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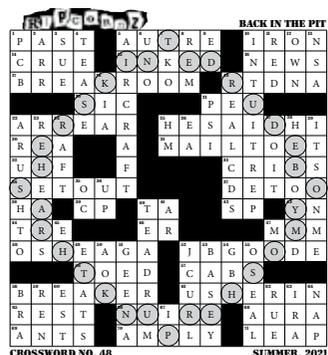
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The Roar of Torrefy

By John Carlow

Torrefy is:

Simon Smith: Bass

Daniel Laughy: Drums

Adam Henry: Guitars (lead)

Ben Gerencser: Guitars (rhythm)

John Ferguson: Vocals

Mid-June 2021 and I am shooting Victoria metal warriors Torrefy at the infamous Duncan Showroom.

To get here, the band, like many others had survived a brief heat wave and the scorched ground of a pandemic. Hundreds tuned in to this live streamed event and hundreds more plus have watched the footage since. It was the band's first "show" in an exceptionally long while, and they thought it was their best recorded live set to date. (Shout out Showroom's sound guru Dr Ted Cadillac.) A triumphant return for a band that's rumbled walls since 2011 with their original lineup and three albums under the hat. It was deemed a highly successful night.

Hard to articulate the experience of Torrefy live, but you know that moment in a Godzilla film when he is back building a radioactive breath and there's a split second of silence followed by the deafening roar of destructive fire? That is how this five piece launches an assault on your unsuspecting senses.

I had shot Torrefy at few times at the late great Tavern of the Damned and at the last Victoria Metalfest. That wildly successful event deepened my appreciation of metal and all its sub genres. Torrefy is infectious live. Like me, at the start you may only catch the third or fourth word in the mix but as a whole they are a band to really experience and it grows on you from there. I have never believed one has to be an expert or veteran of a music genre, to be able to equally appreciate it. I shoot a lot of music and often I am drawn to the vibe, visual impact and energy of a band as much as what I have taken from an album.

I checked out the band's discography, including the lyrics so I did not interpret something less that the bands work as a whole. Lyrics are included with the band's recordings with importance. If vinyl were easy and cheap to produce, I believe you would find a full-page lyric sheet in every Torrefy sleeve.

What I found when I sat down to talk with the band at their practice space of many years, were five long-time friends who have very much evolved together into the band you see today. Indeed, they all started at similar skill levels and have come up together. As a band Torrefy reveal that they are continuing to evolve especially with the latest album, *Life is Bad*. It's an observation shared in reviews that cover their first recordings. Analysis of genres and record reviews are something the band absorbs collectively but not too much takes them off the path that has held them together such a long time. These are fun guys, approachable and I believe we could have easily continued long past the three and a half hours spent talking about Torrefy and music in general. I walked away with volumes of bullet worthy quotes, too many to use here. I will say my favorite was, and I quote, "Every metal head loves ABBA" (we will return to that.) As musicians the band was educated through help of friends, musical families, lessons and self-taught discipline. As "best friends hanging out" the band creates collectively. Everyone contributes towards the final crafted work. This process did not cease during the drought of the pandemic. Everyone

seemed very much focused with eyes forward for the band, with a fourth album already written and a fifth in progress.

During that time, the band kept friends and fans updated through a podcast, sent out via YouTube. Slightly scaled back regular practice was maintained, save for a short blackout during the worst of restrictions. It was also during that time the punk and metal scene lost its local home base when Logan's closed its doors forever. I believe the scene will re-cement its foundations. I know a lot of bands have written and practiced and will come out of the gate with a fury. Pre-pandemic the band was working twice weekly and doing shows regularly without having to promote.

As the ice thawed on the shutdowns, the band was signed to Exhumed Records. This development will tie in nicely to the bands ambitions to once again hit the road. The guys regaled me with tour stories. This seemed a happy place for the band and something desired for the immediate future. They have a deep-set appreciation of their fans and are driven enough to make a tour happen. "Live shows have depth, people, vibes and experience."

We talked about familiar territory for many a touring band. Broken down vans, little money, empty venues, Subway diets, and regardless... it seemed as though this band would tour endlessly if possible. Ask the guys sometime about a show in Nelson that had only two underage fans turn up. There's a great underlying ethic in that tale about appreciating and giving 100% to anyone that makes the effort to show up and see you. Torrefy is a band that has its faithful followers. Autograph requests are not uncommon at shows, fans wear band colors and in turn, the band moves aggressively forward with ambition to deliver more of what those fans appreciate and want.

One of my favorite things to ask a band is about "guilty pleasures" or, "what is in your record collection?" One by one the guys revealed that behind an exterior of "extreme and noisy" there is an appreciation for the other end of the path in musical tastes.

"Pizza is heavy metal for me. But I don't only eat pizza."

Among guilty pleasures and musical influences some of the band favorites include Broadway musicals, jazz, blues, folk, punk, hip hop, dance, classic rock, rap, electronic, indie rock, synth wave and classical. Specific artists include, Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Carter Family, Abba, Bad Religion, Tupac, Snoop, Beatles, Zep, Pink Floyd, Eagles, Metallica, Die Antwoord, Coldplay and old school Dolly Parton-esque country. I was surprised by some of this, though I suspect many bands share the same truths about their musical foundations. These diverse tastes, while appreciated also contain elements the band draws from when

it comes to creating their sound.

"Without influences we would be one-dimensional."

Thinking ahead about live shows I wonder if the band had plans to follow the path taken by bigger touring bands and create more of a production to accompany the sound. "Smoke and fire" staging works well with metal. Torrefy is now very much "what you see is what you get" as a band. It was discussed that given the opportunity and funding, lightning with the thunder would be appreciated and accepted, but certainly not needed.

When asked further about goals and hopes for the band there is unified enthusiasm, though slightly different answers come from everyone. Indeed, that is often how the band answers most questions; unified but with everyone speaking as individuals. Each give their own irreplaceable contributions. As for goals, "being on a label" has recently happened and "touring" is in the crosshairs. "A chance to play for and connect to fans" will come with touring and "to leave a legacy of cool songs" has already started and will continue to happen. These goals are not uncommon ones for emerging bands and these guys have that vital longevity built into them

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

that lets me believe they will accomplish what they set out to do. Torrefy has even been working towards being able to engineer their own music. Admittedly "super analog" Torrefy confess to being "dragged by the feet into the technological world." A few of the band have been learning recording technology and can do their own preproduction now. Those emerging skills were very much prevalent in the ambitious *Life is Bad*. To me watching five friends on stage that share a passion and a common set of goals need no smoke to surround them. I look forward to the next Torrefy album, live show and maybe Ill join others and drop in on a Weds night just to see them simply create.

Eyes and ears open everyone.

Look for Torrefy at Exhumed Records and on Bandcamp/ socials

Chat /photographs: John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography



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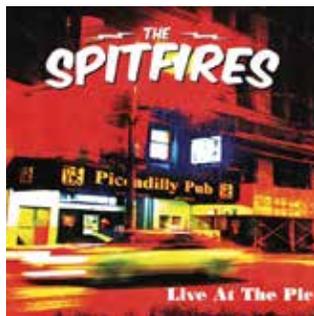
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The Spitfires

It's been eighteen years in the making but The Spitfires have finally managed to release *Live at the Pic*, recorded by producer Howard Redekopp (Tegan and Sara, Mother Mother, New Pornographers) on his mobile recording studio at Vancouver's infamous Piccadilly Pub in 2003. The album celebrates their 25th anniversary and the accompanying video showcases a time-capsulized look at the Canadian underground rock 'n' roll scene of the era. The live footage for video "Down On It" was shot via Danny Nowack (Hard Core Logo) and Doug Donut (Death Sentence) in the sweatiest, smokiest, mainstay-venue of Vancouver's "Gunk Punk" revolution: The Pic.

The Spitfires made a name for themselves in the late 90's and early 00's not only for their raucous, beer-soaked live shows, but also for their well-crafted rock songs. They shared stages with contemporaries like The Hellcopters, The Murder City Devils, The Black Halos, and the New Bomb Turks while winning awards from the



Georgia Straight, and CFOX radio's Seeds competition. The band toured extensively in the United States, the U.K. and Canada, but unfortunately they'll probably be most remembered for the night they were banned in Toronto. In 2002 The Spitfires signed on with one of Canada's premier booking agents at The Agency Group. The band was firing on all cylinders, touring with the Headstones (ruining their attempt at sobriety) and being courted by labels in the United States and Europe. They were invited to the Canadian Music Week festival in Toronto, where NOW

Magazine offered them "pick of the week" for their headlining show at The Legendary Horseshoe Tavern. Celebrities like Robbie Robertson, Chad Kroeger and

Brittany Murphy were in attendance, sharing drinks with the band backstage. Upon commencing their performance, singer Jason Solyom shot off a chemical-filled fire extinguisher which choked the crowd and created a panicked rush to the exit. This all occurred very shortly after the Great White nightclub fire in Rhode Island, and concert goers were justifiably on edge. It effectively ended their career. They were dropped by their agent, their label, and banned by most clubs in the Toronto area. Their agent is rumoured to have said, "I've never seen a band shoot themselves in the foot like this in my life." The Spitfires had all but thrown in the towel on the project until singer Jason Solyom discovered the lost recordings while spring cleaning in 2020. It was only fitting that Tony Lima at Yeah Right! Records should release the album. His infamous rock club Call The Office hosted The Spitfires

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

repeatedly and was arguably one of the best rock 'n' roll venues in Canada at the time. *Live at the Pic* captures the band in their heyday, right after a European tour and right before they imploded at the Horseshoe. They were a band you either loved or hated. If you were from Toronto, probably the latter. It's been eighteen years and the Spitfires have to wonder, "Are we still banned in Toronto?" Luckily the careers of the Spitfires weren't completely ruined. Jason Solyom went on to join stoner rock outfit La Chinga, CC Voltage joined new wave act Autogramm, and Jay Millette has continued with the Black Halos and his solo project, Silver Receiver.

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DEFORMATORY

Interview with Charlie Leduc

AU: For those unfamiliar with the band, tell us some quick background on Deformatory?

Charlie Leduc: Deformatory officially formed in 2010 from Canada's national capital, Ottawa with the goal of creating their own relentless brand of death metal. Inspired by their love of old school and technical death metal, Deformatory is an

amalgamation of the heaviest parts of extreme metal, all while retaining their connection to the underground scene.

Deformatory have released:

- "A Prelude To..." (EP) - 2011
- "Believe The Lie" (Single) - 2011
- *In The Wake of Pestilence* (LP) - 2013
- *Malediction* (LP) - 2016
- "Bilateral Carnage" (7" split with Blood of Christ) - 2018
- "Once Upon The Cross" (Deicide cover) - 2018

- *Inversion of the Unseen Horizon* (Coming out on September 3, 2021)

AU: We understand the Deformatory has had various line-up changes over the years, but at its core (Charlie Leduc - Guitars & Vocals and Neil Grandy - Drums) have been the main duo behind the sound, how do you find this dynamic influences your songwriting?

CL: Throughout the years, every member who has been a part of Deformatory has helped to shape the sound you hear today. Every member's

contributions to the writing process have been absorbed into the entity that is Deformatory, consumed and redistributed at the right time. This breeds a very organic style of death metal, that borders on chaos and sometimes, a rejection of musical theory; relying on what sounds and feels good in the moment. This, in essence, is the core of Deformatory's sound.

AU: Your new album is a concept album continuing from 2016's *Malediction*. What can you tell us about the storyline behind it?

CL: In our previous album *Malediction*, the truth was revealed about the origin of Evil Incarnate, the Prince of Darkness, Lucifer. Lucifer was an Angel in Heaven, created by God to serve Him. He was perfect in every way. How can an Angel, created by God, defy Him, and become the source of Evil modern man has come to vilify?

Answer: Lucifer was a possessed Angel. He was possessed by Savael, a truly maleficent entity that consumed the Angel's corpse, and became the embodiment of who we call Satan.

AU: You had the album mixed and mastered by Topon Das (Fuck the Facts) from Apartment 2 Recording. How was it working with him?

CL: Topon Das is one of a kind. He is one of easiest people to get along with in this industry. He is as down to earth as they get and is one hell of an audio engineer. Topon is all about the music and he has been such an integral part of the scene here in Canada for over three decades that it's impossible to have a negative experience with him. Every part of the process was enjoyable, professional and enlightening. He worked with us to achieve our vision and immediately "got" what we were going for sonically.

AU: You collaborated on the artwork of the album with Paul Gerrard, a movie concept designer known for his imagery on *Wrath of the Titans*, *Hellraiser: Origins*, and *Hellboy*. How did you recruit Gerrard for this project?

CL: All of the stars were perfectly aligned when we reached out to him by email with our complicated concept in hand. He just happened to be between movie productions and had a small window with nothing major on his plate. He was all about what we were trying to convey artistically. He was by far one of the most efficient and talented artists we have ever worked and we couldn't be happier with the final result.

AU: How important do you find album artwork is to give a visual approach to the extreme metal you present?

CL: We believe it's vitally important as it's just an extension of the music and an opportunity to put some imagery to the energy behind the compositions.

AU: What was it like to work with ex-Cryptopsy guitarist Jon Levasseur on your track "Impaled Upon The Carrionspire"?

CL: Honestly, we are still in a bit of shock that he's a part of this album. For both of us in Deformatory, Cryptopsy is one of our favorite bands and sources of inspiration for our music. So, to have the mastermind behind the incredible songs off *None So Vile*, *Whisper Supremacy*, etc., giving his approval on something we wrote, completely blew our minds. On top of that, he



went above and beyond, getting into the song enough to write a classical guitar intro after he laid down his massive guitar solo. It has been an incredible experience working with him on this track and the accompanying music video.

AU: Deformatory also has its own gear review channel "Extreme Gear Reviews" on YouTube. What can you tell us about this?

CL: We started *Extreme Gear Reviews* fundamentally because we both love acquiring and trying out new music related gear and we both started to get into video editing (out of necessity for the band) and saw this as an opportunity to hone those skills a little bit more.

AU: How did the pandemic affect the band?

CL: Covid affected us in various ways and the recording process took a bit longer than it should have as a result. We knew that the pandemic would impact our ability to release an album in a conventional method. So, we chose to focus on video content; putting together over 20 different videos, ranging from a biography series to individual videos for every song on the album as a way of getting our entire artistic vision "out there" without the ability to leave our own province.

AU: How would you sum up this past 2020?

CL: 2020 has clearly been a shitshow. All of our worlds has been turned upside down; freedom that was taken for granted got snatched up without warning. It's been a mess and that mess has carried over into 2021 spectacularly; with slivers of confusing hope emerging here and there; enough to keep us moving forward inch by inch. We are hopeful that 2022 will be the year that things go back closer to normal. We hope that bands, promoters, and venues who have been drastically impacted are able to get back into the swing of things. More importantly, we hope that 2022 ushers in some of the most monstrous mosh pits we have ever seen!

AU: Final thoughts to share with our readers.

CL: Thank you for supporting underground death metal and all of the people that work to bring it to you - like *Absolute Underground*! Fingers crossed that we run into each other in the pit sometime - somewhere! Until then, STAY DEFORMED.

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Artach

Interview with Sruthán

AU: For those unfamiliar with the band, please tell us some quick background on Artach?

S: Artach is a two man black metal band (Sruthán: Guitar/Bass, Fíochmhar: Battery/Vocals/Keys) based in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. Artach began with the idea for us to write and record black metal. Nothing grandiose was planned, it was just a desire to play some raw and noisy music. Within 9 months we had an album's worth of material recorded. Now, a year later we just released our second album, *Sworn To Avenge*.

AU: As a duo how do you find this dynamic influences your songwriting?

S: For me as the guitarist, I suppose it's a lot of pressure, but since I am always coming up with riffs it's not something that I find difficult. Typically I will compose the rudiments of the song myself then bring it to Fíochmhar and we work out any issues and we record the song. There are no arguments, it's simple with two people. I present a song idea, I absorb any feedback and adapt the song a bit if need be and we're ready to record it.



surroundings, such as Scandinavian black metal bands, what's your take on the northern climate influencing dark sound?

S: The North can be harsh just like the music it helps inspire. Black metal bands don't sing about surfing and the sun. But it's not only all grim and cold, there is beauty and a desire to preserve this which also plays into our musical and lyrical ideas. So our own style is not all grim and frostbitten but

AU: What's it like living in the frigid north of St. John's, Newfoundland? How do you find that influences your music?

S: It's a place of extremes and having a lot of gloomy weather can of course impact the music and mentality. It definitely impacts our lyrics.

AU: Many black metal bands are influenced by their

NEWFOUNDLAND NIGHTMARE

also reveres nature.

AU: We understand you have a new album out now *Sworn To Avenge*, from Depressive Illusions Records to follow your debut album *Chronicles of a Black Winter*. For those unfamiliar with both, how you would compare them in sound?

S: Our newer album is a continuation from the first. The biggest change is that the newer one sounds better as we had this one mastered by Fredrik Folkare (Necrophobic, Heartwind, etc.) at Chrome Studios. So while there's more of the same style on album #2 I think we pushed the envelope – to push ourselves to do more. There is also the evolution to play tighter, to have a more professional sound, but to not sound overly polished. The listening experience provides you with epic black metal music that is angry, savage, unhinged, but contains melody and some twists and turns to surprise the listener. Varied song tempos mixing blasting with thrashy, punky, doomy elements keep the sounds interesting and not monotone.

AU: On *Sworn To Avenge* you chose to cover Celtic Frost's 'Jewel Throne', why this track?

S: Celtic Frost is one of our big influences and I think sometimes the vocals channel a bit of Tom G. Warrior, so it was a cool song to cover to pay homage to a band we love. And it's not a song that has been covered a million times already.

AU: Any stand-out tracks on *Sworn To Avenge*?

S: Well, for me the 20+ min long song "Endless Tundra" is exciting as it was a big challenge to do and especially record. The structure is complex with intros, breakdowns, solo sections, and an outro. It is almost like a mini-album in and of itself. If I had to pick another, I really like "Shimmer", and we made have a totally do-it-yourself style music video for it that turned out really cool.

AU: Any plans to tour?

S: We are not a touring band or a band that plays live since we are a duo. Maybe someday, but for

now we shall remain like the mighty Darkthrone and just write, record, and release music.

AU: How did the pandemic affect the band?

S: I wrote a lot of material so it wasn't wasted time. Personally, for me, it made me dislike humanity even more. From the ignorance of the uneducated anti-science brigade to the wackos more concerned about their own assumed "freedoms" being taken away. It has been largely a pandemic of our own making yet so many just won't change a thing about their behaviour at all as they assume they are not a part of the problem.

AU: How would you sum up this past 2020? And how do you think 2021 will turn out going into 2022 for your band?

S: 2020 summed up: 0.5 stars. Would not recommend it. That said, some bright spots have been more time to play guitar, we finished recording our second Artach album, and I had more time to get out in nature. As for the rest of this year and into 2022. We have more songs written already. A couple of them are just about recorded. So we're not content to do nothing. We hope that more people get to check out our band and that some might even like it. Hopefully, this fall and into 2022 sees some normality return and hopefully some people have learned a thing or two from the experience... however I doubt it. My faith in humanity as a whole is pretty fucking low.

AU: Any final thoughts to share?

S: Thanks for taking the time to read this interview and for checking out the band. If you like old Venom and Celtic Frost, mixed with some black metal from bands like Immortal, Satyricon, and Darkthrone along with a few hints of thrash metal, we think you might like our sound.

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artach.bandcamp.com



Malevolence Malevolent Thoughts

By Lorán Werrun

In May 1990 Malevolence recorded and released their 'Race to Infinity' demo tape. By then I'd hooked up with a couple of guys from the other side of town to form a band called Conviction. Through them I met a whole other community of people, one of whom played in the band Arcfiend, a bassist named Kirk Mercer. He worked at a local print shop and listened to heavier music than everyone else I knew.

As I prepared to record my first demo tape, the Malevolence cassette had become a staple in my tape deck. It was a cross between Iron Maiden and old Metallica.

The Malevolence tunes made me feel that if my friends could do something this good, then there was nothing stopping me from doing the same. I attended all but one of Malevolence's gigs, and enjoyed the whole vibe around the local metal scene. It was pretty awesome to go inside of the venues that I'd only ever seen the exterior of while growing up. A brand new world existed behind those walls, a lot of heads banging and stage diving to my buddy's band on stage.

By late 1990 as Conviction was preparing to play our first gig, I heard that Malevolence had broken up. Tom and Jordan left the group to pursue a different musical direction, while Pete joined his brother's band Distorted Influence. It was an interesting time because Kirk's band Arcfiend had ceased to exist, and I was getting pretty frustrated with my own situation, although there was a flicker of hope when Jay auditioned to be our second guitarist. The thought of my old buddy joining my band made the future seem bright. But when my band-mates decided against Jay joining us, I split from the group.

After my departure, Kirk and I got together to discuss a resurrection of Malevolence. We just had to see if Jay was into it. A few days after our first meeting with him, we set up our gear in my parent's basement and got down to business. We learned all of the 'Race to Infinity' material and helped Jay complete a few unfinished songs he had brought with him.

Once our jam room was complete, we focused on finding a new guitarist. We held auditions. One with a guy who was a giant fan of the band and knew all of Tom's solos note for note. He was really great, but something about him didn't sit right with the three of us, so we focused on the other guy who happened to be a friend of Tom's older brother.

His name was Adel Braga. He'd heard about our needing a guitarist, and had actually seen Tom, Jay and myself play a Talent Show. So we discussed it amongst ourselves then invited him to join the band.

With our roster now complete we were itching to play a show, but had nowhere to play. My cousin who lived twenty miles away in the town of Sidney worked as a gardener for the Mayor. He arranged a meeting with her to discuss the possibility of us booking a gig, and how it was an opportunity for local youth to come together and have some harmless fun. His smooth talking swooned the Mayor and she granted us permission to have a show at Sidney's Sanscha Hall.

For that gig we shared the bill with Distorted Influence. Their guitarist Andy and Jay invited a couple of bands from Seattle to play the gig; Forced Entry co-headlined with punk rock gods, The Accused. The show attracted 600+ people and went off with minimal incident. Malevolence was officially back and our new cross-design t-shirts sold out before we even hit the stage. We were happy, as were all the other Victoria bands because there was a new place for everyone to play gigs.

In 1992 Annihilator had already exploded out of Vancouver with videos on Much Music and MTV. Our general outlook on everything was pretty grand, so we decided to go and record where Annihilator had recorded their album, a studio in New Westminster called Fiasco Brothers.

The 'Apparitions' tape sold respectively well around town, and Jay sent our stuff all over the world. One highlight was finding out that we'd made it into the regular rotation at an Egyptian college radio station. Our mail-outs looked great, and we aimed to make a good first impression in everything we did, whether on stage or on paper.

The pinnacle of our promoting came in October 1992 when we flew Jay down south for the Foundations Forum in Los Angeles, California. It was an annual international music conference that attracted industry professionals from all over the world. Our press package was visually stunning with Kirk's printing prowess and Jay's artwork on full display. We took out a full-page ad in Canada's premiere metal tabloid Meat Magazine and received a killer review in that same issue.

Sending Jay to the Foundations Forum made us feel as if we were on the right track. However, when he returned home saying that it was nothing but a fancy chin-wag for the business elite, we were all quite disappointed and left scratching our heads.

Upon reconvening after Jay's trip down south we only played two more shows. We did our first gig in Vancouver, a show made most memorable by my buddy Tim stripping off all his clothes on the dance floor to swim in a sea of beer. Our final gig happened the following Monday at a really cool place called Harpo's. Jay and a buddy worked there as stage hands. Looking back now it's kind of bittersweet to think that our version of Malevolence ended where a lot of those bands got their start.

Kirk, Adel and myself carried on as another band, while Jay recruited a new version of Malevolence. That Malevolence recorded two CDs: a self-titled offering in 1994 and *Transcending The Godless Age Of Science* in 1998. They produced a couple of videos and toured across Canada, even stopping



in for an interview on Much Music's weekly metal program. Seeing Jay on television from the other side of the country was really cool and it lit a fire under my ass. All these years later that fire still burns.

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Pillbox is Shaking Again

Interview with Chris Barry

by Billy Hopeless

When asked to answer a questionnaire for this issue, one of the questions was "Who is the most underrated Canadian artist?" My answer is Chris Barry, the guy was doing what I do when I was still dreaming of it, and he did it to the max. He lived on Chris Stein and Debbie Harry's couch, wrote songs with Ian Hunter, won Joan Jett's admiration and put out a record on her label, toured with Girlschool, The Cult, and much more. Now the ultra cool label Yeah Right! Records is putting out the first ever vinyl release of his band Pillbox's album *Jimbo's Clown Room*, which has been one of my fave rock records ever. And now Chris Barry has given me one of my fave interviews ever. Read it and buy the damn album!

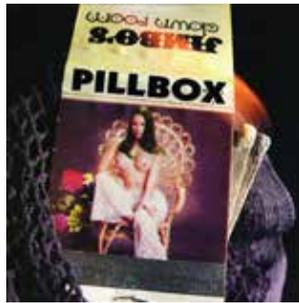
Absolute Underground: Hey Chris, I gotta say I'm all A-gust about this interview as I'm

a huge fan of your musical career. Let's get our Julie Andrews on and summarize this interview by starting at the very beginning, always a very good place to start. From 1977-1981 you were fronting one of Canada's first punk bands, The 222s, out of Montreal. What or who inspired you to play the sound of punk rock music and what was the scene like in la belle province back then?

CB: In my youth I was a huge *Ziggy Stardust*-era Bowie fan, which in turn led me to Lou "Rock'n'Roll Animal-era" Reed, the Stooges, Mott the Hoople, Roxy Music, etc. And of course I was a big Alice Cooper group fan. Around that same time, like Grade 7, I started hearing about this "outrageous" act from New York, and as soon as I saw the cover of that first New York Dolls album I was sold. People hated them so much, they hated all the music I adored, so I knew the Dolls were probably onto something. I'd feel the same way a few years later when the first Ramones album came out. All I needed to do was read the song titles and marvel at those four weirdos on the cover to know I was gonna love them. When we first started to hear rumblings about this punk rock thing in Canada, I was in Grade 10 and already a huge fan of the Dolls, Stooges, Ramones, etc, but I don't think any of that stuff had really been given the "punk" label yet. That only seemed to come around once the Sex Pistols started gaining notoriety on these shores in '77.

AU: Back then you wrote the hit, "Slip into the Crowd," which you carried over into the band 39 Steps, and was not only covered by the notorious Vancouver band Black Market Babies but was featured with you and the band playing in the academy award winning Woody Allen movie Hannah and Her Sisters. Do you have any good stories about that movie shoot, and how did you spend your royalty money?

CB: Yes, it had been a later 222s song, written in '81. But yeah, so far as royalties are/were concerned, that was the gift that kept on giving as I still own most of the publishing on that song. But I did meet Woody Allen, who was remarkably gracious given I was essentially just some featured extra on his set who had the gall/naivete to introduce themselves, and suddenly people in the music industry started to think we might be ripe to exploit once word got out we were gonna be in the next Woody Allen film. Admittedly, we were a hard act to market in the mid-to-late 1980s. There was no easy label to pin on us. Too rock and roll for the goths, too punk for the arena rock fans, not punk enough for the hardcore scene, and so on.



AU: While I do have the first 39 Steps album, I have yet to get my hands on a copy of any 222's stuff, including the reissued material that came out as a collection in 2006. This brings us to the present where Pillbox's classic and holy vinyl grail Jimbo's Clown Room is being re-released for the first time on Vinyl by that Grand Poobah of Punk, Tony Lima, on his Yeah Right! Records label. What were your first thoughts when you were approached with the reissue?

CB: I was very pleased. These records still mean a lot to me and I'm always super happy when people reach out to me about them. Even more so when I think of how they weren't very well exposed back when we made them. *The Clown Room* in particular was a very good record, but it came out on a tiny New York label with minimal promotion. It wasn't a very fashionable sound in 1993 – although I guess it never was, really. And while it got excellent reviews and was gaining a fair bit of momentum as people were increasingly hip to it, the band had its own problems and I was no longer with the group only a few months after it came out. So that was kinda the end of that. Sadly, really.

AU: Now the name Jimbo's Clown room is an obvious reference to Jumbo's Clown Room in L.A, why did you name it Jimbo's instead of Jumbo's and who's the topless match cover girl that gets this James Bond barstool solitaire coaster All Liver Let Die?

CB: Ratboy, who had lived in LA with his band, Motorcycle Boy, prior to relocating to NYC and starting Pillbox up with me, was always talking about this low rent strip club in Los Angeles he called Jimbo's Clown Room. So yeah, I'd never heard of the place before and Ratboy presented it to us as Jimbo's Clown Room, not its rightful Jumbo's Clown Room name, so when we went to name the album, we went with Jimbo's cuz that's what we thought it was called. As for the cover, I think the matchbook came from the actual club. We thought it was fantastic. Nobody considered that the naked female breasts might upset record store owners, but in the end it did, with many of the big chains refusing to stock it. Crazy, huh? It's hardly pornographic, not that that should make a difference either.

AU: From my first listen to the masterpiece, my fave track is "Bobby's Shakin' Again." Now that I'm working in social housing on the frontlines of Vancouver's opiate crisis the song hits ten-fold. Was there a Bobby that inspired the song or was it just a less played out name than Johnny?

CB: Yes, most of the lyrical content of that record is autobiographical, based on real events, either from my own experience or those of the people around me in the East Village of the early '90s. Bobby was a drummer who'd played with GG Allin at one point, and was an unrepentant drug enthusiast.

AU: Well since we are playing the name game

I see the packaging and layout has been done by a Mr. Rich Rich bo bitch banana fanana fo fitch Jones. How did you get involved with this graphic nobleman of Burlington?

CB: Well, I've had a fair amount of correspondence with Rich over the past several years. He's pretty fond of the *Clown Room*, *39 Steps*, etc, and has been pretty supportive of yours truly's musical efforts through the ages, which I appreciate very much. It brings me a lot of joy when I learn people are still listening – and digging – those records. Rich is really the catalyst for this vinyl release *Clown Room*, and for that I can't thank him enough. I like all of you Black Halos fuckers for that matter, I really appreciate how you've championed my stuff over the years.

AU: I'm told like with any good reissue or Blu-ray release there will be Bonus material. I'm already satisfied just to have the album on vinyl but you totally raised my flesh bar with the thought of a bigger second coming. Please tell us what icing we can look forward to dripping off this already perfectly stacked platter?

CB: Yes, there are four, count 'em four, previously unreleased tracks that come along with the new vinyl. Three of them are demos we recorded in early '94, just before my exit from the group, and the fourth is an early demo we did of "What She Wants" when it was still called "What She Says", essentially the same arrangement as the Motorcycle Boy track "She Says" but with mostly different lyrics cuz I couldn't make out the original ones from the tape I had of it. Of the bonus material, I'd argue at least two of those songs are as strong as the stuff on the original album.

AU: I know I'm being gluttonous but are you planning on doing any live shows to promote the re-release or is it just a slice from the past coming back to give new listeners that missed the first serving a taste of perfect recipe for rock and roll?

CB: I've often said that I'd return to the stage in a heartbeat were there enough of an audience to witness it. But to lug gear over to some pay-to-play gig and have to beg your friends to come see you? Nah, that's okay. I can live without that experience... again. Ha, ha.

AU: So what do you do now? Are you still writing music or have you served your time, left your records, and moved on to other adventures?

CB: These days I'm writing an animated series that revolves around the modern music industry. As for music, well, I always start to ache to play music when I've been away from it for a while.

AU: Whatever path you take let me just say that you created some very lasting music in the playlist of my heart. I bow respectfully and thank you for giving me a soundtrack that didn't suck. Before we go, since you are one of the birth gods of one of my favourite genres of music, tell us what present bands do you feel are worthy and carry the torch you helped light and held for many years?

CB: Well, thank you, Billy. I appreciate you saying as much. As for what I've been listening to in recent years, I've been going back to listening to a lot of 1960s garage stuff. New current acts that I admire? I'd need to think about it. I don't pay very close attention these days. Lil Pump? Yeah, I like that kid. And then there are the bands that friends of mine have, which I'm always eager to support in my own small way.

AU: Last question, where is the best poutine in Quebec?

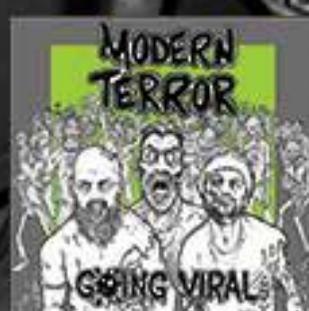
CB: I'd argue that La Belle Province makes the most reliably good poutine here in la belle province. Yup, they get my vote.

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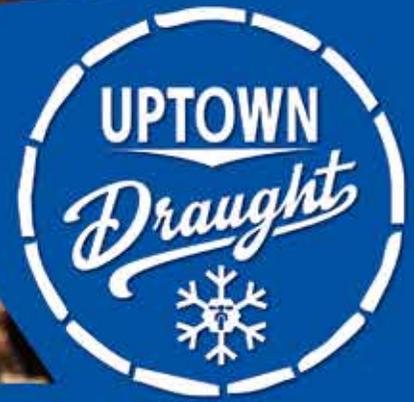
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Welcome to issue #101's edition of Blast from the Past.

This issue HARLEQUIN with APRIL WINE Canadian Tour 1981. OOWATANITE by Clark Mantei

Let's time warp back to summer 1981. I was 14 and had just returned to Victoria from a drum camp in Whitehorse. The camp had a gym where we played games and socialized. It was there that my eyes and ears found an old style Jukebox where the music blasted from. For 10cents you could play 3 songs from the 45rpms inside... I always chose *You Shook Me All Night Long* by AC/DC, *You Better You Bet* by The WHO and a song called *Thinking of You* by HARLEQUIN. 3 songs that jolted me more than any sugar I knew of. On the last day prior to flying home a truly amazing surprise came my way too...woohoo. Save that for the end...

Upon returning home to Victoria, my cousins from Winnipeg were in our house and brought a box of records. In the box was *The Nature Of The Beast* by APRIL WINE. I dropped the stylus down on my turntable and WHOA!!! I heard sheer energy. That 1st track *All Over Town* and the rest of the LP had me entranced. 11 tracks of bliss. This band was fantastic. Two of their hits were on the

radio in heavy rotation. *Sign of the Gypsy Queen* and the power ballad *Just Between You and Me* as well. This might have set the tone for power ballads in my opinion.

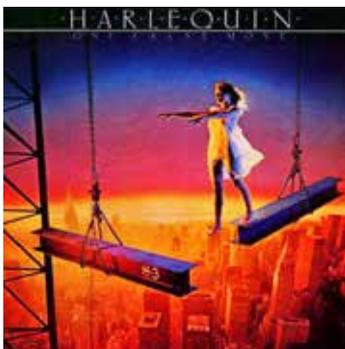
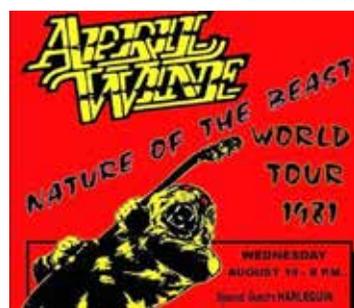
During a downtown venture that week my cousin pointed out an April Wine tour poster. My eyes took a first glance and then I saw they were appearing with HARLEQUIN too? Wow!!! The band from the Whitehorse Jukebox!

April Wine toured an 18 show venture with Harlequin across Canada, from Prince George, BC, all the way to Moncton, New Brunswick.

Show number 5 was held at Victoria's Memorial Arena and on that day I found myself putting on a cheetah style silk sleeveless shirt to suit the occasion as the April Wine LP had a Beast playing guitar and the same attire graced the back cover. So off I went alone to see my first show on my own. I showed up early and hung around until the ticket window opened and paid my \$12 for a ticket to an evening with these Canadian Rock and Roll bands. When the doors opened I made my way to the open floor. I remember feeling pretty charged seeing all the stagehands getting everything set for the bands. Then the lights went down.....

I felt electric. July 31st, 1981 and Harlequin was about to hit the stage...
...40 years later let's look back on who the HARLEQUIN band was.

Harlequin was formed in 1975 in Winnipeg, Canada, by bassist Ralph James who eventually met up with guitarist Glen Willows who joined in 1977 along with the singer. The five piece high energy rock band connected with LP producer Jack Douglas (John Lennon/Aerosmith) and thus began the magical recordings which graced the grooves of 4 Harlequin LPs from 1979-1984. I was honoured to speak this past week with Glen Willows, the guitarist / songwriter for Harlequin on all those albums.



Here's some cool things we reflected on...
AU: Hi Glenn. What do you remember about joining the band in 1977?"
Glen Willows: Well, they were already formed and needed a guitarist so I asked "Who's writing the songs?" and Ralph said "You are!" simple as that so I said "Um, O.K." and proceeded to give the group all my best ideas and it was great.

AU: I see there's others credited on a lot of the songs too.
GW: Well, everyone was happy to add on their parts and we collaborated well together. It just worked out almost effortlessly too. It was only like 4 albums in 5 years but it was a great time and I'm so happy to have been a part of such a great time.
AU: What is the memory of these 1981 shows that you remember most?"
GW: Well, April Wine invited us to do the entire tour across Canada and everyone got along. Both bands played very well and I remember that most every show was sold out too. It was such a great time and with our songs on the radio, what more could a band wish for? Great times and a lot of fond

BLAST FROM THE PAST

memories.

And now let's return to the Memorial Arena in Victoria B.C. for the show...

I was standing in the front area as the band was to begin, everyone crunches in and its all black and the crowd is loud and ready... "Hello Victoria! Please welcome Epic recording artists HARLEQUIN!!!"

Instantly the blackness becomes coloured lights with a LIVE band. The song was SWEET THINGS IN LIFE.

Harlequin graced the stage and played out a blistering set of song after great song. This was better than the vinyl. This was LIVE! and I was loving their performance. When they played *Thinking of You*, Oh My God, here's my fave track from the Yukon Jukebox. I was entranced in all of the glory and to this very day I cherish that magic performance.

Bravo Harlequin! You all shone so very bright that nite. The sound was LOUD, and with a singer sounding clear as a bell, who wouldn't love this band in 1981? Seeing a great drummer play my fave song purrfectly was a treat indeed.

Then there was guitarist Glen Willows; the sole guitarist of the band and he handled it with ease. Maybe one day I'll drum with a great guitarist like Glen, that was my dream back then. They played out their set and ended with their smash hit at the time, *Innocence*, and then said goodnight. This turned out to be Harlequin's only performance ever in Victoria, BC. Harlequin is still active today with two original members so hopefully they will be able to play Victoria again in the future.

www.harlequintheband.com

To be continued next issue when APRIL WINE hits the stage... Until then Rock out and Roll on.

- Clark "Super" Mantei



Horror Of Pestilence

By Ryan Dyer

From Guangzhou, China, Horror of Pestilence are a group of metallic conductors who specialize in creating symphonies of sickness. Since 2012, when their debut EP, *The Last Judgment*, arrived on the scene, the band has been blending tech-deathcore savagery along with symphonic elements, as seen with the many instrumental versions of their tracks and "Capriccio No. 24 from Hell", inspired by Niccolò Paganini's *24 Caprices*. The shock and awe of Horror of Pestilence is certainly something to behold, and their new EP, *Illiterate Construction // Inaudible Deterioration* marks a new chapter for the band. I caught up band composer Jian Luo after their shows at the One of Us IV festival to discuss the new album and direction for the band.



Absolute Underground: *Illiterate Construction // Inaudible Deterioration* is the new Horror of Pestilence EP. It sees some progression in your sound - which was already very technical and progressive before. Tell me about this album and the changes within the band since your last release.

Jian Luo: I wrote this batch of songs on my own - which is no real difference to what is usually done - I usually complete all the songs by myself. In fact, we had no plan to release this batch of songs, but our new musician Mr. Mustard (Jiejun Lin) from deathcore band Massacre Of Mothman (Hong Kong) has come in as a guitar player. Now that he has come in, the writing process will become a two-person ordeal. This batch of new songs is just for us to make a conclusion of the songs I wrote in order to move on to the next phase of the band.

AU: How do you feel this batch of songs rank against your previous albums? And about the next album with your new members at the helm, how do you see it turning out?

JL: I prefer to write sad things, but maybe this kind of obscure emotion is not particularly popular in China, so these four songs are slightly adjusted for the market to be more mainstream. Now that Mr. Mustard has been added to the writing mix, I want to make the music a bit more extreme in the future. There is also a new drummer in the band. With us working together, I think the next Horror of Pestilence album will be even more powerful, more extreme, more technical, and more guitar-based. Those who spend a certain amount of time listening to the songs and have a good understanding of the musical style, such as fellow musicians, can better understand what we want to express on the technical level. It's not very popular to make the music more technical or niche, but we must please ourselves before we please others.

AU: The album shows some new

directions for the band, such "Iconic Mortal" having a tasty saxophone segment. You have always been open to layering your songs with the talents of guests, such as on "Calling to the King of Black," which had many special guests. Who are the guests on the new album?

JL: This time we didn't ask for any big names; we don't want anyone else to work with us, just want to start with the writings by ourselves. We no longer need the help of other big names, and I think they will also think this work is okay on its own. For the saxophone part I just wrote the score by myself and had a saxophone player perform it.

AU: The lyrics to "God Given. Hell Risen" are as follows, "I now know hell is real so I know there's a heaven. I believe, and I shall. That I exist in this mortal shell." You must go through hell to get to heaven, right?

JL: I wrote this song which refers to the coming of God, which is actually the rise of hell - there is no God at all. There are no ghosts or gods. In fact, the idea of God, our so-called faith, is just being used by people with desires to rule us. So I would say that the coming of God is actually the rise of hell, because there is no God at all.

AU: For "Iconic Mortal", the lyrics are more spiteful "Millions and millions who drowned alive. The pistol has brainwashed their mind." What can you disclose about these words?

JL: There is no geographical distinction on peoples' greed. I wanted to express this kind of thing. The entire four songs are actually written around this theme. The lyrics you see can be applied to yourself or any kind of ideology. Everyone is entitled to their own view of the lyrics.

AU: Another new direction is not using the famed artist Guang Yang for album artwork this time. Kiryu took care of the album design for the new record. What guidance did you give for it?

JL: We actually wanted to cooperate with Guang Yang to help us with the new cover, but he was occupied. I hurriedly released these four songs and asked Kiryu to cooperate on the cover.



AU: Only four songs have lyrics; the last four are instrumental versions of the first four. This is another feat I haven't seen with many bands - either they have one instrumental track or they're an instrumental band. You have also done this with "Calling to the King of Black." What was the philosophy behind this decision?

JL: I think our instrumental parts are more marvellous to domestic musicians - many shining things can be remembered and listened to repeatedly in the songs with or without lyrics. It shows that it doesn't mean that only vocals can make people remember details of a song. Every time we do a record we will release an instrumental version of the album.

AU: How has your sound changed throughout the years? How do you see it evolving moving forward?

JL: From 2012 to 2015, our music was extremely guitar-based, but from 2018 to present, the imagery is regarded as the main and core thing. With our next creation, we may focus our worship to the guitar once more, and the sound might become more black metal - a little bit sadder.

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Sepultura

Interview Andreas Kisser

...winter communications from a frozen São Paulo...

by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: We are calling today from the west coast of Canada... where are you today?

AK: It's cold in São Paulo. Sunny but cold. Today is 5-6c, very cold for us.

AU: Where do you find yourself with the band in your touring cycle, are you getting set to move?

AK: We put an album out in February 2020, and of course in March everything stopped. Being a touring band, it was very hard to concept Sepultura without touring. Since '89 we never stopped. We visited 80 countries in 30 years, all of a sudden, stopped. It was hard to rethink everything. Not only the band. But I never stayed

in my house for a year? Always hotel, tour bus. We created "Sepulquarta" event, which became an album. Also being in a routine at home: relationship with family, study more, exercising, eating better – routine I never had before. That's life, pandemic aside, we have to deal everyday. I'm excited the shows are starting to come back, and we find rhythm again.

AU: No doubt you find the rhythm. It's good to hear you found ways to stay positive. With "Sepulquarta" interviews and performances on YouTube, it was super to see partnership with other musicians. Is the live record a compilation of these?

AK: Yes definitely. But as I say, we didn't plan to make an album. Our intent was to keep the channel open with our fans and talk about the new album. Every Wednesday specifically. Calling friends, making performances of songs we didn't play that much. The end, we have an album. And it is not a live, nor studio album. Everyone is at their own houses, sending audio and video from different parts of the world, and assembled here. It was very homemade within the limitations that we have. We can't leave our houses. It's a new format which doesn't have a name. "Ratamahatta" for instance, we have three drummers – to do that onstage or in studio, it's possible, but time consuming, a lot of microphones, building the set. But doing like this, very easy. Everyone in their own place, video and send it here. Easy. That's why we had so many amazing guests, Scott Ian, Devin Townsend, Phil Campbell from Motorhead, all our friends from our history on the road. In the end, we have this format, which is something new, which we didn't think we could create an album out of it.

AU: It was cool to watch you put the effort in to stay connected with the fans. It showed you guys as people as well. Was just watching the Devin Townsend one, "Mask", and you can see Paulo in the background watching soccer. And you're in the basement with guitar gear. It's cool to see behind the scenes and hear this great audio coming out, it gives us hope we can do it too.

AK: That's great to hear man! It was really inspiring

for us. It kept the band alive, gave purpose. It was fun as well! We learned a lot. The most important thing: we kept the band alive. There is no backstage, tour bus, to talk about ideas or fight or discuss. "Sepulquarta" was that, our everything. The technology involved really saved our life. To keep our mind positive, working and creative. It was done at home, no secrets or tricks.

AU: To conceptualize the band, it is always on the pulse of what is going on. Writing music that is timely. Funny to start the discussion on weather and how it is changing. Here on Vancouver Island, we see the old growth forest being cut down, and protests against it. There are connections between the Amazon and forests here, protecting the environment. Did you have thoughts on keeping pulse on the Amazon, or the environment in the world?

AK: Seems to be an obvious cause, food, animals, the air! We have to fight for that? It's crazy! For future generations... especially in Brazil. We have this connection with nature. I went to the Amazon many times. In between São Paulo and there, many vegetations, animals and fruits. It's fantastic and very rich! But they are destroying in a fast way, the speed, is so terrible. Especially with the government we have in Brazil right now – they don't give a fuck – they just want to go with tractors and destroy. This is a thematic that Sepultura has been using for many years. It's obvious to us that we have a lot to learn with indigenous tribes; how to deal with nature and respect animals. Communication with nature that is lost, with metropolis, screens, and phones. We touch that subject in "Machine Messiah" where we have to find the balance between technology and being human. We use our music and lyrics to express how we feel. "Guardians of Earth" video, we got messages from around the whole world about environment problems. Siberia, Thailand, everywhere. It is a worldwide problem. We got to a point of almost no return. Yet! We can see nature can recover very quickly! The first week the lockdown happened in Brazil, in the city. The pollution, the quality of air with no cars, no planes, and industry. Even after a week, we felt quickly, we saw animals and nature taking over again. You see how much power the human being has to pollute the planet, every single second of the day. I believe to find ways to balance that, to respect the environment and survive. The answer is not on Mars or the moon. We have the answers right here on the planet, we should be aware of all the possibilities.

AU: We've seen at the same time, some high up people saying we should decrease our energy consumption, yet they are flying into outer space. You are saying two things...

AK: Yes! "You have to take care of the environment, so I can destroy it." Hahaha! You protect, I destroy. There are a lot of concepts that we think we are green – but we are not. We get fooled by the same people. We buy the same shit, but now it is in a green or organic package. Nothing has changed. We have to be aware of the propaganda power. What are they really saying? What are they selling? Read between the lines, so you can make a better judgment of what you are buying.

AU: The world went through a low point, when in January the US Capitol got taken over. There are a lot of factors in that, I'm not an expert. To think an outgoing president, Trump in this case, would advocate for that, and be followed blindly. The time for electronic propaganda is now.

AK: The president here, in Brazil as well, got elected because he was on Twitter all the time. Creating fake news, an image that was far from reality. It is the sign of times. We have to deal with that. We have to learn how to respond to it. Not to give too much power to these kind of people. This type of information, is so quick now, we don't have time to digest information now. Everything is so fast.

AU: In thinking of the music video "Guardians of Earth" it is apparent your message around the Amazon. Gojira did a similar video too, from France. When someone watches this on the couch in Canada and wants to get involved, do you see a good way to support this cause and make change?

AK: Yes definitely! We are connected with this organization "Amazon Frontline". They need support. There are a lot of possibilities to

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help. Physically being there, regardless of the profession you have. Donations also are helpful. This type of information, and awareness is healthy. If you talk to friends, say "I saw the video with Sepultura, I am helping here and there", you might be inspiring others to do the same. Art has this mission, to express, to criticize. This is a great tool to criticize dictatorships, government, all the bullshit politics. Imagine Dead Kennedys without Ronald Reagan. Art has amazing possibilities to attack without violence. And create an atmosphere for debate.

AU: We will add some of the links in the interview! To speak to the word "attack" and Sepultura, you on guitar and Eloy on drums! He is going for it. How has he changed your playing?

AK: He brings the best of me and Paulo and Derrick. We inspire each other! Eloy was a great drummer when he joined us, no doubt, but he grew up so much in the last ten years. He had freedom to explore. Other projects before, had limitations. But here, total freedom. He brought all these possibilities, and he is smart, can talk about any subject, is professional, great guy to be around. He made me a better composer and musician, because I can write stuff that only he can do. We challenge each other. In the early stages of *Quadra* we sent drum loops, and riffs back and forth. We have the spirit of challenge. We are a better band and improving – all that is missing now is getting on the road!

AU: The spirit of challenge! Another great live performance we saw, is with Steve Vai in Las Vegas, a few years ago. What a great player to drop into the band. Curious: did you show him some tricks? Did he show you?

AK: Oh dude! Vai is a master. One of my favourite players, amazing human, so smart and spiritual! What trick can I teach him? But it was funny, "Roots" for instance, is a simple song, but it is a groove that is not easy everyone, it is very Brazilian, peculiar. I remember him having some trouble to get the groove and concept. It is different! It was great to see him adapt and find his way. He found his own way to perform it, and make it his own. He was not there to play like Max. In the same way with guests for "Sepulquarta" the guests are free to bring what they wanted, and portray the song in there way. I made a mixture of "Kaiowas" and "Bad Horsie" and it was fun to play with him. I love his material. He did Alcatraz, David Lee Roth, Flexible, Frank Zappa... it was an honour.

AU: The re-interpretations and trying new things... this is a great asset Sepultura has, re-invention. Do you have tips, rituals, recommendations on being creative?

AK: I don't have a process, but I keep ideas. Now this is so easy, because of the smart phone. You can record, you can write anything. Keep ideas. And build them. It is not always that a song comes in a day. That is rare. Most of the time you have to build, a song can go different directions. You have to respect the process and momentum, and have to change. Don't be afraid of risk and change. Try new elements in whatever style. It's always a risk, but that is the beauty of art. You will only create something new if you risk. Don't be afraid. If you want to do a metal album and sound like Beyonce... go for it! It could or could not work, but you have to listen and feel that. You have to test yourself, ideas. You will only know from doing – you have to act.

AU: Thank you for sharing this observation. Action! It has been a long and wonderful career to follow with you.

AK: Thank you man!

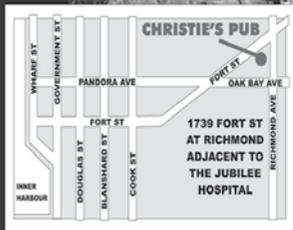
AU: Last words to Canadian metalheads out there reading?

AK: Love you all! We always have a great time in Canada and we miss you so much. Hope to see you soon! 2022 the tour is announced. Thank you for the support over the years. Stay safe.

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SHADOW CABINET WITH GRAYSON CALIGARI:



Soriah

Interview by Grayson Caligari

Soriah is an internationally acclaimed throat singer and multi-instrumentalist. We are fortunate that he was able to take some time to speak in depth with *AU Magazine*. His new album *Cathartes* is a testament to the spiritual power of sound and a must have for any serious music lover.

Here are some excerpts for the interview. The full text can be read online at www.absoluteunderground.tv

Absolute Underground: Tell our readers about the song writing process for this new album:

S: Each track on *Cathartes* had its own unique process in how it was developed. Sometimes when creating, I look for holes or voids in contemporary musical or vibrational expression that I can fill with my music. I believe each set of ears is a whole universe into themselves. Therefore, the spaces for new expression and vibration to fill each of those spaces with something new, rich and authentic are vast.

Many times, a seed will just present itself, such as the final piece on the album, "Response." That song began with a simple field recording. Late one night in a hospital parking lot, I captured the sound of a metal pole as the water drops from a sprinkler struck it, making it sing. It sounded so amazing and ethereal, I had to capture it. The rest of the song came to me layer by layer. By now I doubt most people will hear the original impetus sound of that track when they listen to it. It's pretty embedded, but it's there as the hidden root of the piece.

Other times I trim myself out of the process and turn to the natural world where order as well as chaos conduct the elements and narrative. I'm largely inspired by nature; I lean a lot on nature. I find endless lessons about naturally occurring frequencies, symmetry and flow. For me, nature is the highest art form: from auspiciously mystical rock formations to the deceptively simple rhythms of insect chirps. These symmetrical and asymmetrical tendencies are found all around us. I believe these seemingly opposing tendencies give shape to the very essence of nature; this dualism fascinates and resonates with me. It is astounding and mysterious. This is what I choose to reflect in my music. I find too much human interference or one's idea of art or one's attempt to make a statement, hinders the true experience of the art itself. I feel there is an over abundance of this flavor of artistic expression. I do not feel the need to contribute any more to our overstimulated human consciousness.

The human world turned upside down this past year and it brought up a plethora of issues and inspirations for us all. Some of these themes I used in songs on *Cathartes* such as, pan generational justice, forest management, death transformation to acceptance and transcendence.

These are cycles that some have the ability to observe outside of themselves. This album is an attempt to engage the listener in this way. I'd like to think that Soriah inspires one to step away from the screen and experience how music can dissolve into nature and its cycles.

AU: The album has a trance inducing quality to it. Can you speak to the spiritual side of your music and how you connect with sound?

S: Soriah's world is an animist world. Things like places, animals and plants are animated with spirit. This is the essential alchemy of Khöömei aka Tuvan throat singing. The sounds I make are reflections of what I hear and feel from the world around me. This, I believe is the single most profound lesson I took from my time in Tuva learning the techniques of Khöömei. Khöömei is essentially the process of transforming the singer's environment into a language of harmonics and vibration. My spiritual goal is to become transparent in my environment and to impart a sense of wonder where we live amidst the animist spiritual nature of things. There is not much religious devotion to my spiritualism, It is an expression of gratitude, awe, wonder and communion as a spirit among spirits.

AU: What are your favourite memories surrounding the recording of this album?

S: I made this album in my quarantine living room with a panoramic view of the city of Portland and it's surrounding volcanic mountain range, the Cascades. I could wake up in the morning, be greeted by the world in peril and start recording fresh as the day's very first endeavour. The strong sense of "these unprecedented times" kindled a creative spark for me as I'm sure it did with lots of people. Yet amidst all of that horror, the moon still rose over the city, the Spring bloomed big in Portland. I had the time for once to really slow down and observe with a devoted detail I'd not had the opportunity to observe with for many years. I was always running around, trying to find time and means. One piece in particular, "Flower Moon" was recorded on the night of the full moon in May, referred to as the "Flower moon." I had just returned from a hike in the West Hills to view the full moon rise. I came home, turned out the lights, turned on the studio and just started creating. The Flower Moon was the only source of light. The windows were open letting in a gentle breeze, the city was alight and the spirit of the song came in strong. "Gnosis" was another fun endeavour. I worked closely with Grant Chambers on it. He's was the perfect engineer and producer for this piece because he had experienced the Ayahuasca lessons I was trying to convey with this song.

The process itself was a lot of throwing things up against a wall to see what stuck, it eventually began to reveal itself. I knew from the beginning that I wanted to make something like no one has ever heard in recorded music before. Something that was all oral based with no instrumentation

only sounds I make with my mouth. Something purely and authentically me. With "Gnosis", we were working on two levels, the conscious and subconscious. We worked in the sonic realm of the conscious like themes and riffs that would draw the listener in, but we were also working simultaneously with how these frequencies would trigger the subconscious as well how they would play within the imagination and how it could unlock healing for the listener.

One interesting side note about "Gnosis" is that in the process of recording percussive parts, I found that I had inadvertently created a portal that the listener could access by breathing in rhythm with the prahnic breathing, which is featured twice in the track. By following the percussive full in and out breathing, the listener would attain a state of mild asphyxiation, a "natural high" akin to a nitrous effect which would coax in a state of Gnosis for a short time where the sonic space in the track expands to cosmic proportions. That is something new I've never experienced in recorded music. A way for the listener to directly interact with the music and in a sense dissolve into it.

AU: How does writing in Nahuatl affect your relationship to language and sound?

S: Well, I discovered early on using the language of Nahuatl, that it is uniquely suited for overtone singing. There are consonants that place the tongue in the correct position so that if one were to extend the sound for example, the very common Nahuatl consonant "tl" that often comes at the end of a word, for example the word "QuetzalcoaTL", if you were to sing through that "tl", you would produce the style of Tuvan that singing known as "Sygyt" which is a high whistling like sound of harmonic overtone singing. Nahuatl beyond lending itself conveniently to harmonic overtone singing, is itself a magical language. There are many words to do with the spiritual aspects of life and the afterlife. I use Nahuatl

as my mode of sigilization. I'm not fluent in Nahuatl, so I search through various dictionaries to translate basic lyrical ideas, then flip through looking for narratives to present themselves in the words. I do know what the words mean, but the intent integrates and dissolves in the utterance, becoming harmonics and rhythm. After a time, and quite purposefully, I forget the literal meaning of the words. They become a song-spell. This technique is known as sigilization.

AU: What do you wish more people knew about Tuva?

Unfortunately, what is considered Mongolian throat singing by the general public is actually a contemporary cultural acquisition of what their lesser known neighbors, the Tuvans have been doing for millennia. Most people aren't really aware of the language and cultural differences in a place so remote and exotic to Westerners. The Tuvans themselves claim that Khöömei comes from the land that is now known as Tuva who taught their ancestors this form of singing even before language had developed. My heart always sinks when I hear something about Mongolian singing and I hear what is obviously a Tuvan melody. It seems that only people really devoted to music from this part of the world would ever know the difference. Russia doesn't really have the resources or the disposition to distinguish cultural diversity in Siberia, that fact has been exploited by the Mongolians and even the Chinese who claim the throat singing comes from China and actually has the Unesco designation as the birthplace of throat singing. It's my mission to spread good information about the amazing and unique feature of a culture I've come to deeply love and respect.

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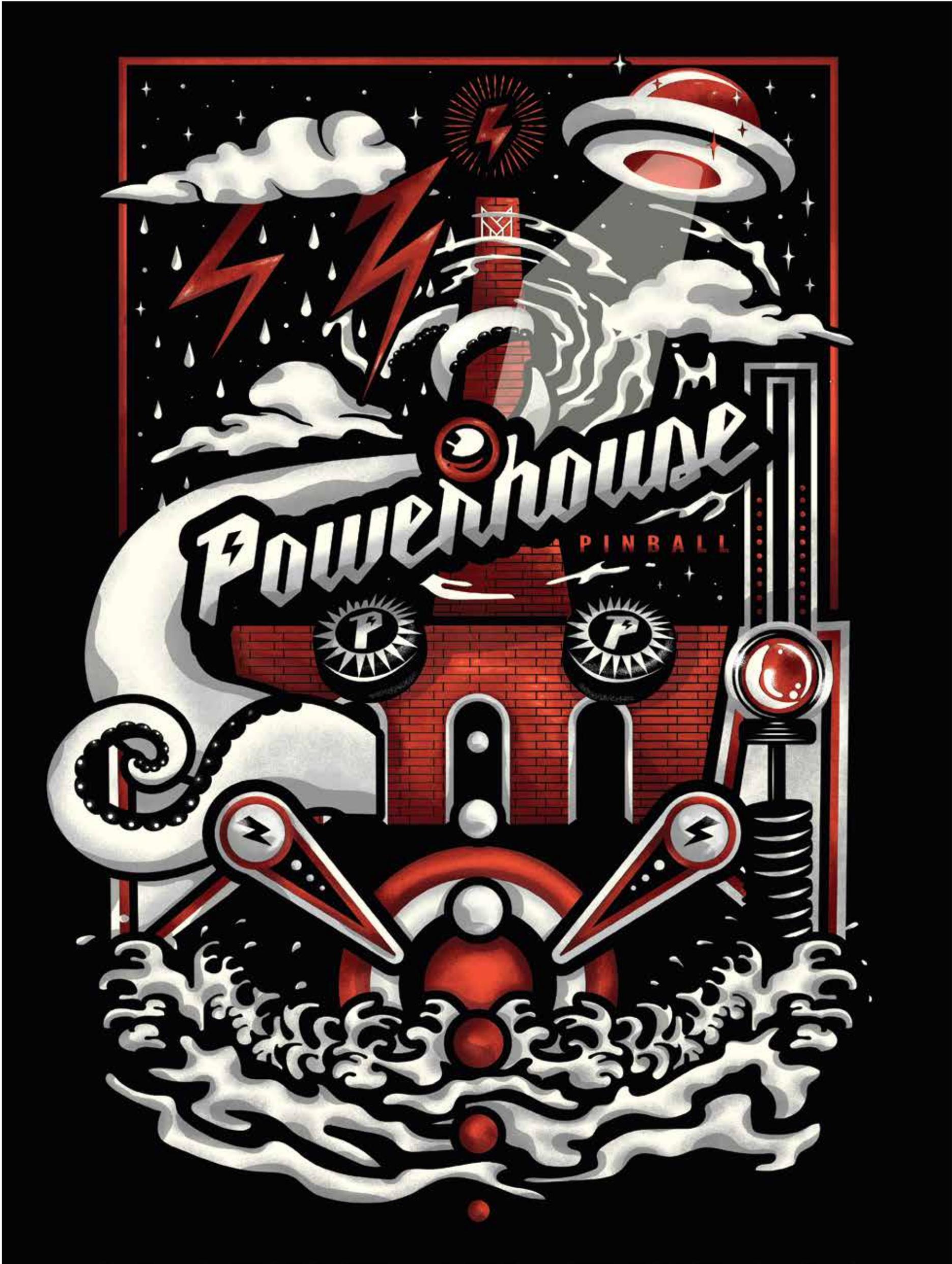


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ROSS REBAGLIATI

Still Going For Gold

Interview by Ira "Irocker" Hunter and Brydon "Panda Face" Parker

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

Ross Rebagliati: My name is Ross Rebagliati and I'm probably most infamous for testing positive for THC at the Olympics after I won a gold medal in snowboarding the first time snowboarding was an Olympic event. That was 23 years ago and basically ever since then, I've been an advocate for Cannabis use and have a Cannabis company called Ross's Gold.

AU: Did you know that people sometimes call you Ross Weedbagliati?

RR: That's awesome. I haven't heard that one before but I like it.

AU: It's kind of amazing now that Canada has legal weed coast to coast.

RR: Yeah, 23 years later, it's pretty ironic for sure to see it all happen before your eyes.

AU: When you were on the World Cup circuit, you would leave parties early so you could ride the fresh groomers before anyone else got on the mountain. Do you still ride early morning groomers?

RR: Yeah, actually, I'm coaching freestyle snowboarding and skiing on Apex mountain outside of Penticton. So yeah, I'm up there doing high speed groomers before everybody else gets there.

AU: That's when you get going the fastest, when it's still hard?

RR: Oh yeah, the harder the better. Just like when you're skating. You want hard ice, you don't want any soft spots.

AU: What prompted the move from Whistler to Penticton?

RR: A number of things. Our family has always had a cottage here so I kind of grew up here in the summers. We're in the heart of the Sonora desert and wine country and it's really good for growing outdoor here as well.

AU: And there's still lots of mountains to ride?

RR: Oh yeah, there's lots. There's probably half a dozen excellent resorts within a couple hours of where we are. It's super great, it's just like Whistler but with more elbow room.

AU: What is the difference between the FIS and the ISF?

RR: So the ISF stands for the International Snowboard Federation that was the original federation that homologated World Cup events

for the sport of snowboarding. They basically set all of the rules and all of the clubs had to be sanctioned by the ISF since the 80s. And the ISF brought snowboarding to the Olympics. We all lobbied the Olympics for years and years since way before Nagano to have snowboarding at the Olympics. When we finally got it in '94, to be run as a full medal event in '98, the FIS (Fédération Internationale de Ski), they suddenly wanted to be the governing body of snowboarding. And obviously the ISF hugely protested that.

AU: Did you also compete in boardercross?

RR: No, just full giant slalom. Boardercross wasn't even an event at the time. It was an event but it wasn't a part of the Olympic schedule.

AU: What's your favorite mountain to ride?

RR: The one with the least lineups. Haha. But most recently Apex Mountain. Holy smokes, that's an underrated mountain.

AU: Do you prefer Whistler or Blackcomb?

RR: That's a tricky question but I think Blackcomb.

AU: Is it true Whistler is an older mountain that's been smoothed down over time and that Blackcomb is a newer mountain so it still

has it's sharp edges.

RR: So Blackcomb was designed on a computer and Whistler was designed by loggers. So a lot of the runs on Whistler aren't perfect fall lines and there's a lot of traversing. Whereas Blackcomb was designed on a computer and every single run has a perfect fall line. But the real reason is that when snowboarding came on the scene Blackcomb and Whistler each had separate owners. They didn't have dual mountain passes for a long time. So when snowboarding came on the scene I was 15

and we were living in Vancouver and only Blackcomb allowed snowboarding.

AU: Yeah, same thing on Vancouver Island, Mount Washington didn't allow snowboarders at first either so we used to ride Forbidden Plateau instead.

RR: Yeah, I competed at Forbidden Plateau. Actually, I was in

one of maybe their first ever snowboard contests. I was lucky early and I got sponsored instantly. Burton was really behind me and I was coaching for Craig Kelly. But first growing up, I was a ski racer at Grouse Mountain in Vancouver. I was just training and going to different contests, maybe Whistler once a year type of thing. But then when I started snowboarding it was Blackcomb all the way every day. But both mountains have these magical spots that are incredible.

AU: When you won the first Olympic gold for snowboarding and the following controversy over the positive test for Cannabis, we understand back in the day that you used to leave the room when people lit up joints so that you wouldn't test positive. True or false?

RR: That's true. But I was a pretty big pothead though, leading up to the Olympics. Like I didn't want to stop smoking weed. And a lot of times people would pass me a joint and then apologize, you know? So my excuse wasn't too far fetched.

AU: Same thing happened to me once, a drug sniffing dog sat down beside me at the New York airport and I said it must have been punks smoking weed beside me at a club I went to. So I've used your excuse before as well.

RR: Nice, nice. It is what it is. Like prohibition and the laws against weed were designed to be broken. That's how they get you, right? They know that nobody can follow the law. It's like the speed limit. They know no one can drive the speed limit and that's why whenever they need money, they just set up a speed trap.

AU: I guess the answer to the earlier question though is that you were smoking weed before

the Olympics?

RR: I was a big puffer for years leading up to Nagano. Like on the ISF tour, there was no drug testing of any kind. The coaches and the organizers, we were all smoking weed. And of course it was a big beer festival too in Europe, right? And in Japan, it was all about sake and partying and just how you would imagine the World Cup would be. Of course the racers were slightly more serious than the freestylers but you might remember Martin Freinademetz got booted out of the Nagano Olympics for partying too hard and he was a racer. We had our share of parties also. But yeah, no, I was a big burner. But my story that I quit smoking weed to go to the Olympics in April is true. The secondhand smoke stories are true. I did three drug tests leading up to Nagano where



everything checked out, obviously I made the team and competed. And after I tested positive for weed in Nagano, those three tests that I did prior to going were made public. And I actually tested positive for weed and all of them.

AU: It's a tough one because marijuana stays in your system for 30 days, unlike the people who can do a bunch of cocaine and pass a drug test 24 hours later. Is cannabis a snowboarding performance enhancer or an enjoyment of snowboarding enhancer?

RR: Well, I think the more fun you have, the better you're going to be at it. I think the term performance enhancing is subjective. Like water, for example, if you dehydrate enough of it, you fucking die. That you obviously would compete better when you're hydrated properly, right? So is water performance enhancing? You know what I mean? So there's things about weed that lend itself to being performance enhancing, Like for me, I started competing in '88 and so '99 was my last year, and it was my full time job for almost 10 years. After a few years you've been to fuckin' Val d'Isère a few times already and now you just want to get it over with, you're not there as a tourist anymore. And there's been times that weed helps out with motivation. We were somewhat isolated in those days, no internet and no cell phones. At the Winter Olympics in Nagano I was 26. But I was in Europe competing since I was 21. And for somebody that young to be by themselves in unfamiliar territory, you know, weed is a good companion. It helps with jet lag, with trying to sleep when you're not tired or trying to eat when you're not hungry. I would always take a bong

rip in the morning when I was back in Whistler working out for the millionth day in a row at the gym, just to motivate me to go to the gym in the first place. And so the whole stereotype that, "Oh, it makes you unmotivated." is obviously super bogus. And that was kind of where I started questioning weed in my life in the first place. Like, how come if it's so unmotivating, and people just waste their life on weed, then why do I feel like I need to ride a 100 fucking Ks right now?

AU: And it's not like you smoked a big joint or had a huge Bong rip right before your Olympic run either. It was probably something a few weeks before?

RR: Well, I was just around people smoking weed

and I tested positive for it. That's why those tests came back positive, because of the environment I was in. Don't forget that weed wasn't on the list of banned substances in the first place in Nagano. So there was no maximum allowable limit. Or any limit because it wasn't on the list of banned substances. So what they did in the first place was completely outrageous. They tried to take my gold medal away for breaking an imaginary rule that didn't exist. So obviously, I could have sued them, but that's not the way I operate.

AU: Would you say that experience is what made you become a Cannabis advocate?

Yeah, 100%! Well obviously during prohibition, as an Olympic athlete, I wouldn't all of a sudden think getting into weed 20 years before legalization would be a good business move. In 2001, I got put on the No Fly List after 911. When the internet came online, and you could Google my name, all of a sudden the corporate interest wasn't there anymore, because it was a bad image for them. Before the internet, I was doing stuff for the Governor General of the United States. I was opening blockbuster videos for 10 grand an hour. But as soon as they launched the internet, that's when I really started noticing this stereotype and the stigma of Cannabis affecting how I could earn a living through endorsements as an Olympic gold medalist. I kind of lost everything about being a role model and so I said "Fuck it! I'm just gonna start a Cannabis brand." That's when I decided to launch Ross' Gold.

www.ross-gold.com

To Be Continued Next Issue...

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Devin Townsend Productive And Reflective In Pandemic Times

By Erik Lindholm

We started the interview with a bit of discussion on where the magazine is from (not Los Angeles), readership numbers, Devin on another gruelling press day promoting his many projects. We reflect on #100 of AU, and how the mag progressed.

Absolute Underground: Looking back in time, I wrote something about SYL in #2 or #3, and it reads like a label promoter wrote it: "The heaviest band! Crushing riffs! Coming to destroy you... check it out!" What did people get out of that? Did anyone pick it up? That was the one with "Aftermath".

DT: Ah yes! Self titled. Well it's good to talk again!

AU: Let's get it started... Good day! And where are you now, set the scene for the person who will read this.

DT: I think where I am at would not surprise anybody, unless I've been living in a fantasy world, we've all been dealing with pandemic for hundreds and hundreds of days. Now that I'm doing interviews, it's interesting the line of questioning is such that it makes me feel, like it is a fantasy world, the idea of making plans during this period, and dude, I can't imagine it has been any different for you. It's crazy! I have been working constantly and doing my best to pivot the career because I have to. I haven't stopped since the minute I got home. I had a flu on tour, they cancelled the tour, sent me home and I had to go into quarantine and take all the tests and as soon it was done I was like, "holy shit, I gotta start working." I've been doing seven streaming concerts, three of which for charity, we managed to raise a couple hundred thousand euro for a bunch of charities. Done so far two albums of

quarantine material, working on the third one now, I've made a whole series of online songs, like a weekly song, I've done a podcast, I've done guitar albums – now made two new films and two new records called *The Puzzle* and last week I started the next actual record called *Lightwork* which comes out beginning of next year and I'm getting ready to headline Bloodstock, in a month in a half, so I've got to figure out a band.

And next year, I just announced some tours for an album I haven't even started yet. So... BAM.

AU: Huh, well sounds like we don't have anything to talk about in this interview then. Just too easy, sitting around the house.

DT: Ah! I also moved house! The combination has been surreal. I have found ways to make it work, which is great. I don't remember the last time I had a full night's sleep.

AU: To reflect on that, something we've all been dealing with is coping strategies during the time of lockdown. Have you learned some new coping strategies or methods out of this experience?

DT: Dude, it's like a military mindset. It has to be. I have people in my life, on a professional level, on a personal level, parents, kids, friends. Towards the end of last year, it was getting dark at 2 in the afternoon, it was the most psychological part of this pandemic. Last winter. My strategy was to continue to exercise, meditate, and try and limit any activities that would cause me psychological damage. Really work to keep my frame of mind optimistic amidst a relentlessly negative period. It wasn't just for me, I realized that if I have a business, or kids – it's my frame of mind that will affect everybody. So I had to really, work to keep myself psychologically healthy in a period that was unhealthy. The progress I made on a musical or a professional level, is simply a reflection of that struggle, moreso than the objective. I didn't decide to be hyper productive and do all these things, I was just more of the mindset "I have to keep myself emotionally healthy" and a way to do that is to keep the mind active. It required me to pivot the career in all ways, and learn new skills, how to Twitch. My mechanism is knuckle down and get it done.

AU: Thank you for sharing that. It's been cool in the past year, from afar, saw some of the livestreams in the Vancouver hospital. "Ocean Machine" on the Sunshine Coast patio! There is a dog running around.

DT: Garth Richardson's studio. Dude – it's pretty impressive. The new record I am with Garth. The first record I've ever had a producer with. It's one of these things, you either do or you don't – with coping. I'm sure you've encountered this, some people just deteriorated, some died. Ended up their long term relationships fell apart after spending a week together, or whatever it is. There are all these things that on the surface are profoundly negative. But the silver lining of it, this has been the first opportunity to really confront certain parts of my trip, that perhaps touring or travelling, the work that I have been constantly involved in, allowed be to put inside or ignore. This time I couldn't – nobody could! I feel strangely grateful for that. To have the opportunity to confront that. There has been a lot of growth. Within that, a lot of music. That's the silver lining of an inherently really fucked up

period.

AU: Truly, what we've seen from a lot of artists we've talked to, this is either an opportunity to pivot and rethink and find new positives, or its the thing that took them out. Everyone we talked to has recorded a livestream, a rarities record with extra spice. Everyone had to run with it.

DT: That's it, man. You can't compare artists to each other as well. I'm in a fortunate position in that, I've always been independent. Because I couldn't get signed, or get my band out there, or record company would touch me with a ten foot pole when I was younger. So I had to learn how to produce and engineer, mix, video – everything. I'm in a fortunate position where my skillset could be completely independent. That benefited me. The people I feel are hit worst in all this are the techs, you see some people had to take another job. Gone into construction. Anything. People who've been on tour for 30-40 years and have no skills outside of that, how life works. I see them deteriorate. Trying to sell all these guitars they've accumulated. Getting into alcohol heavily, that's been hard to see with people. I'm glad to see things opening up again, I hope they can get straightened out again.

AU: Absolutely, and an observation we have is "art comes from suffering." I'm quite sure a philosopher said that a thousand years ago. Would predict a lot of art coming from this time period. People want to get out of the home office and do live shows again. It will swing back the other way.

DT: There is going to be a paradigm shift socially. Politically, economically. From having time to reflect. As a society, we've had to move at two or three times capacity. I've never worked harder – however – it's compounded with being stuck by yourself. It's been a lot of work, and a lot of technological learning. It's also been hand in hand with having nowhere to run, and facing ourselves. The art will certainly, we will be surprised with the beauty that comes from it. I also wonder if there are a certain amount of artists who realize that maybe art isn't important, as it once was to them. The gratitude I feel for being able to write music, relegates it to a different part of our life, in a sense. When our whole life, my identity, is so tied to what I do. When I'm able to say "hey I've had to deal with other things, that's made my perception of what I do artistically, different as well". I'm rambling, but it's going to be fascinating.

AU: It has been really cool watching your live shows in the last time period, one that blew me away was the remote cover with Sepultura of "Mask". It was great to hear a second voice, and guitar with them. How did it come about?

DT: It's one of those things, the first Sepultura experience I had was with *Arise* and I saw the *CHAOS AD* tour. They were great! And are great. In fact, "Machine Messiah" the one before "Quadra" was super strong and I was buddies with Derrick and started spending time with Paulo because our soundman used to work with Sepultura as well. But I never really "knew them". So when they asked me, it was an honour. When I watch myself, I think, "All I do is ruin Sepultura," you know what I mean? I just think, "What is this fucking guy doing in the band?" So I'm super honoured and flattered that they asked me to do it, but my personal take is like, "that guy needs to go, man."

AU: Maybe you won't guest on the next record? It went off well! You added some flavour.

DT: Well thanks man! They are cool people. Andreas wound up being a great dude. And Eloy as well, I talked to him about doing work as well, but pandemic, so we are too far. But the guy is a monster too. You watch him hit those drums, you feel bad for the drums!

AU: Glad you took that on. Well you are famous for producing and working with a whole ton of folks, is there anyone in the future you might want to work with, or at least the isolated readership of this mag?

DT: No, in all honesty, I'm really happy not working with anybody right now. I really am enjoying doing my own thing. And I have to hire and work with people obviously, on a professional level. But I don't want to produce. I don't want to do anything, than my own work right now. That's fair enough to be honest. I get asked to guest things all the time, I don't have any time for the most part – it's also rare for me to get a song and go, "I can really contribute something to that."

Oftentimes, I'm like, "You don't need me, or I don't relate to the song." The only time I've ever really done anything with people on guest things, is when I know them. Sepultura a bit of a different scenario, because I'm a fan. But I get asked to do these. I got asked to do one with a band who is really popular, but... I don't know you. I don't know your band. I'm not trying to be flippant or arrogant, but why would we do this? A lot of times these collaborations are put across like, doing the copy at the beginning of this interview, "as the universe collides, these two forces of energy," it's stupid you know.

AU: When you ask someone, "What is your heaviest metal song?" One person says, "Planet Caravan," and the next person says, "Hammer Smashed Face." It's different for everyone! Is there a song you find EXTREME at the moment, and what might it be?

DT: Depends on how we define heavy. Heavy in a live format, is not as heavy in a recorded format for me. "Flying Whales" by Gojira live – devastating. When Meshuggah is on point live – devastating. But it's not the heaviest bands I hear on recording. Bands like SUMAC, some really heavy moments. The Body, the guy is shrieking like his balls are in a taffy puller. That can be really heavy to me. To be honest, I don't find that to be as heavy as I used to. Now, it sounds heavy. It's crushing, maybe. Heavy... the emotional component winds up being a lot heavier for me now. I remember when Johnny Cash did the track with Trent Reznor? The video in his museum? It was one of those things where I could only watch it once, it was too much man, too much. "Hammer Smashed Face", any of these death metal, grindcore, NASUM stuff, it's heavy sound, but not emotionally devastating shit you know? My long form answer is: how do we define "heavy"?

Some things that are heavy for me, are things that drive me crazy. It's heavy to hear it on. Every now and then I was able to go to a mall, I'd hear some saccharine Le Chateau mumble rap – it's so heavy, and I hate it with such a passion, it bums me out! There are different ways to define heavy and that depends how much coffee I've had.

AU: As we see the clock tick down, a buddy of mine Chase sent a question. We've listened to lots of your stuff over the years. I saw you at Soundgarden in Victoria in '02? But here it goes: "Where do you see music in 20-30 years"? Where do we see it, curious to hear your take."

DT: I think everything is integrating itself. Music, art, interactions on a personal level, technology. People talk about singularity in terms of an artificial intelligence, but perhaps there is another one where it all integrates itself into an experience. There is music I use for working. For exercise. Music I want to hear in the morning. Django Reinhardt with coffee. Then brutal metal. My point with that is, it becomes a part of my life. Because of the way technology is moving, there is a good chance that music, art, creation, consumption, is all going to be synonymous with our experience in daily life and I think there is a lot of potential there for artists still. People will always require music. It is a reflection of the human spirit. The best solution for us is to just roll with it. And not panic. The whole NFT thing happens and everyone gets their shit in a knot, about wanting to be the first guy in it and making a lot of money. There is an element of desperation in that, I find super off-putting. So just roll with it. Music is part of being a human. It's not going to go anywhere, it will morph how it is consumed.

AU: We are tribal, this is our drum beat.

DT: 100% brother. We have to keep working on ourselves. The progress, or lack of progress we make, where the creativity comes from, so as long as we aren't giving up we'll always have something to say.

AU: I'm not giving up. Neighbours are giving up pounding on the wall when I put on City at 2 am.

DT: Well, I apologize to them, and thank you.

AU: Last words to the Canadian metalheads out there reading this paper:

DT: Really appreciate the support! I love being a Canadian artist and bringing my weird passive aggressive Canadianness everywhere I go, and I think we are very fortunate to live where we do – not taking that for granted.

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Canadian punk rock and hardcore



Artwork by BRIAN WALSBY

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CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE

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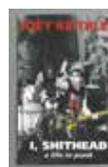
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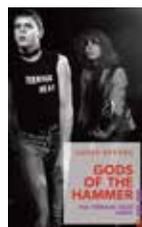
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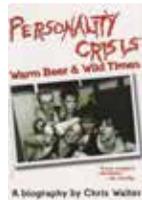
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STUBBEN DEATH RECORDS



Death Sentence

Interview with drummer Doug Donut

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and how were you involved in early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore?

Doug Donut: Fraser Short nicknamed me "Donut" at 1226 Granville, a punk bastion. I couched at said bastion summer '83. I'd been in a Top 40 working band called "Legacy" - and we'd play a fuckload of powerpop. Angel City, Cheap Trick. I ran away from all that when I got turned onto Bad Brains.

AU: What's on your musical resume?

Donut: I was singing in choirs my whole

childhood. Mom was the "hippie" and had me super young. Musicians galore. I picked up cello, guitar etc. I was singing before I could say "fuck" though.

AU: How did you end up drumming in Death Sentence? How old were you?

Donut: I was just 19 - I was a huge fan. I'd seen them a bunch and just loved Pete. My buddy Trigve goes "Hay man, wanna go to Death Sentence's rehearsal?" so we go to the haunted mansion in Burnaby and as we're driving in, their drummer was pulling out. I knew all the songs. California #1 was 10 days later. Our first jam was B-52's "Planet Claire".

AU: Describe Death Sentence's sound.

Donut: We really loved being drum heavy on the first record. Lots of quickness with in key melodic fuck you punk. Alex Harvy meets Bad Brains meets Killing Joke.

AU: What made Death Sentence unique when they were first getting started?

Donut: Pete Cleaver was motherfucking scary. His demeanor was so threatening, and he's a little guy. It was wicked watching him confuse rednecks. Honestly, The band was punk as fuck. We embraced DOA's dark side.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to

share?

Donut: We got kicked out of Calgary and Banff in the same day because I wrote DEATH FUCKING SENTENCE on the side of our big bus.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

Donut: Vancouver started punk rock with The Skulls. And the Zealots, Modernettes. The soft rock cafe - I mean Joe wrote the books. Plural.

AU: First introduction to punk?

Donut: LSD and a skateboard. And DEVO.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk rock bands?

Donut: HOC. Nomeansno. We loved SLOW.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

Donut: We're sardonic and spoiled.

AU: Newer Canadian punk bands that continued to hold the torch high?

Donut: #RebelSpell big time.

AU: Best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

Donut: Personality Crisis by miles. They were the Bad Brains of Canada.

AU: Donut: Most underappreciated band?

Donut: Everyone after Napster.



AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

Donut: Ronnie Hawkins. No. really.

AU: Looking back now can you see Death Sentence's influence on any other bands that followed?

Donut: Hell yes. We upped the game. Cobain saw us and loved it. We had a message and we had fun.

AU: Is the band still active? What is on the horizon?

Donut: Yes, I mean we have the survivors. Save for Brad Kent and Pete, everyone is kicking.

We're negotiating a world wide distribution and yes, we are in rehearsals. Syd has great riffs.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

Donut: I'll respect Pete on this. He'd say it's a massive sellout, a sea of denim vests and not a scratch on them. It's a joke. I see conservative "punks" all "keep politics outta rock, maaaaaan"

Fuck that.

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INFAMOUS SCIENTISTS RECORDS

Red Tide

Interview with Marcus Pollard (Bass & Vocals)

Absolute Underground: What was your involvement in the Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

Marcus Pollard: I was in a few punk bands in the early 80s and later booked a couple of venues where many punk and new wave bands played.

AU: What bands were you in?

MP: The Clicks, Red Tide, Electric Bananas (Garage), Show Business Giants with Tom from NMN and Steve from the News (whatever the fuck that was...)

AU: What's the history of Canadian Punk?

MP: Like hip

hop, the Canada punk scene is pretty much an East Coast vs West Coast thing. Sure lots of small towns across Canada had great bands but at the start it was essentially D.O.A., the Subhumans, the Dayglo, The Modernettes, and the Young Canadians vs the Viletones and the B-Girls. Actually now that I think of it, Toronto had less going on than Calgary, Edmonton, or Winnipeg...

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian Punk?

MP: My first show was (probably) Vancouver's Modernettes with the X-Men (later to become the Dayglo Abortions. I say probably because it might also have been the Infamous Scientists with the Alternatives at Norfolk House all-girls private school. They played with the Alternatives who would soon break up and reform as the Clicks - with 16 year old me on vocals.

AU: Earliest bands that were most influential?

MP: The Victoria scene was rife with bands, and many of them great. Pink Steel, No Means No, Easy Money, the Keys... but for me the gold standard was the Infamous Scientists.

AU: Favourite Canadian Punk Rock bands and albums?

MP: Love the Diodes, No Means No, Asexuals, Modernettes, Young Canadians. And to pick a

band I played in - all the Red Tide material (cassettes, EP and comp tracks).

AU: What sets Canadian Punk Rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

MP: I think, funnily enough - record distribution. Canada got the best of the (major label) Punk and New Wave records so we were able to act like a musical melting pot. You can hear that when you listen to all the early Canadian Punk records. Joy Division records were stocked in the big box stores. Accessibility is important.

AU: Best Canadian Punk band of all time?

MP: The Infamous Scientists. The Clash plus Gang of Four plus Elvis Costello plus Richard Hell and the Voidoids.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian Punk or Hardcore band?

MP: Although we all think they are huge - NoMeansNo. Sure Dave Grohl wears their T shirts but they should be millionaires.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian Punk band was?

MP: Hmmm... Murray Acton's first band.



AU: What was the first dangerous music you heard that made you feel rebellious?

MP: My first live shows in Victoria. My brother was in The Keys so my entry in the scene happened pretty early. It was all rebellious. It was all dangerous. To put it in perspective - I went to private school and was physically thrown out of chapel because I had... a skinny tie. It was ALL dangerous.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore.

MP: I was really a New Wave kid, as it turns out. Ha!!!



Pointed Sticks

Interview with vocalist Nick Jones

The Pointed Sticks were a west coast phenomenon that burned white hot during their short career from 1978-1981. Coming out of Vancouver, the Sticks created a unique legacy with their pop/rock/punk sound.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

NJ: Nick Jones, Singer of the Pointed Sticks 1978-1981 and 2006-present.

AU: Give us the history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore if you can.

NJ: All I can comment on is the early Vancouver punk rock scene, which was pretty Anglo centered, and ended in 1981 when hardcore started. All the girls left, along with most of the fun. And all the seminal bands from that scene (Us, the Dishrags, Subhumans, Modernettes, Young Canadians, Private School, U-J3RK5) had broken up by then. Except for DOA, who coined the term hardcore for their Hardcore 81 shows. Testosterone took over from innovation. Things got boring in a hurry.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk and what was the early scene like where you grew up?

NJ: I lived in England during the first bloom of punk rock, when I returned to Vancouver in 1978, a very small scene was just beginning, with D.O.A., the Dishrags, The Subhumans, and some great art rock bands like the Generators. It was more a collection of like minded weirdos than a scene... those who didn't quite fit with 70s Vancouver culture, where you were either a jock or a greaseball, both of whom hated anyone different with a passion. There were a lot of art students, gay people, broken home kids, anyone operating on the fringes was welcome to join. And risk being beaten up for being different.

AU: What early bands were most influential?

NJ: Those noted above, as well as the Furies and Tim Ray.

AU: Describe Pointed Sticks' sound if possible.

NJ: I would describe our sound as a synthesis of all we heard growing up as kids in the sixties, filtered through 1977 punk rock. Abba meets the Stooges. The Ramones meet the Beatles. The Buzzcocks meet the Stones. Something along those lines. And nowadays, it seems to have expanded to cover pretty much anything that takes our fancy. Some very odd new songs to come.

AU: What was the genesis of Pointed Sticks?

NJ: Bill and I were friends from childhood. I had been in England in 1977/78 and got to see so many of the seminal punk bands in their heyday. When I came back to Vancouver, a small scene was already building, with DOA, Dishrags, etc. Going along with the DIY, anyone can be in a band ethos, we started the PS, and things moved pretty quickly from there. Within four months

of our first gig, we had already won a Vancouver wide battle of the bands, recorded our first single, and generated a pretty decent following.

Right place, right time!

AU: Who else is currently in the band?

NJ: The other members are all original, although never in the band at the same time. Ian Tiles drums, Tony Bardach bass, Bill Napier-Hemy guitar, along with myself, this was the original four-piece. Gord Nicholl joined six months later on keyboards, right after Ian had left. So, everyone from 1978/79.

AU: What are some of your favourite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

NJ: I liked the Modern Minds from Edmonton a lot. Forgotten Rebels were good. 222's from Montreal. Was never much on the Toronto bands, they seemed to be kinda self important, and lacking a sense of humour, which was a prerequisite in Van.

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

NJ: Alice Cooper when I was 14. My mom wouldn't let me go to see the *Killer* tour. Last time I ever did what she said. RIP, Mom.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

NJ: Again, I can only speak to Vancouver 78-81, and it was definitely the self deprecating humour. No one was really out to smash the state, no matter what their jean jacket said. More just looking to have some interesting fun.

AU: Early Canadian venues that supported punk rock?

NJ: In Vancouver, there was the Quadra Club, a lesbian bar where we played our first gig, the Windmill, Smilin' Buddha... and lots of hall gigs. We even got to play the high end showrooms like the Cave and Commodore when we had established a draw. Touring the US west coast entailed a lot less driving than going across Canada, so we did much more of that in our three years. I do fondly remember the Riviera Rock Room in Edmonton though, booked by John Bell.

AU: Who is the best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

NJ: Well, it's DOA, and it's not even close, in my opinion. 43 years of unrelenting hard work.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

NJ: In Vancouver it was undeniably the Furies. People could argue over this question forever, but they would be splitting hairs.

AU: What made Pointed Sticks unique when you were first getting started?

NJ: We liked melody and harmony and wanted to play to girls instead of hyped up dudes. We took our musical cue from artists like the Buzzcocks and Elvis Costello more so than the Clash and Pistols. There were enough bands going down that road already.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

NJ: Famous Vancouver punk photographer Bev Davies told me that the first time she heard Green Day, she thought she was listening to an unreleased Pointed Sticks session. Not sure if it had much to do with us, but that pop punk sound we were playing in 1978 sure had a good run in the nineties...

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock.

NJ: Happy to be here. Happy to be anywhere, actually. We just finished recording two new songs last weekend. Coming soon on BandCamp.

AU: Is the band still active? What is on the horizon?

NJ: Absolutely. We've just finished recording two new songs, and we have a ton more to go. Below is our

manifesto for moving forward.

Hello to all following the band, and reading this. 16 months of isolation for us is about to end, and we find ourselves having written a whole bunch of new songs during that time! We've come up with what we think is a novel plan of how to deal with all of this material. But first, a little history.

As we've stated before, we are transistor radio kids. All raised in the Sixties on a steady diet of Top 40 music. Luckily for us, the charts then were populated by an incredible wealth of talent, ranging from perennial chart toppers like the Stones, Who, Kinks, and Fab 4, to amazing one hit wonders like the Count Five, the Crazy World of Arthur Brown, the Easybeats, and many, many others. Singles were the thing. LP's like *Gunfighter Ballads* by Marty Robbins, or *Whipped Cream and Other Delights* by the Tijuana Brass were for parents only. The bands we liked, their job was to come up with a new 45RPM every 6-8 weeks or so, and the creativity involved in doing so was off the charts. Truly a golden era.

Fast forward to 1978, and Punk Rock had just brought the 45 back into vogue again, after years of bloated triple albums by the likes of Yes and ELP. The Buzzcocks, the Damned, the Pistols, and the Clash were making singles hip once more, with their DIY ethos, incredible pic sleeve artwork, and take no prisoners attitude. And just like when we were kids, us punks were excited to receive a new offering every 8 weeks. This is what inspired

us to start our band, and our first and only goal at the time was to make our own 45's. So we did, and the three singles we made for Quintessence Records in 78/79 still stand as our most fully realized artistic statements. But record companies don't make any money off those little records with the big hole in the middle, and as the punk movement became assimilated into the mainstream, the 45 once again went the way of the Dodo bird.

Fast forward again to the present day, and the main platform for music now is the single song digital download. For whatever reason, people no longer seem to engage with an entire album's worth of music. Which got us to thinking. Why not try, in a modern way, to release our music in the same format that had captured us so completely twice before? And that is exactly what we are planning on doing with our new songs!



So, beginning next month, we'll be going into the studio every 6-8 weeks, and recording two songs for release as 45s on BandCamp, our chosen digital format because they recognize the value of the artist, and compensate fairly. We hope to be able to continue this concept for at least 18 months, depending on the response from the general public. These

"singles", (A and B side), will come complete with original downloadable artwork, and will be priced at \$3.49 each.

As for the songs themselves, we think they stand with the best work we've ever done. Lyrically somewhat existential, musically somewhat outside our normal box, but ultimately PS songs through and through, and reflective of all the influences we've absorbed throughout our lifetimes. The first of these "project 45s" should be available by mid to late August, followed at 8 week intervals by the next offering.

We're incredibly excited to get started on this, and July 24th is our first studio session! We'll also be returning to the stage soon, with our first gig in Vancouver to be announced soon, and we have plans to be back in Europe in 2022. Thanks to all of you for staying with us through thick and (a lot of!) thin, please enjoy our new 45s, and hopefully we will see you very soon!

Love from all the Pointed Sticks...

pointedsticks.bandcamp.com

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PHOTO CREDIT: Stephen Macklam

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GENETIC CONTROL

Interview with Mike Price (vocals)

Genetic Control is a Canadian hardcore punk band from Montreal. They existed from 1983 to 1985, and then reunited in 1998. Known for the comical disguises they wore on stage, the band established itself in an old apartment block which also served as a rehearsal space for local bands. It was dubbed the BBC (Bleury Beach Club), which gave birth to the 1980s Montreal hardcore scene.

AU: What was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

My name is Mike Price aka Mike Zabo/ Polio Elvis from the band Genetic Control.

I was a Punk Rock music promoter and band manager originally. I managed a local Montréal band called S.C.U.M. and promoted local shows. I was also involved in producing a fanzine called APB (All Points Bulletin). I interviewed the Ramones, UK Subs, Exploited, bands like that. It also featured local bands like S.C.U.M. and The Nils. That led to starting the band Genetic Control. We were only around for a few short years 1983-85. Unfortunately we broke up, but we managed to release a 45 entitled "First Impressions".

AU: What other bands have you been in?

I was in "Out of Step" before Genetic Control. And after I was in "Final Chapter" which later evolved into "DBC" aka "Dead Brain Cells".

Out of Step was a hardcore band that was influenced by the early American hardcore scene.

Genetic Control was an original sounding band. Our sound was a combination of many styles blended together including progressive influences. All the band members had different influences that contributed to our sound.

DBC was a very metal influenced band.

AU: How did Genetic Control originally form?

Genetic Control was the fusion of two bands. Like two chemicals, when they meet, both are transformed. One band "Out of Step" that I was in, with Rob Huppe on guitar and Doug Crevier on Bass. The other band was Drunken Disturbance, which was Rob Porter guitar, and Mike Brisebois drums. "DD" were looking for a singer, and I approached them telling them that I had a bass player and guitar player. We started jamming and put a setlist together quickly and were playing shows within a couple of months.

AU: What made Genetic Control different?

Well, other than the fact that we dressed like silly

idiots in crazy costumes, I think we were one of the fastest bands in Montreal. We loved to play as fast as possible. We also liked to use dynamics. We had very fast songs that usually contained slow parts that gave the music a chance to breathe, and offered the moshers a chance to catch their breath. The sum of those parts equal Genetic Control.

AU: Career highlights or lowlights to share?

Breaking my leg when we were playing our first show at the BBC was not exactly a highlight, but it stands out in my memory as I finished playing the show with a broken leg.

Playing with the Dead Kennedys was pretty cool, especially since we dressed up as Mötley Crüe, no one knew quite what to make of it. We looked like Mötley Crüe, except we were playing hardcore music. It must have been confusing for people.

Also playing with Black Flag at Canadian Music Week in Toronto was pretty cool, but the highlight had to be playing '77 Montréal in 2017 with Rancid and X.

AU: History of Canadian punk/hardcore?

I remember seeing bands like Teenage Head in the late '70s and early '80s at Le Club Montréal as well as Broadway Live, Hotel Nelson, the Pretzel and a few other now defunct venues. Bands that seemed to be leading the charge at the time were from Toronto. The Viletones were a great band, I saw them with a French band called Danger. There were also great Montréal bands like The 222's, one of my favourite bands.

AU: First introduction to punk?

New Wave bands like Buzzcocks, Gang of Four, The Stranglers, etc, which led to The Clash and Sex Pistols.

I moved to Florida for a while and saw the movie "The Decline of Western Civilization" and immediately decided to move back to Montréal to get more involved in the punk/hardcore scene.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk/hardcore bands?

As a band we used to listen to Subhumans, Personality Crisis, SNFU, Teenage Head, 222s, and D.O.A. of course. In fact, the reason I wanted to play in a band in the first place, was when I booked D.O.A. with the Dead Kennedys at the Spectrum. As soon as D.O.A. hit the stage I decided right then and there that I wanted to start a band. And within weeks I was in a band with Rob and Doug who were playing with Alex Soria from The Nils on Drums, but had no singer. I think Hardcore '81 by D.O.A. is the most

influential Canadian Punk album, followed by Creatures For Awhile by Personality Crisis. Classic albums that are still incredible to this day.

AU: First dangerous music you heard?

The Sex Pistols definitely. I loved the danger they represented. I still get that same feeling every time I hear the guitar leap out of the speakers.

AU: What sets Canadian bands apart?

I am not sure that Canadian bands have their own sound or identity to be honest. I think most of the time we get heaped in with American bands, but D.O.A. and Personality Crisis definitely had a unique sound that was adopted by many bands all over the world. D.O.A. were one of the first bands out there touring, and really put hardcore on the map. Joey Shithead had a book of all the venues and promoters across the USA and shared it with every band that wanted it. That book became the bible that bands like Dead Kennedys and Black Flag used to break their careers. D.O.A. are really the Godfathers of Canadian Punk Rock. No Canadian band has done more than D.O.A. to shape the sound of Canadian Punk Rock.

AU: Early venues that supported punk?

Toronto had Crash 'n' Burn, Larry's Hideaway, Horseshoe Tavern etc. Winnipeg had the Pyramid. Ottawa had Barrymore's. The first original punk invasion in the late '70s and early '80s bands primarily played night clubs, but with Hardcore, all-ages shows in halls were more common.

AU: Any other Canadian bands of note?

We can't discount bands from the mid to late '80s like the Doughboys who were one of the most successful Canadian bands in my opinion. Also The Nils were a great band that had some level of success outside of Montréal.

AU: Best Canadian punk or hardcore band?

It's complicated, because Canadian punk rock and hardcore bands exist in a parallel universe to the mainstream music industry. You would be surprised how many people do not realize how many great bands are Canadian.

If I had to pick just one Canadian Punk Band it would undoubtedly be Teenage Head. Their contribution to the genre is undeniable. They were not only one of the first Canadian Punk Bands, but one of the most popular. They had classic songs and a great attitude. Unfortunately like so many other Canadian bands, their careers were met with the Canadian Curse. I am not sure that I can explain the curse, but the facts are clearly written on the wall. Canadian bands have to work so much harder than our American counterparts for example. Being a small country, population wise, cracking the US market is a difficult task in any genre. With Punk Rock and Hardcore it was even harder as we didn't have access to mainstream media. Bands had to play south of the border to get noticed. They had to tour relentlessly. Another part of the curse was Canadian bands not going across the border enough or not at all.

As for the best Canadian Hardcore band, it would have to be D.O.A., as they crossed the border regularly with great success and played with almost every American Hardcore band. They were very much in the same league and could hold their own with any of them.

AU: Most underappreciated Canadian band?

The 222's from Montreal. They were one of the earliest Montreal punk bands as well. Their songs were great and they were an excellent live band. They should have gone places, but back to the Canadian Curse!

The most underrated Canadian Hardcore band is Personality Crisis. They were probably one of the best bands musically and had some of the best musicians in the country. They really should have had more success, but the curse once again rears its ugly head and takes down another Canadian band before their time.

AU: Who were the first Canadian punk band?

The Diodes were the first Canadian punk band as far as I know, but they may have started close to the same time as Teenage Head and the Viletones. The Diodes were also the first Canadian Punk band to get a major record deal. It seems to me that Toronto led the punk rock charge in the mid seventies and opened the first official punk venue in Canada called the Crash 'n' Burn.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

I guess some young bands out there could have been influenced by Genetic Control. We had a

unique sound and we're told that we didn't sound like other bands or that we sounded American.



AU: What's the craziest thing you've ever seen on stage during one of your shows?

Three S&M Nuns in latex habits and giant dildos making out with me covered in whipped cream. That was when we played the 15th Anniversary of Fofounnes with the Misfits. The best was watching our guitar player give birth to a Mohawked Fetus that looked like Wattie from the Exploited.

AU: Is the band still active?

I am not sure if active is the correct adjective. However we do seem to play every few years. We have discussed doing some recording and releasing some unreleased recordings and videos.

AU: Anything else to promote?

Yes, we have records available through Return To Analog Records. They have re-released our original 45 single "First Impressions" from 1984, as well as a box set that includes the single and unreleased songs from that recording session.

AU: Final thought on Canadian punk/hardcore.

The Montreal scene during the late seventies to mid eighties was like a dirty little secret and people were not seemingly known to kiss & tell, which kept most of the music and the scene very underground and incestuous. Perhaps it was the language barrier or the fact Toronto and Vancouver seemed to get all the attention and glory, but perhaps living in the dark shadow cast by their success was the magic that created the Montreal sound. We were like our own musical microclimate. And what happened in Montreal stayed in Montreal for the most part. I would like to acknowledge some bands that I worked with and played with from 1981 - 1985. These bands were all key players in creating and defining the Montreal hardcore scene... The Asexuals, Fair Warning, No Policy, Unruled, Vomit & The Zits, My Dog Popper, The Absurds, and The Nils were all instrumental in shaping the punk rock landscape.

I also enjoyed seeing bands from other parts of the country playing, and it was great to share music and exchange culture and politics from



a different perspective. Bands like Direct Action from Toronto were one of my favourite bands, along with Youth Youth Youth, Dead End, and the Young Lions. All great bands in their own right.

In retrospect the punk rock scene initially only lasted a few short years from 1976 to 1981, and hardcore respectfully from 1981 to 1985.

Then things once gain started to change and evolve like cells dividing and mutating. Now the new sound was metal influenced. I left Genetic Control with the intention to start playing this new metal influenced sound that was a hardcore hybrid some referred to as crossover music. This new movement was a cross pollination of all the genres combined. It is fascinating that 40 years later there are still new punk bands and kids discovering punk for the first time. It is incredible to think that some kids listening to punk music today are discovering Genetic Control. It has come full circle and makes me realize that we had an impact and influence. While we never went on to great success, we did in our own way contribute to part of the Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene and if kids out there enjoy it and appreciate it, it makes it all worth while.

returntoanalogrecords.com/collections/genetic-control

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www.77montreal.com



The Modernettes

Interview with bassist Mary Jo Kopechne

The Modernettes were formed in 1979. John Armstrong, aka Buck Cherry, and Mary Armstrong, aka Mary-Jo Kopechne, along with drummer John McAdams formed the "classic" three-piece. They released the landmark "Teen City" 12-inch EP in 1980, and made a video for lead-off track Barbra. They would split up, then reform, and release two more 12-inch EPs before dissolving in late 1983.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Mary: I go by Mary but I've had more than a few stage names throughout the Decades. I've been Scary Mary, Mary Cherry, Mary Celeste, but most people remember me in the Punk Scene as Mary Jo Kopechne, the bass player for the power pop punk band the Modernettes.

AU: Describe the Modernettes sound if possible.

M: Well we're the volume of a jet plane taking off so we were a loud power pop punk band. We melted peoples' faces off. Originally a three piece

so volume on 11. Our best known song, "Barbra," never sounded out of place on the radio, but our hardest core song was "Suicide Club." We weren't DOA, we weren't the Pointed Sticks, we weren't the Subhumans, we were the Modernettes.

AU: What was the genesis of the band?

M: The bass player of course. Desperation. In the early 80s it was just plain bad for the arts in Vancouver. Nowhere to live, nowhere to sleep, nothing to eat. We were the teen city that we couldn't find anywhere else.

AU: Who else was in the band with you and what would it say on their dating profiles?

M: I was married to the guitarist/singer John Uber Armstrong (formerly Buck Cherry until he sold the rights to the name to the band Buck Cherry) so I wouldn't recommend that one. John McAdams the drummer I dressed up with a tinfoil crown hat and took off his hippy jeans and replaced them with a pair of second skin tights and got him really drunk and sent him screaming down 4th Avenue one night.

Dating for Jughead, well when we played at the Fab Mab in San Francisco he was approached by a girl that he thought was quite taken him. Well it's our turn to play and Buck and I are onstage looking DUMB without a drummer and we are calling for him through the mics. It all ended up good except Jughead ended up going home with this lady of the night and in the morning we got a ransom note from this girl's pimp for his safe return from Dirk Dirksen. We slept in the alley in our tour buggy as no one but Jughead could drive. So dating, ummmm nope.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first getting started?

M: Eight Strings Rule! We were flat broke and had no money for strings so my G String was gone, Buck Cherry's high E was gone. So it was 8 strings rule. There was a unique situation in that I was one of the only girls playing in a band of boys. I was often derided by other girl bands saying that I cheated by playing with boys.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

M: "Teen City," our first EP was recorded at Little Mountain Sound with Bob Rock and recently we met again at Brian Adams studio for a session recording with American punk band The Dils. Got invited on a spot with Wayne Cox on the Vancouver show and was labelled Canada's most popular band at the time. Did and interview and two live songs. When I was asked about my name Mary Jo Kopechne and answered that my Swimming instructor gave me the name you could hear the laughter all the way to Grouse Mountain. People used to get together and watch these shows, they were major events.

AU: Brief history of Canadian Punk and Hardcore.

M: Oh Canadian. The first Canadian Hardcore Punk Band for me was Victorian Pork, and the Subhumans. But in the end it was all happening down at the Smilin' Buddha where we were the house band.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk?

M: I grew up in East Vancouver and was homeless by 13 years old. I went to a house party at a friend's place and Victorian Pork were playing, my first exposure to punk. After the party they took me away to Snob Hill where they rehearsed and kept me as their in-house on demand Go-Go Dancer.

AU: Earliest bands that were the most influential?

M: Slade, Iggy Stooze, Stones, Beatles, Undertones, Buzzcocks, Sex Pistols, Television.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk rock bands?

M: Art Bergmann, DOA, Subhumans, Rabid, 54/40, Victorian Pork.

AU: What makes Canadian punk bands unique?

M: I really didn't think they were unique but they had a wonderful amateur quality and spirit.

AU: Early venues that supported punk?

M: The Buddha, Windmill, Gary Taylor's Rock Room, all the Halls for the kids, Commodore Ballroom.

AU: What does the future hold for Punk in Canada?

M: It seems like there's a resurgence of the old bands coming back.

AU: Are The Modernettes still active?

M: The band tours without me and still uses me as ticket bait, using my photographs as advertising. Calls themselves the New Modernettes so John Uber Armstrong doesn't have to pay us anything. None of us were paid royalties. I worked hard in The Modernettes, played every day and never got paid. To this day I am still owed money for Modernettes royalties.

AU: That totally sucks. Anything else you would like to promote?

M: Yeah, like many musicians and songwriters in those days, I never saw a penny for 10 years of playing with The Modernettes. So recently I've opened a Redbubble store featuring designs from bands I was in, and various other bands from the Punk era will be featured. Redbubble is a fulfillment company that prints digital images on everything from bathmats to T-shirts. One recent design features an original David Cran design with me dancing to the Young Canadians "Let's Go To Fuckin' Hawaii." Another is me in Japan from a magazine article. So yes I make a couple of bucks every time someone buys something from Memoryvault on Redbubble and I really appreciate it.

Photo Credit: Bev Davies

redbubble.com/people/Memoryvault



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Rick Megatron

The Commodes / JerK Ward

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

RM: Let me begin by saying I'm going to talk about 1981. My name is Rick Megatron (that was my punk name, but I never told anyone). I was an innocent bystander in the early development of Sidney/Victoria B.C.'s punk and hardcore rock scene starting in 1980. That's right Sidney did have a strong punk scene. I remember in 1980 I entered high school and observed a grade 12 woman wearing a yellow Devo suit. The same woman would wear T-shirts with The Dishrags felt pinned on them. I'm sure this is the same person that tagged the back of the school "Dishrags Rule." I had never heard of the Dishrags but later found out they were from Central Saanich, had moved to Vancouver, and made records. They even played live in Victoria a few times. Needless to say their record and a handful of like records were purchased that year. A small group of Sidney skids passed these records around feverishly. Stephen McBean was one of those skids (his mom even threw out a pile of those records in distaste to try to keep her son from becoming punk. It

didn't work but that's a whole other story).

To my knowledge there was a band called the Slivers in the late 70s and they were probably the first Sidney punk band. Later I formed a band called the Commodes and throughout our two year existence we played two live shows. During this time my little brother Randy, Stephen McBean and John London formed JerK Ward, Sidney's first hardcore band. This was Sidney's Premier League hardcore punk band. That was the band to watch, not the Commodes.

AU: Describe The Commodes sound if possible.

RM: We were trying to achieve a New Wave sound. It was mostly noise, just horrible. We somehow figured out how to play Blondie's "One Way or Another" and "Smoke on the Water". The rest was just 1,2,3 timed noise. It is really hard to listen to the existing recordings of The Commodes. I no doubt consider us the worst new wave band of that whole era. We really needed an electric organ section.

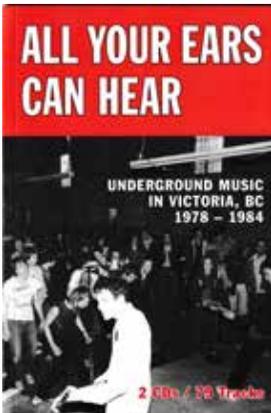
AU: Who else was in the band with you?

RM: Pete J played bass, he grew up and became a counsellor for troubled youth. Dan Horse was an older true New Wave guy and sang for us in the beginning. We found Geoff TT as our drummer but he was still in elementary school when he joined. Jayson K was really the front man of the whole operation and had the hair clippers to cut our hair right off and give us the look. Jayson became a hairdresser.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

RM: In 1983 we arranged a live lunchtime punk show at our highschool in Sidney. JerK Ward was supposed to play but didn't. The Commodes played with drummer Trevor who had only joined the day before... Our set pretty much half cleared out the full house. Then we had the super group Velox Strepitus finish the show to a remaining crowd of garbage throwers. It would have been an amazing show if there were more punks in the audience.

AU: First introduction to Canadian punk and



hardcore?

RM: July 1st, 1981 if I have the date right. I headed down to an all-ages punk show. The opening band was the Twisted Minds, they did Sex Pistol songs so we could sing along. Then the Infamous Scientists, they were the true pop punk band in Victoria and later members went on to be NOmeansNo. Then to our unexpected surprise a band for Minneapolis took to the stage and played a hardcore 20 minute set, it was Hüsker Dü. The evening closed with the Subhumans from Vancouver, the last song sung was, "We don't care what you say, Fuck You!" I was hooked.

AU: Give us a brief history of Victoria punk rock and hardcore community.

RM: It was great. I had reconnected with my elementary school friends and all the Saturday afternoon hangouts downtown. Their scene was mega cool and deserves a record all of its own. The New Wave Cave was a garage in Saanich that gave birth to some awesome bands and one legendary show. These bands were together for only an instant but they really were punk. Bands like The Do-WoPs, The Nevar, Velox Strepitus, Distortion and the Nematodes, Twisted Minds, and the NeOs. Downtown Vic had bands like Suburban Menace, Noise Generation, Ad Lib, Sludge Confrontations, and Fake Dogs.

Langford/ Sooke had Censored Chaos, Divine Right, Da Jeep, Nuclear Errors, HOC and most of all RED TIDE!!! RED TIDE was and is my favorite.

There were so many other bands happening in Victoria, many different clicks. It was and is a great family to belong to. The DIY ethics is really what it's all about, it's great. You can read about it and listen to all these bands in the *All Your Ears Can Hear* book and CD.

AU: Tell us more about the book and compilation.

RM: *All Your Ears Can Hear* is a book that contains two CDs of music covering 48 bands all from Victoria from 1978-1984. It took us over six years to compile six years of Victoria Music History. It was a fun project and the release party was like a big family reunion. We dug deep and got 95% of what we wanted. Every city should have a book like this. You can still get it at Supreme Echo

records in Victoria.

AU: Early bands that were influential?

RM: Elton John, and The Cockney Rejects. But most of all I would have to say The NeOs.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

RM: D.O.A. *Hardcore 81*, Subhumans *Incorrect Thoughts*, Personality Crisis *Creatures For Awhile*, Dayglo Abortions *Out of the Womb* and for good measure a little Teenage Head... the band Teenage Head

AU: Who was the very first Canadian punk band?

RM: Let's face it, D.O.A. and all their early incarnations really spread punk rock all over the continent. They played Victoria in 1978.

AU: Best Canadian Skate Punk bands?

RM: Skateboarding in the early 80's was fun... Riot .303, RSG "Ripp Shredd Grind", Eat Shit (Calgary early eighties had the good skate punk), FRO "Fuck Right Off" (Saanich Skatewave rock 1980) but if we fast forward a little there was a band called S.T.R.E.E.T.S. (Skateboarding Totally Rules Everything Else Totally Sucks).

AU: Been in any other bands?

RM: I had the fortune to sing in JerK Ward for their reunion tour. My little brother was the original singer but is no longer with us...

AU: Craziest thing you've ever witnessed at a live show featuring a Canadian punk/hardcore band?

RM: I have to say when Black Flag played in 1982 1983 and 1985... it was seriously next level insane. Wait... that's not a Canadian Band... sorry.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock.

RM: Punk rock helped me have my mind open to all kinds of music. Reggae, Metal, Oi, Rock-A-Billy, Ska, Jazz, Country and Western. There is so much energy to discover that is not played on mainstream radio. Now run down and buy an old Ornette Coleman LP and turn that crazy up! supremeecho.bigcartel.com/product/all-your-ears-can-hear



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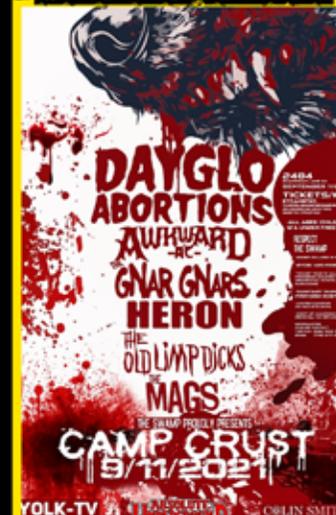


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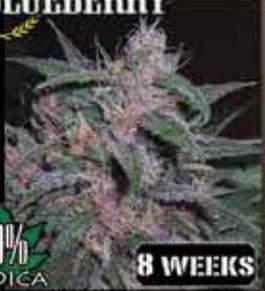
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Asexuals / Doughboys

Interview with frontman John Kastner

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

John Kastner: This is John from the Asexuals, and the Dough Boys. I'm most famous and infamous for having two kids, Blues and Summer Kassar.

AU: What else is on your musical resume?

JK: The Asexuals, Doughboys, All Systems Go!, then I made a solo record. I played with Mark Lanegan for a little bit. There was a Men Without Hats stint in there. I wrote lots of songs with different people like Evan Dando from the Lemonheads.

AU: What was it like at the beginning of punk around Montreal?

JK: Well, we came from the West Island, which is kind of the suburbs. So once we started to play we did our own shows, at little halls in the West Island. And then we started to go downtown, we'd play at The Cargo, but Montreal only had like two places to play. So once you played The Cargo and Station 10, then if you wanted to play you had to get out of town. So that's why we ended up going on tour so fast and so much.

AU: How would you describe the sound of the Asexuals in comparison to the Doughboys?

JK: Asexuals is a little faster, Doughboys is a little more melodic. I would say the speed would have been the only thing. Asexuals has a little bit more hardcore speed and Doughboys is more kind of punk rock speed.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore?

JK: The best three scenes in the country were Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. Vancouver always had a strong punk scene that turned into

hardcore. Toronto had an early punk scene that turned into art crap stuff with the Queen Street art scene. Then Montreal, we were never as big but it always had a good punk and hardcore scene. All three cities basically, for better or for worse, put punk rock on the map in Canada.

AU: Most influential early Canadian punk bands?

JK: Definitely Teenage Head. Also D.O.A., Forgotten Rebels, Pointed Sticks, The 222s.

AU: What sets Canadian punk bands apart from others?

JK: Other than maybe a slight Western Canadian accent, I would say nothing really.

AU: Best Canadian punk/hardcore band?

JK: Teenage Head would be the best punk, and DOA would be the best hardcore.

AU: Most underappreciated Canadian punk band?

JK: Teenage Head.

AU: Who was the very first Canadian punk band?

JK: Would it not be Teenage Head also? Teenage Head to this day are one of my all time favorite bands. The first two records are mainstays with me that will never go away.



AU: What made your bands unique?

JK: Most bands back then didn't really tour outside of their own city. Where with us, we got up and went real fast. It would be hard to find some of these classic punk and hardcore bands that we're talking about that toured Canada, America, and Europe as much as we did. I mean, we started going on tour in the States when I was 15. And we played down there a lot, we'd do 30, 40, 50 shows in a row. I don't think there's anybody else that would do anywhere near that amount other than SNFU and D.O.A. Honestly, D.O.A. and Black Flag helped pave the way, they

taught us how to do it.

AU: Which bands influenced you the most?

JK: There's two bands in particular for me that really changed everything. First was when I met Youth Brigade in like '82. When they first came to Montreal, we played with them and they taught us how to go do it. And then I met The Descendents in '87 when we came down with the Doughboys. Meeting those two bands really changed everything for me and showed me that you didn't have to sit around and wait for the phone to ring. Just get up and go do it yourself. Which is exactly what we did.

AU: Any of your bands played Punk Rock Bowling?

JK: We did with The Asexuals about 2-3 years ago and it was amazing. We played with D.O.A. It was sold out and super fun.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

JK: There are so many highs and lows from all the different eras. I feel lucky, I had a really good run. Currently we've been working on a big reissue coming out of our first Asexuals record with like a 25 page booklet. We will do the odd festival with The Asexuals and it's still the same four guys 40 years later.

AU: I noticed that you've done some movie and TV soundtracks.

JK: Yes, I started scoring a lot of film and television. Like the vampire movie with Iggy Pop in it called *Suck* was a soundtrack I worked on that they released on vinyl. I've done a whole bunch. I did one of the *Universal Soldiers* movies. I usually work together with a keyboard player, and I'll start with guitar or bass or weird sounds. There is no set way. I just kind of do it so that it makes sense with what I'm looking at.

AU: You were featured in SNFU's Mr. Chi Pig documentary. Got a Chi story to share?

JK: Chi man, he was just a great dude. We were so young when we met on tour. I think it was '84 or '85 and we met at a casino. I remember we were walking through and everyone was all dirty and tired from being in the van, half the guys didn't even have shoes on. The hotel had million dollars in cash on display under glass and I remember standing there with Chi all quiet just staring at a million dollars. That was a memory that never goes away. That was the first time I ever met him and it was all good times from there.

AU: First dangerous music you heard?

JK: My parents, as soon as they saw Kiss, they were like, "Is this okay for kids?" That was when I was 10 and by the time the Sex Pistols came along with Sid Vicious wearing a shirt with a swastika

on it, that definitely made my parents nervous but they were always very understanding and supportive.



AU: You must have started really early playing music.

JK: Yeah, I started playing music when I was 10 years old. When I was 14, I was playing shows downtown. By the time I was 15-16 we were touring in America.

AU: What did you think when you saw that art that Brian Welsby drew for our cover?



JK: I thought it was really cool. I mean, everyone in that picture I know. When I first saw it, it didn't have me on there and I was like, Oh, that's too bad I didn't make it. And then like a week or two later, I got it sent to me and they'd added me in there.

AU: Some people were saying certain bands were missed, like the Dayglo Abortions, Ripcordz, and Forgotten Rebels.

JK: Yeah whatever. The thing is that you're always going to leave somebody out. Somebody is always going to be disappointed no matter what you do in art, you know what I mean? So bottom line is he's a very talented artist and I think we did a great job and I'm super proud to be part of it.

AU: Anything else to mention?

JK: I own Cobraside which is a big vinyl distributor in America. I put vinyl records in all the record stores. I also own a management company called Black and Blue where I manage a lot of bands like The Replacements, The Lemonheads, Soft Kill, and Swervedriver.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk and hardcore.

JK: It's always been strong. There's always been a good strong scene. I think that it is distinctly different between the West and the East but both positive and both really good. I've always felt proud to be coming from the Canadian punk rock and hardcore scene. So, let's keep it up.

Colour Photo Credit: Linda Dawn Hammond

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Personality Crisis

Interview with frontman Mitch Funk

Photo Credit: Bev Davies

Formed in 1979 in Winnipeg, Personality Crisis (originally named Le Kille), played a complex and powerful form of 1980s punk.

Absolute Underground: What was your first exposure to Canadian punk rock?

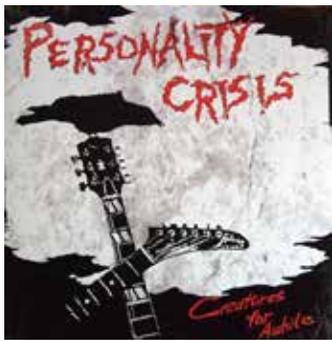
Mitch Funk: Wow, I don't even know how everybody came together. I saw Lowlife perform once. They put a single out called "Leaders," a four song 45 and then the singer just kind of disappeared.

AU: Describe Personality Crisis' sound.

MF: Thick, it's like a heavy slap shot, or a tank.

AU: What made Personality Crisis unique?

MF: We had heavier riffs. I love punk rock but we really liked Deep Purple and Black Sabbath. We weren't really trying to do anything they did but you know, something that was really heavy and played really fast. There was something new there even though it was coming from an old source, the blending of the two styles came out as



something almost completely different.

AU: It seemed like everyone was trying to play faster but Personality Crisis was slowing it down a bit, and you're known for a very deep baritone voice.

MF: Yeah, I mean it was still fucking fast but you don't want to override the riff, if you play it too fast it just sounds stupid.

AU: Who else was in the band with you?

MF: One of our members, Walter Kot, just passed away. He was our first rhythm guitar player and goes back to Le Kille. He's on some of the songs on the reissue put out by Sounds Escaping.

AU: What was the difference between Le Kille and Personality Crisis?

MF: Le Kille mostly sucked, none of us could play very well. We were young kids like "Hey, let's start a band." I played bass in that band mostly and then towards the end I sang. It was a bunch of us hooligans getting together, some people in the band were really obsessed with trying really hard and other people were just having fun. Enough people in the band kind of knew chords and then we just practiced like hell and got better.

AU: Who were some other early punk bands around Winnipeg?

MF: Let's see...There were The Nostrils, The Worst, Ruggedy Annes, Lowlife, Popular Mechanics, The Fuse, Discharge. They were an earlier Discharge, not the Discharge from Vancouver, or the one from England.

AU: Did you play any shows with the Stretch Marks?

MF: Oh yeah, the Stretch Marks and the Unwanted, I missed the obvious ones. Yeah, we played lots of shows with them. Our guys slept on their couch a lot so I owe them some gratitude.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian punk rock

and hardcore.

MF: Geez, I don't know. I wasn't in Toronto or Vancouver, they're the places that would have started it. But I think some college or art school kids started the first thing here in our town.

AU: Tell us about your artwork.

MF: Yeah, that's what I'm into now, just doing art. I haven't done a hell of a lot lately.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock apart?

MF: Oh, let's see. It's really well rehearsed and a good heavy meat and potatoes sound. There's a lot of differences in the bands. There's never really any kind of trend where everybody sounds like this band or that band.

AU: Any career highlights?

MF: A career highlight would be that people are still interested in us, it kind of surprises me. But once in a blue moon I listen to some of the music and let go of the critiques I used to have, it's pretty good stuff and it doesn't sound dated.

AU: Yes, your album, Creatures for Awhile, is quite iconic. What are some of the standout tracks?

MF: In Winnipeg people like "Double Take."

AU: Is Personality Crisis still active?

MF: Not at all. The CD is still for sale and Porterhouse Records just reissued 500 copies of the album again.

AU: Who was the very first Canadian punk band?

MF: The original one? Who knows... The Viletones probably, but Teenage Head was pretty early too. I mean, I think they were crossing the border and playing CBGB in like '77 and stuff. So I gotta say

Teenage Head, for the win! Do I win anything?

AU: How do people find you online to check out your artwork?

MF: It's funkmitch_ on Instagram.



AU: Do you remember when Youth Brigade from BYO Records toured across Canada? How did you get involved with them?

MF: I was in town when they were in Winnipeg and our song "Piss On You" is on their *Something To Believe In* compilation. It's all Canadian stuff mostly I think.

AU: What is your book review of the band's biography Personality Crisis: Warm Beer & Wild Times?

MF: Well, 75% of it is bullshit and the other 25% might be half truth.

I don't remember yelling at all these people and throwing people off stage or whatever. Maybe it happened, but I don't remember much about it. So I doubt it did. I'm not denying that it didn't happen, but I'm pretty sure it didn't happen. Or maybe I was super drunk that night. I don't know.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of punk rock reading this?

MF: Keep buying it and keep supporting it because someday it will go away if people don't.

porterhouserecords.com

punkbooks.com/personalitycrisis.html

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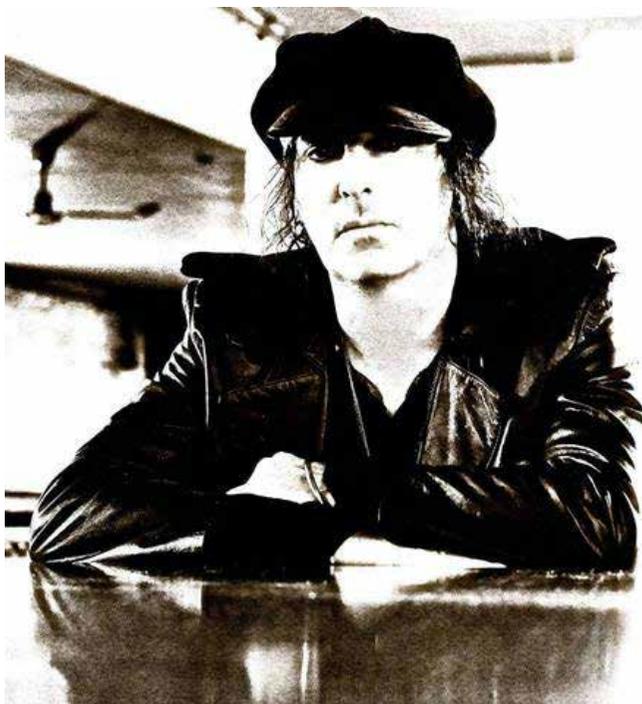


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Lowlife / Personality Crisis

Interview with Richard Duguay (bass & guitar)

Lowlife bassist Richard Duguay would later help start legendary Canadian punk band Personality Crisis and produce the debut EP for the Stretch Marks. Duguay also played guitar on Guns N' Roses' cover of The Damned's "New Rose" on their *Spaghetti Incident* LP.

Absolute Underground:
Who are we talking to and how were you involved



in the early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

RD: Hey there, I'm Richard Duguay. Founding member of the first Winnipeg punk rock band Lowlife. Later, a founding member of Personality Crisis.

AU: What was the genesis of Personality Crisis?

RD: PC came from the ashes of a psychedelic Winnipeg band called LeKille. Mark Halldorson and I (original Lowlife members) had joined LeKille in their last incarnation and we evolved into what's known as Personality Crisis.

AU: Describe Personality Crisis' sound if possible.

RD: A melting pot of 70's hard rock, punk rock & a fuck you attitude.

AU: Who else was in the band with you and what would it say on their dating profiles?

RD: Mach 1- Mitch Funk, Walter Kot, Jim Green, Mark Halldorson and I.

Mach 2- Mitch Funk, Walter Kot, Jim Green, Jon Card and I.

Mach 3- Mitch Funk, Walter Kot, Jim Green, Duane Eddy and Jon Card

Mach 4- Mitch Funk, Richard Duguay, Jim Green, Duane Eddy and Jon Card

We don't date.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk and hardcore? What was the early scene like where you

grew up?

RD: The Viletones - *Screaming Fist* EP. There was no scene. Haha.

AU: Early bands that were most influential?

RD: The usual suspects - The Stooges, The MC5, New York Dolls and later the British bands of 1976-77

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

RD: Anything that my Father hated was good enough for me.

AU: Any early punk venues to mention?

RD: Lowlife rented out various ethnic halls all over Winnipeg. That was the only option back then. Bars and clubs weren't at all interested. Also we were too young to get into clubs at the beginning.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first getting started?

RD: Really, it had all been done before we started. We were just carrying the torch as best we could.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

RD: Saving that for my biography... not really.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

RD: The only influence I care about is that we showed it could be done. In Lowlife we had no idea how to play. We learned in front of an audience. Trial by fire mostly.

AU: Craziest thing you've ever seen happen on stage?



Photo Credit: Doug Humiski

CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE

RD: It's in my book. hahaha

AU: Is the band still active?

RD: Lowlife broke up in 1979. HoZac Records out of Chicago re-released the Lowlife single a couple years ago. Personality Crisis broke up in 1984 Record labels continue to re-release the Personality Crisis record- *Creatures For Awhile*. It's just been re-released on Porterhouse Records

AU: How do people find your band online?

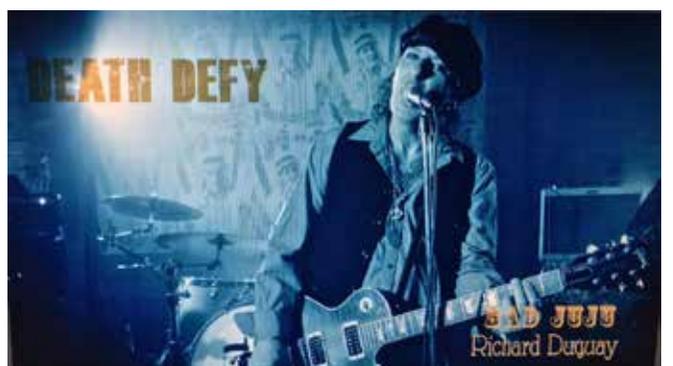
RD: There's a Facebook page for Personality Crisis. Other than that you're on your own. I love and have much respect for Personality Crisis and what we accomplished but... it's 37 years ago... I'm much more interested in what I'm doing now.

richard-duguay.myshopify.com

facebook.com/RichardDuguayRocks

hozacrecords.com/bands/lowlife

punkbooks.com/personalitycrisis.html





D.O.A.

40 Years of Hardcore '81

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your experience with the early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

JK: My name is Joe Keithley better known as Joey Shithead. I think you could say that I wrote the book on punk rock. So that's one way of putting it. Noted as coming up with the handle of hardcore, putting that name on the map with the album *Hardcore '81*. It was an expression that was loosely around at the time, but we put it on an album title and that brought it into the common language.

AU: Were you at the very first legendary punk show with The Furies and The Dishrags?

JK: I know that The Skulls played at the second show, which was at the Japanese Hall on Alexander Street in Vancouver. So I think I missed the first one. Then we met The Dishrags later in 1978, when we went over to Victoria.

AU: What was the difference between your first band The Skulls and D.O.A.?

JK: All different guys except for me, for one thing. The Skulls were a great band. We started in maybe July 1977. We only really did two or three shows in Vancouver and then I moved to Toronto in the winter of '77 and played like half a dozen shows in Toronto and then broke up. Simon Werner on guitar, Dimwit on drums, Wimpy on bass and myself on vocals. At first we didn't have many songs so we would play maybe seven songs off the first *Damned* album, a couple Iggy Pop covers and a Pistols tune maybe. Then we had like five or six originals that became either mainstays for D.O.A. or the Subhumans.

AU: Is the documentary *Bloodied but Unbowed* a good representation of early punk rock in Vancouver?

JK: Yeah, I'd say so. I think it covers a lot of angles. You have a good cross representation there, from D.O.A. to Art Bergmann. Pretty much everybody from the early scene is in there. So that was a good job done by Susanne Tabata.

AU: I keep hearing there was an East Coast/West Coast punk rock rivalry and was curious if things ever got heated?

JK: Yeah, well we didn't go quite as far as the owner of Death Row Records or anything like



that. When The Skulls moved out to Toronto some people we're really cool like The Ugly, which was a great early band from out there. Then The Viletones were really good apart from the singer guy. That was an odd thing, because he was sort of like, I'm using quotation marks with

my fingers, "the King" of Toronto punk. We were seen as upstarts and lumberjacks, right? Which was fine with me. So yeah, a bit of a rivalry there, me and Nazi Dog (Steven Leckie) got into it a few times you know, not a real punch up but some confrontations, he didn't end up doing so well. But that's another story.

Along with that we played Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto which is right in front of City Hall at an Anti-Racism thing and they got D.O.A. to headline it. We played with The Demics, a legendary London, Ontario band, and also Joe College & The Rulers. Anyways, but then there's a whole bunch of like, skinhead Nazi guys that came down and we got into it with them.

That's about the extent of that East Coast/West Coast rivalry. It wasn't really bad, I love Toronto, it's a great town. I love playing there and have lots of friends there.

AU: Who else was in the original lineup of D.O.A. and what would it say on their dating profiles?

JK: Randy Rampage was the bass player, Chuck Biscuits on drums, and myself were the original three and then later on by the early 1980s Dave Gregg. Their dating profiles, I guess the short synopsis of that was that Randy was very popular with the girls and Chuck would get pretty pissed off cause if he met a girl Randy would probably usually come in and try to scoop the girl. So it's kind of like the Johnny and Joey Ramone thing, right? So that never worked out very well in a band.

AU: What made D.O.A. unique when you were first getting started?

JK: I think it was that we took this approach that is really kind of revved up rock and roll with really political lyrics. I mean, not all totally political right away and never totally political on every album. But I think the thing is that we combined being fast and furious, being loud and obnoxious, being political, and being funny all at the same time.

Those are the four mainstays of every D.O.A. stage show and attitude and still remains thusly so.

AU: Career highlights?

JK: Well, if you want career highlights, you can buy my book called *I, Shithead: A Life in Punk*. But just briefly, maybe that first time we played in Milan in 1984 at the end of our first full European tour. It was unbelievable, 3000 people showed up to the show at Leoncavallo, the most famous squat in Europe. We were blown away. And going into Berlin the first time was an amazing experience. Going through East Germany through like Checkpoint Charlie. Then the gig turned into a giant riot, it was a unique first impression of Berlin.

AU: What set Vancouver's punk and hardcore scene apart?

JK: What set it apart is that we weren't London, New York, LA or Toronto where there was an established record industry. So you had to try harder, you had to be more innovative to make your mark in this world. I think that did a lot of good for D.O.A. and for the Vancouver scene. Talk to Jack Rabid from The Big Takeover and he said Vancouver was one of the best early scenes in the world. Vancouver used to be the biggest small town in the world. Because of that small town mentality we wanted to get out of that. So the way we did was we bought a van and we drove down to California.

AU: From the legends I can decipher it was Black Flag and D.O.A. racing all across the country playing shows. You could tell who got there first because half the kids in town would be wearing either D.O.A. or Black Flag shirts. Is that accurate?

JK: Yeah, that's pretty accurate and then the next time you got there the opening bands would either sound like D.O.A. or like Black Flag. It depends who got there first. Those two bands opened up all the touring for hardcore and punk rock across America and Canada and it just made a lasting impression with a lot of people in the early days. If you ask people who's the first punk band you saw the answer is usually either D.O.A. or Black Flag. We were

good buddies with them, probably played with them 15-18 times over the years.



AU: Any newer

Canadian punk or hardcore bands you like?

JK: I was pretty impressed with the Chain Whip. They're good.

AU: How you are celebrating the 40th anniversary of *Hardcore '81*?

JK: So for the first and only time, we're gonna play the album from start to finish in order, not excluding any material. It's all *Hardcore '81* plus



D.O.A.'s greatest hits. People are pretty enthused.

AU: And you're re-releasing the album?

JK: Yes, it's the original 14 tracks plus 3 bonus tracks on black or red vinyl. We also made a 12 page booklet that goes into every LP. Paddy Duddy, our drummer, did the graphic designer artwork, and I wrote a piece called D.O.A.'s History of Hardcore. I wrote that about the origins of hardcore, from our point of view. I really dug extensively and found a bunch of old photos that people have never seen before.

AU: Were there any Canadian bands that inspired you guys or was it the English and American bands mostly?

JK: Well, we'd heard The Furies and The Dishrags, so The Skulls were like Vancouver's third punk rock band in '77. They were great, I'd never seen a punk rock band before. For bands across Canada, Teenage Head got some play and some media and then The Diodes but that was more like new wave pop. But in those days new wave and punk rock were all in the same boat. There weren't enough of us to go like, "that doesn't sound like punk rock to me", everybody stuck together.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk band?

JK: Personality Crisis is one that pops into mind, they're reasonably well known within Canadian circles, but I don't think they're that well known outside of Canada. But Mitch Funk was a super dynamic singer and all the guys that played in the band were tight.

AU: Craziest thing you've ever seen during a live show?

JK: It might be one of the police riots in LA. The punks were a bit unruly but all of a sudden the police would show up and start beating everybody and start a riot. That happened at a couple shows, us and Black Flag, us and the DKs. That was complete mayhem, you'd have like 200 cops show up and start swinging billy clubs. Not a great thing, but pretty memorable.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore?

JK: I think Canadian punk rock can hold its head up high. For an underappreciated country it has produced some great bands. Ranging from the Subhumans, Personality Crisis, Forgotten Rebels, SNFU, Stretch Marks. People gotta realize D.O.A. were the ambassadors for Canada, people would be like "Wow, there's punk rock in Canada? I thought there was only snow, hockey and lumberjacks." There was this impression that there was a great wall of snow as soon as you hit the border. So people were quite surprised that you got this manic great punk rock coming out of Canada. I think Canadian punk fans and bands can hold their collective heads up pretty high.

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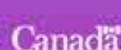
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Nomeansno

Interview with John Wright

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk Rock scene?

John Wright: This is John Wright from Nomeansno. We emerged into the punk rock scene in Victoria British Columbia around 1980. I am not a historian nor was I ever really a record collector. My older brother Rob though heard the Ramones in 1977 and was converted so to speak and began collecting all the new music that was coming out in those days. It wasn't until he convinced me to see DOA in 1979 at the University of Victoria that I became a huge fan of this new music. Vancouver already had a thriving scene developing. Around this time was the genesis of the Victoria punk rock scene with bands starting to sprout up. I remember at this time seeing a poster by my high school in Gordon Head for the Xenon X Band who of course later became the Dayglo Abortions. It wasn't however as though Victoria was suddenly populated with mohawk sporting safety pin stuck denim jacket wearing torn jeaned individuals but more like a bunch of white urban nerds enjoying music that seemingly no one else knew about. But as hall gigs and the DIY music scene grew we all started to get to know each other, Victoria is after all, a small town.

AU: What were some of the earliest bands that were the most influential?

JW: The Vancouver punk rock scene had a big influence on the Victoria scene although Victoria has always been somewhat disconnected from the rest of the world. Anything new was exciting but certainly the highlights from Vancouver would be DOA, the Subhumans, the Pointed Sticks, the Young Canadians, the Dishrags, in those early days. And I'm sure I'm forgetting lots here, there was a lot going on. Although certainly all the British first wave and second wave of alternative music was highly influential we were distinctly a West Coast punk rock influenced scene. I feel we all had more musically in common with western Canadian and American punk rock from California and the like more than what was happening on the east side of this continent. But Victoria was definitely more insular and had quite a diverse and quirky collection of bands. Pretty much anything that wasn't mainstream was part of the make up.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock and hardcore bands apart from other bands in the world?

JW: Perhaps not so much now but certainly Canadians have had a history of a somewhat diminished attitude towards Canadian art and music, looking abroad for greatness so to speak. This I think fosters a certain humility in Canadian

artists also deferring to their influences abroad. We don't always recognize the influence we have had on the rest of the world. I don't recall the word "hard-core" in reference to punk rock before DOA's *Hardcore 81* and is now a term that has defined in entire genre of music, a style of music that they, in many ways, created. They probably picked up the term somewhere but they put it on the map. And although punk rock was getting faster and faster, I also don't recall any band playing as fast as the Neos from Victoria when they first emerged and released their first EP, essentially the first truly hyper sped up "hard-core" form of punk rock. This influenced Jello Biafra and the Dead Kennedys who went on to popularize that form of punk rock that spawned this whole new genre and so many bands. On a side bar it was Jello's invitation to the Neos to come play with the Dead Kennedys in San Francisco that gave us the opportunity for our very first two shows in the States, playing with the Neos in Seattle and Portland. I also believe the Dayglo Abortions were the first truly "metal" punk band. At least, again, I was unaware of any band like them and yet so many bands like them afterwards. Perhaps my scope is limited and these points could be argued but it can't be argued that a lot of western Canadian punk rock the likes of which I have mentioned and also SNFU from Edmonton (not to mention ourselves) were big influences around the world.

AU: Who is the best Canadian punk band of all time?

JW: What I liked a lot about the early punk scene in Victoria was that it was about participation not competition. The commercial rock and jazz worlds were mired in a competitive mindset, and the egos that go with it, which inevitably boiled down to some technical and mostly boring prowess

usually resulting in wanking on ones chosen instrument as a benchmark of superiority. To paraphrase Scott Henderson, the pain of the universe is in his guitar. Yawn. There are a lot of great bands, OK bands, and crappy bands out there, no two people will ever agree on all of them. The world of music for me has never been confined to punk rock either. Strangeness and diversity always appeals to me and that could certainly be said about Victoria.

AU: What made Nomeansno unique when you were first getting started?

JW: I guess the most obvious thing was that my brother and I started Nomeansno with just bass and drums. We had no choice but to be different. Bass lines were repetitive to some degree and I had to just do more on

drums to be interesting. It also opened up a lot of room for the lyrics which have always remained at the forefront of no means no. Without guitars, song arrangements could be just about anything, and I could certainly employ my jazz drumming. I have always approached the drums as a musical instrument not simply a beatbox. When eventually Andy Kerr joined bringing guitar elements to the music it was really to augment what was already there and the bass still remained the lead instrument in some respects although songwriting began to fall into more standard three-piece rock 'n' roll arrangements. We tended to write songs rather than a style of music and with a lot of different musical influences sometimes those songs went in quite odd directions.

AU: Can you see your influence on any bands that followed?

JW: We were always respected by other musicians wherever we went for the most part. We showed our commitment to always try to put on a good show regardless of attendance or circumstance. Honest energy is the key. We rarely lacked it. It was what attracted me to punk rock in the first place.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

JW: Lots of great music, wonderful musicians and awesome fans!

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wendythirteen

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what's your involvement in the Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

wendythirteen: wendythirteen... multiple musician girlfriend, backdrop painter, logo painter, guitar carrier, gear mover, band booker, promoter, poster maker, venue runner, booze dispenser, band house, jam space provider, baby band stage, party maker, starting over expert...

AU: Give us a brief history of Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore if you can.

wendythirteen: I was late to the party musically... it all started for me as a teen with rebellious hair and fashion. I was a skid of the flatlands, hard rock and heavy metal life. A bunch of mix-tapes tweaked my tastes to run even heavier to death and grind and over to the punk side. My hair has always run a combo of skid do, mullet and Mohawk. I shudder to think of the neon I wore in the early 80s. Black is the best.

AU: What was the early scene like where you grew up?

wendythirteen: The prairies were always a couple years delayed. We were mostly skids.

AU: Earlier bands that were influential?

wendythirteen: 70s heavy rock...AC/DC, Sabbath, Maiden, Scorp, Priest, 80's new wave, D.O.A., Dayglos, Exploited, Bathory...

AU: Favourite Canadian punk/hardcore bands?

wendythirteen: Dayglos, DOA... SNFU I wasn't keen on until I got to know Chi and his evil genius. Only the ones that toured Regina was I exposed to. Not a big happy punk fan. I like shit growly.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart?

wendythirteen: They're hella gritty. I think the Canadian tour concept contributes to that.

AU: Newer Canadian punk or hardcore bands that continue to hold the torch high?

wendythirteen: Lots of amazing choices. I won't name names because I don't want to leave anyone out or type a list of hundreds. I love how involved gals are in the scene now. I love how the punk is heavy as fuck now too as it tickles my metal fancy.

CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE

AU: In your opinion who is the best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

wendythirteen: Dayglos hands down. Always the craziest gigs with frenzied punks AND METALHEADS. Not all punk bands can draw that mix. That's why they were always a Cobalt staple. Appeal to both genres which was the entire reason that bar existed. In the beginning I did mega mixed genre nights.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk or hardcore band?

wendythirteen: All of them.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

wendythirteen: Shit. Visibility wise I'll have to go with D.O.A. I always marveled that Joey Shithead's bobbling head was going to decapitate during his sets. Mesmerizing.

AU: Have you been in any bands?

wendythirteen: Nah. Just around. Was always teenage fantasy though. Ended up being a mom to the scene for a couple generations. I remain that.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk and hardcore.

wendythirteen: Burly as fuck.

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The Nils

Interview with Carlos Soria (Bass and Vocals)

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

Carlos Soria: You're talking to Carlos Soria from The Nils co-founder with my brother Alex. I guess what we're most famous for would be our first album that we put out on Profile Records in 1987, which is produced by Chris Spedding. We charted on the *Rolling Stone* top 10 US college charts two months after the album was put out. Which at the time was a pretty hard thing to do for an unknown band from Montreal.

AU: Are The Nils still an active band?

CS: Fully, yeah fully. We put out an album in 2015

called *Shadows and Ghosts*. We've just been going ever since we began. We've been jamming pretty much every Saturday for over 30 years. Which was the reason we started this band, we wanted to play music just for ourselves not to sell. I mean it'd be nice selling millions of records, but when you start out and you're just figuring it out, you're just playing it because you enjoy playing music, you know?

AU: Tell us more about being on Profile Records.

CS: It was the same label as Run-DMC,

they started a punk division and signed up all these bands like Cro-Mags, D.O.A., us, Discharge, Girlschool, Motörhead, and they put out like an album for each of these bands. It was a tax write off for the millions of dollars they were making from Run-DMC. But sure enough, our record was the one that did the best out of all of them. They didn't know what to do with us so they tied us up. Meanwhile, other labels wanted to sign us, and then they were expecting to sell the contract type of thing and that's what ruined us. So it was a double edged sword. We got a great record out of it, but it kind of hurt our career.

AU: What was your involvement in the early Canadian punk rock and hardcore scene?

CS: Well, when we started out we were more like old school punk, more power pop sort of thing. We were one of the first bands from Montreal to

do the type of music we play and we were there from the beginning. We were one of the youngest bands out of Montreal to hit and start playing. So we've always been known for being old school punks. When hardcore kicked over, everybody went hardcore, but we stuck to our guns and played the style of music we play. When the hardcore thing passed we were still relevant.

AU: Describe The Nils sound.

CS: Well, I always say it's kind of power pop, you know, punk rock n' roll. We grew up in the 60s and 70s so we had that influence. But definitely when punk rock came, the first wave, that's what we enjoyed the most. The Sex Pistols, The Clash, Stiff Little Finger, Rich Kids, bands like that.

AU: How young were you guys when you started the band?

CS: Alex was 13 when we started the band, I was 15. At the beginning we were figuring out what we were doing, so we weren't the most virtuoso. But the spirit, love and drive that we had for that kind of music drove us. It was after seeing bands live like The Clash in 1979, that really propelled us to want to start a band. When we saw that show and The Undertones were opening up, it was really like, we got to do this. We made a plan, my brother and I, to do this and that's pretty much what inspired us. And seeing the Pistols tour America was very exciting for us. You're watching that in your basement in Montreal on an American TV show, it was a pretty powerful thing when you were 15.

AU: Who else is in the band with you?

CS: I have Mark Donato, who used to play in Chino, and Flounge. He plays guitar and sings. I have Phil Psarakos, he plays guitar and sings. He's like a newer kid to the band. And we have a young drummer Emilien Catalano who also plays in the Moving Targets from Boston. And myself, I play the bass and sing.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first starting out?

CS: I think it was the sound because we were the only band aiming for that power pop sort of thing. That Stiff Little Fingers, Rich Kids, The Professionals type thing. At the time, everybody was like super hardcore. They would book

us on hardcore bills and of course, we were the standouts. I mean, we played that sort of aggressive music, but more pop oriented. It ruffled a few feathers among the hardcore kids. But I always maintain that we weren't hardcore band, we were a punk rock n' roll band.

AU: What was the early punk scene in Montreal like and what were some of the other bands playing around that time?

CS: The Asexuals, they were good friends, and you had S.C.U.M. These bands hit a bit of fame, but for the major ones you had No Policy, and Genetic Control. Voivod, they were more metal, but we did shows with them. Montreal didn't have a super big scene at that time. We all knew each other, it was fun and we all supported each other. Each band was different in a sense. So it was kind of exciting at the time. It wasn't like when Green Day and Nirvana hit. You would get flack if you were walking down the street in straight jeans or leather jacket and brothel creepers. It was still dangerous, it made you believe in it. It hadn't become super commercialized.

AU: Any career highlights to share?

CS: The highlights are the records, and the touring and the support from the fans. Still to this day, a lot of people really like The Nils, it's humbling. We kept going despite my brother passing away. It's nice that people still respect the music. It stands the test of time and is still relevant.

AU: How many records have you put out?

CS: Well we put out two full length albums, we put out two vinyl EPs when we were independent. We had a couple of songs on a BYO compilation and also a Montreal compilation. Then there was a Greatest Hits sort of thing, *Green Fields in Daylight*. We're getting ready to make a new one. We also

just did an NRBQ cover for one of the guys battling cancer.

So we played on this compilation with Keith Richards, Ben Harper, Bonnie Raitt, Los Lobos, The Minus 5, Deer Tick...and so that's kind of exciting.

AU: What sets Canadian bands apart from other bands?

CS: Touring in Canada is very hard because of the distances. So to be in a band that wants to be in this business you gotta be tough. Those long drives in the winter and cold, it makes you tighter as a unit to have to go through things like that.

AU: Who are your favorite Canadian punk/hardcore bands?

CS: I love Teenage Head, they have always been one of my favorite bands. I love The Viletones, D.O.A. is a great band, the Subhumans, there's too many to mention but I'd say Teenage Head is my favorite Canadian band.

AU: What were some of the early venues that supported punk rock across Canada?

CS: In Montreal, we have a very famous place called Les Foufounes Électriques. In Toronto, the Horseshoe Tavern, Larry's Hideaway, The Diamond. Every city as you're going out West had a couple main little clubs that you played, Vancouver had The Town Pump and the Commodore.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

CS: Well, there's an argument with the Toronto and Vancouver guys that Toronto had The Viletones and The Diodes, which were the first punk bands to put out records in Toronto. In Vancouver it's D.O.A. and Subhumans, they're all battling out that they were the first. And Teenage



Head is one of the first punk bands out of Toronto to put out a full length album. Later on, The Nils were one of the first bands to put out an album on an American label, we're talking 1987.

AU: Looking back now, can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

CS: We've been super name checked by everybody from Bob Mould to the Goo Goo Dolls to Superchunk to Green Day, all these bands claim us as influences. I hear it in certain bands, I hear it in

Green Day. People come up to me and say The Nils are like Nirvana 10 years ahead of time. You hear it in that power punk era. It's definitely there and we were doing it way back in the late 70s, early 80s.

AU: Have you done any festivals like Punk Rock Bowling?

CS: It's funny you should ask that, we've been asked a few times, but it never worked out. We're trying to do it, I just applied for next year. So hopefully we'll play there next year, which has always been a big dream of ours.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian Punk and Hardcore?

CS: The Canadian Punk/Hardcore era was a good time, really anybody could go up and do their thing. Canadian punk was different from American punk bands. People liked Canadian punk bands so it opened the door for us. It was a great time to come of age. I think we need more of that now, more of a young rebellion. It should go back to \$5 shows in some dingy room, that's what made it exciting at the time, and that's what we're lacking now. But yeah, it was a good time to be around, I miss those days.

AU: Did you see the artwork that Brian Walsby drew for our cover?

CS: Yeah, it's amazing. I'm really honored that he even included us and he drew a picture of me and my brother, which is really touching to me. It's those moments that get you by, like I didn't make a million dollars off this but when fans and people do that kind of stuff, it really warms my heart so it's really an honor to be included.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Rick McGinnis



SNFU

Interview with co-founder and guitarist Brent Belke

Photo Credit: Bev Davies

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best know for?

Brent Belke: My name is Brent Belke and I'm known for playing in SNFU for many years. After that, I've embarked on a journey of composing music for Film and TV.

AU: How did you first become interested in music?

BB: I always was interested in music. Marc and I had an older brother, Chris, so he was definitely an influence on what music we were getting into. I gravitated to the rock stuff like Kiss, Sweet, and Cheap Trick. Then the punk rock thing happened and that opened things up even more.

AU: What was your first exposure to punk rock?

BB: I remember hearing a news story on CBC Radio about Sid Vicious dying. I wasn't that interested or engaged. I just thought punk rock was horrible. Shortly thereafter, an older guy in the neighbourhood brought over a mixtape. That's the first time I heard the Sex Pistols. This is punk rock? I thought punk rock was horrible? But this is punk rock? This is awesome! I heard "Holiday In The Sun," and it just blew my mind. So that was it. I just started gravitating to punk rock and more punk rock and more punk rock and then suddenly it was just all punk rock.

AU: How did the dynamic between you and your twin brother Marc work when SNFU first started up? Did you feed off each other telepathically?

BB: Yeah, you know, we shared a bedroom and a record player. At some point Marc, probably more than me, was wanting to play guitar and be in a band. So we started a band with some friends. Then we decided the next logical thing is we have to get some instruments. So we all went out and bought our instruments. After we started jamming, it was just make it up as we went. That was our first band, we called the Dogmatics.

AU: How did you first meet SNFU's singer Ken Chinn aka Mr. Chi Pig?

BB: We knew him from the skateboard scene. He's a couple years older than us. This one summer there were all these skateboard contests. Ken and his brother were the best skaters in town. These guys just shredded. So we knew him from that. Then a couple of years later, Marc and I just ended up going to the same punk rock shows as Ken. We started talking to him and hanging out in high school. At some point we started a band.

AU: And you suddenly had one of the most energetic frontmen in Canadian punk history. I would say he got the most airtime.

BB: Yeah, he sure did. That's all from skating. All that kind of hotdoggy that you do skateboarding, he took a lot of that with him when he hit the stage. That intense fast energy.

AU: What was the early scene like when you were growing up in Edmonton?

BB: There were a few new wave/punk bands around. But when the hardcore thing came along we all started a band called Live Sex Shows, and that was basically the first hardcore band in the city. Live Sex Shows lasted like six months, then me, Marc and Chi started SNFU out of that band.

AU: What made SNFU unique at that time?

BB: We were faster, more aggressive, and probably crazier than the other bands. I remember one of our first shows we played at some house near the university. We were just bouncing off the

walls, we were pretty energetic. Talking about getting air and all that. We were just so excited to be playing. The energy and the speed. Actually we couldn't even get a gig at first, because people were scared of what was going to happen when we played. We couldn't get a show at any clubs, and the more established bands didn't want us to play with them. They'd heard about the hardcore slam dancing and they thought it was punk gone too far.

AU: What are some career highlights or lowlights to share?

BB: The first show that we really did at this hall called Spartans Men's Club. There was SNFU, Down Syndrome, and Bing Jesus. Three bands three bucks. The show was packed, it was a huge success and that basically started us playing shows. Then we got a better PA for the next show. We maybe started charging five bucks by the summer. From that one show, where it was the new hardcore thing, there was this whole new scene. All these younger, next generation of bands in Edmonton.

AU: What's the history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore?

BB: From my point of view, punk rock started in Toronto with Teenage Head. Then the Vancouver scene was fantastic. Being in Edmonton bands like Subhumans, D.O.A., and Pointed Sticks would come out and those bands were so great. From there I guess is when hardcore started. A lot of the earlier bands became more businesslike and started getting signed and became more mainstream. The hardcore scene, which started completely underground, was just kids all over the place doing their own thing, making their own fanzines, putting on their own shows. D.O.A. did all the groundwork for everybody. Then we came along and just followed their path and just kept going.

It was kind of weird how punk rock got big and then hardcore exploded. Then post-Nirvana things went really huge. When that happened suddenly there would be these festivals with 5000 people at them and stuff. Four years earlier, we're playing at a hall to 200 people.

AU: What sets Canadian punk and hardcore bands apart?

BB: When punk started, it was doing your own thing, being yourself, self expression and scaring the shit out of people. Then the rules started. After all there is the rules, right? I think the Canadian bands weren't afraid of breaking the rules as much. When the rules were established and you couldn't listen to Aerosmith or to Kiss but there was Canadian bands like The Unwanted from Winnipeg who got to be more metal and Beyond Possession in Calgary were super metal.

They weren't afraid to push things instead of sticking to the rules that had been established at that point. You can't do this, you can't do that, you and you have to look a certain way. Even when we started, some of the stuff on our first album like Grave Digger, there was a lot of people that were pissed off that were like "Oohhh SNFU is going metal". Whatever. Canadian bands we were like fuck it we'll just do what we want. Also just being isolated more, I think you just developed a little more of your own voice in it. There was no Canadian sound. There's a lot of great Canadian punk bands. But there's certainly a lot of different styles and voices coming in through these bands.

AU: How did you get involved scoring soundtracks for Film and Television?

BB: I left SNFU in '98 and it's like I've got to do something with my life. I met someone, who I'm still with now and she's a filmmaker. I remember noodling around on the piano and she's like, "That's kind of cool. That'd be good in a film." I thought, well I'm going to go back to school and study music more. I thought even if I don't proceed in a music career, I still love music. So it will still be put to use whenever I learned. I ended up going back to school for four years and figured out there was a lot more to music then I had realized. I wanted to get into the Film and TV thing. I've always loved film and I just thought why not give it a go? Actually, there was a documentary that this filmmaker was making and he wanted a couple SNFU songs. I said if

you want some other stuff for your film, let me know and he was like, "No, no, we got it all sorted out." Then a month later, he's like, "All these labels aren't getting back to us. Can you write a techno song? Can you write a whatever song?" I said "Sure." So every day, I'd just write a song, then ride my bike down to the editing room.

I thought, Oh this is cool. Just sitting in my little studio at home on my four track and writing music to put in the TV show and people will hear it. I really enjoy it.

AU: What would be on your musical resume as far as the soundtracks go? What movies or shows have you worked on?

BB: For the last year or so I've been doing some documentary stuff. I did a doc called *Martha* and one called *Ninth Floor* for the National Film Board. I did a TV show called *You Me Her* which is about a throuple. Two women and a man that live together in a multiamorous relationship. It is nice that I get to try to do a wide variety of music. I think it's a good thing.

AU: Do you think you would be in any other punk bands in the future?

BB: I don't know. I'm so busy doing music of my own. It's possible, but I haven't had my midlife crisis yet. That's when it's going to happen, right?

AU: What was your initial reaction when you heard that Mr. Chi Pig had passed away?

BB: When it happens it's a punch to the gut, right? Someone phoned me and said, "Chi's in the hospital." That wasn't the first time I got a call saying he's in the hospital and is going to die. I had a few calls like that. But I got a call and they said, "He's in the hospital, and he's not gonna make it for sure this time." I was just like, "Oh shit." and he passed that night. But of course, when it happens, you're just in shock and every few hours we were like, Holy fuck, it's happened and he's moved on.

AU: Have you seen the mural that they made for Chi in Edmonton?

BB: Oh, yeah. I saw the pictures of it. It's the whole side of a building. It's unbelievable, fantastic. There's a Chi mural here in Vancouver at The Cambie too. I drive by it all the time. It's great that people have fond and fantastic inspiring memories of him. What more can you ask, right? To be remembered in such a way. He left an impression and had such a profound effect on people.

AU: Looking back now, can you see SNFU's influence on any bands that followed?

BB: Well, I think so. Definitely when we started going down to LA and we played shows at Fender's, I think we influenced some of those bands like Offspring. I remember hearing an Offspring song somewhere and going, "That sounds like a SNFU song." I also think we influenced tons of bands throughout the prairies.

AU: What are some of your favorite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

BB: There's albums that I can put on at any given time, like the first The Adolescents album, *Machine*



Gun Etiquette by The Damned, Gang of Four *That's Entertainment*, I can listen to any time. The yellow Bad Brains album.

AU: Any favorite Canadian bands or albums?

BB: Well, Personality Crisis was a band that blew my mind. That was just like, this is the next logical progression of music. As far as the Canadian bands, yeah, ultimate favorite band.

AU: What do you remember about when the BYO Records guys from Youth Brigade, Shawn and Mark Stern, came through Canada on tour and swooped up a lot of Canadian bands onto their label for the compilation album *Something To Believe In*?

BB: We met them in '82 when they were doing that Another State of Mind tour, Youth Brigade and Social Distortion. They came to Edmonton and we hung out with them all night. They were just great guys and we just instantly got along. Youth Brigade came back again and SNFU played with them. So when they came back the third time in '83 and we toured through Western Canada. We got along with them and all the Winnipeg bands, the Stretch Marks and Personality Crisis. The Sterns instantly got along with all these Canadian bands, I don't know why, I guess it's because of their Canadian roots. They felt this kinship with all these Canadian bands and there was so many great Canadian bands at that time. They were doing things that were less derivative I think compared to the Exploited and Vice Squad and a lot of bands in California. So yeah, D.O.A. how about D.O.A.? I haven't said D.O.A. yet have I? You have to say D.O.A. a few times when you're talking about punk rock in Canada.

AU: What do you think of the Cannibal Cafe, where you can be the Special of the Day, in Vancouver with all the punk gig posters everywhere?

BB: I'll walk past it and it's like, Holy Fuck, it's The Cannibal Cafe! We wrote a song and now there is a restaurant called The Cannibal Cafe. It's kind of crazy, we wrote that song in 1983 and it still has some kind of effect on people.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk and hardcore.

BB: I'm glad that punk rock is still raging on and raging strong. That it's still going is kind of shocking because it seemed like it was just going to be a flash in the pan. So I'm glad that I got to be a part of this thing that's still going.

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CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE

making it happen. We would often pack up the cars and take off to Calgary to play a Saturday night, drive all day and night Sunday to get back home. Bands from Calgary and Edmonton would do the same.

AU: Early bands that were most influential?

Dik Savage: In 1979 a good friend of our drummer Kel bought an LP in the Kmart

sale bin and presented it as a bday present, so The Pack (German Band) became the biggest inspiration to us and we covered a few of their songs such as "Looking for Danger".

Bill Stretch: Also Ramones, Sex Pistols, and Black Flag.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk bands?

Bill Stretch: We supported each other, bands from Calgary like RIOT 303, and Edmonton's SNFU. There was more too and we would always setup gigs and we would all play.

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

Bill Stretch: The Pack... in 1979.

AU: What sets Canadian bands apart from others in the world?

Dik Savage: Work ethic and determination... In the early scene there was no internet and long distance calls were \$1.00 a minute. I also think the mileage between the big cities and our winters, if you wanted to play you needed to travel (not by air canada) get in the van and go.

AU: Early venues that supported punk across Canada?

Bill Stretch: In Winnipeg there was the Stretch Pad, Dog House, The Spectrum, and House of Beep amongst others. Calgary had The Manor with the half-pipe in the back yard. HC'S was a great place to play in Calgary. When in Calgary you feared for your life but that always meant a good show.

AU: Any newer Canadian bands you like?

Dik Savage: I am still old school.

AU: Who is the best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

Bill Stretch: There are many classics, so tough to answer. DOA holds a spot of honour but our good friends from SNFU take the cake (RIP Kenny).

Dik Savage: Always huge fans of PC, The Nostrils, The Unwanted, Riot 303/Beyond Possession, and the Stretchmarks.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk or hardcore band?

Bill Stretch: Personality Crisis. They could have been giants, seriously awesome band that just never got lucky.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

Bill Stretch: Teenage Head, Diodes, Paul Anka???

AU: Can you see your influence on any bands that followed?

Dik Savage: Some bands have covered our songs including Fat Mike's NOFX version of "Professional Punks", so that means we must have made a small impression on some folks.

AU: Is the band still active? What is on the horizon?

Bill Stretch: Last gig was 2010 at Punk Rock Bowling. We did release a remixed CD version of our catalog on the Sounds Escaping Label that we are quite proud of. A reunion show is a possibility in the future.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

Bill Stretch: Great scene, Great talent, Great people...Please and Thank-you.

soundsescaping.com

habanerosombrero.com



Stretch Marks

Interview with Bill Stretch and Dik Savage

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

It's Bill Stretch, Guitar and Dik Savage, Vocals from the Stretchmarks. We formed in 1980 in Winnipeg which had a vibrant scene back then.

AU: Describe the Stretch Marks sound if possible.

Bill Stretch: Hardcore thrash with stronger melodic aspects particularly in our later sound.

AU: How did Stretch Marks get started?

Dik Savage: Brothers Bill and Kel started as a two piece. We played a biker bar for one of our first gigs and they threw glass ashtrays at us. It gave us the motivation to keep going.

Bill Stretch: Dik was a longtime friend and the three of us moved into the defunct after hours Spud Club which became known as the Stretch Pad hosting many gigs and travelling bands in the early 80s. In search of a bass player we posted a pic at Long & McQuade of Dik jumping about 4 feet in the air while practising. Mark Stretchmark applied and the rest was history.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first getting started?

Bill Stretch: We played socially aware songs at a time when most kids didn't care much about the world. We also practiced wearing pedometers. We wanted to make sure our energy level was up to about 5km in preparation for intense live shows. We were influenced by the hardcore movement which set us apart from other bands.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

Dik Savage: Playing the Olympic Auditorium in LA with Circle Jerks and others at a massive Pearl Harbor gig with 6000 moshing punks... and being spit on... apparently a show of endearment!!

Bill Stretch: Touring with Channel 3 {HIGHLIGHT} sleeping wherever we could {Lowligh}

AU: I understand you guys were obsessed with wrestling?

Dik Savage: Our song "Turnbuckle Stomp" was inspired by many nights spent cheering on AWA wrestling (and Bill's broken leg after wrestling in the kitchen). We connected with Bob Mould in the early days as he was also into wrestling in a big way... Pile Drive-Drop Kick... Ding Ding. Late night wrestling always meant a trip to emergency.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

Bill Stretch: Too much to explore in answering a simple question but if you combine boredom, cold weather, isolation and teenage angst you can see why Canadian Punk was legendary. DOA, SNFU, RIOT 303.

AU: What was the early scene like where you grew up?

Bill Stretch: The Spud Club in Winnipeg transitioned from New Wave to Punk with seminal bands Lowlife, Le Kille and many other early pioneers. We didn't get a lot of touring bands so we created our own scene. Long winter nights, we put on our own shows, convinced other bands to play in Winnipeg, played house parties. We all contributed to



Photo Credit: Jason Payne



Bloodied But Unbowed

Interview with documentary filmmaker Susanne Tabata

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to, what are you best known for, and what was the last live gig you went to?

Susanne Tabata: I haven't seen a show in 18 months. The last one was The Black Halos at the Rickshaw in 2020. I'm Susanne Tabata. Known for creating films which tackle themes of belonging or alienation. West coast surfing history docs on surfing, skateboarding and punk. I'm pretty straight edged in terms of lifestyle and do a lot of volunteer work for the Japanese Canadian community of which I'm a part.

AU: What is the genesis for the idea to produce and direct the documentary, Bloodied But Unbowed, on the early Vancouver punk scene.

ST: Absolutely knew the story. Lived it and had just come off the women's skateboarding history film, where I won 100K to make the film from FuelTV in LA. The Dogtown crew had done the Z-Boyz film so well about the scene. I knew I could make the Vancouver film about the birth and death of a scene, as long as it was character driven. And that it was. There was a phenomenal record of the scene and I'd worked on a cable show that had a lot of that footage. Bev Davies photo show in 2006 at Carola's Gem Gallery. Modernettes and Pointed Sticks shows in early 2007. And the support from Randy Rampage from start to finish. The first scene here in Vancouver 77-81(2) is seminal in world punk circles. We were able to capture some of that homage in the PUNK TV series on EPIX executive produced by Iggy Pop.

With *Bloodied But Unbowed* we refer to the Interstate5 - I-5 highway running from Canada down to LA as the road travelled with all the bands. Vancouver had a particularly tight connection with San Francisco and that scene has yet to see its doc. Green Day has a great doc of their perspective but early San Fran with the Mabuhay Gardens is still needed.

AU: Bands featured in the film?

ST: More like characters featured in the film. DOA, Subhumans, Young Canadians, Pointed Sticks, Modernettes, Dishrags, UJ3RK5, E, Braineaters, Tim Ray, No Fun and photo montages of the rest.

AU: What other movie projects have you worked on? What made the subjects resonated with you?

ST: Directed and wrote *49 Degrees* and *Skategirl*. Everything is about alienation or belonging.

For *49 Degrees* it was a way of life that got threatened because money came looking for beauty. For *Skategirl* it was a comradeship against all odds.

AU: What bands did the TV series documentary called PUNK that you worked on feature?

ST: Randy died my first week on the job. He had already made comments on the creative and was pretty stoked I was working on the project. I co-wrote the series and part of my gig as the consulting producer was to recruit the cast. It was a big roster across the four episodes: MC5, Iggy Pop, The Stooges, New York Dolls, Ramones, Blondie, Suicide, Wayne County & the Electric Chairs, Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Damned, The Slits, The Selector, The Runaways, Agnostic Front, Bags, X, Bad Brains, Germs, Circle Jerk, Black Flag, Dead Kennedys, Avengers, Minor Threat, The Stimulators, Social Distortion, NOFX, The Fartz, Soundgarden, Bikini Kill, Sonic Youth, Queens of the Stone Age, Bad Religion, L7, The Offspring, Pennywise, Green Day... and DOA.

Non-musician cast was also amazing - Penelope Spheeris, Danny Fields and Legs McNeil, John Holmstrom, Bob Gruen, Don Letts, V Vale, Winston Smith, and Pam Hogg. They aren't bands but are part of storytelling.

AU: Did any Canadian bands make an appearance at all?

ST: DOA (Joe) made the cut and there was a DOA storyline. Gerry Hannah was interviewed and his interview didn't feature and Subhumans (Gerry Hannah) were interviewed and his interview got cut. Not my choice.

AU: You also produced a Barenaked Ladies documentary, any antics to share? I once saw them live and the singer ate a whole box of raw hard Kraft dinner noodles.

ST: The KD boxes did fly during the shows... they were just great live performers and good musicians. Good senses of humor as well. The film turned out great!

AU: Career highlights?

ST: *Bloodied But Unbowed* because it was personal and also a passion project.

AU: Give us a brief history of Canadian punk rock from your perspective if you can.

ST: I think you need to speak to different scenes rather than a complete history. With the large land mass of Canada, scenes have been concentrated in different areas of the country at different times.

My perspective is West Coast late 1970s - 77-82 to be exact. With a strong 79-81.

The Vancouver scene was connected to San Francisco. And not at all connected to Toronto. Ties ran up and down the coast. Seattle did not

have anything close to Vancouver at the time but it brewed for years. Duff McKagan has gone on record to talk about the flash of brilliance in Vancouver. The city was so small and under the radar of the recording industry so it got to percolate to perfection for a very short and brilliant time.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk rock?

ST: Some small shows in Legion halls, and cultural centres in Vancouver. And then vinyl.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk rock? What was the early scene like where you grew up?

ST: I'm old enough that punk started while I was living... for some of your readers, it might be new to think of Vancouver's early scene being influenced by the UK and not the US and that by the time the first scene had died a natural death, hardcore was at the doorstep. *Hardcore 81* signalled the time when bands who sounded the same started playing together. Pop, art, noise, experimental and hardcore had always played together prior to then. The early gigs had mixed shows.

And a lot of that incredible early fashion - rooted in anarchistic art forms - in the UK attributed to the core of Rhodes, Westwood, McLaren, Reid and others in the UK. In NYC the Pop Art scene with Velvet Underground, and Beat influences where Suicide and those guys were playing in basements in art co-op spaces.

But for us in the west coast, we were just small town kids. We ran the city at night. Lived in abandoned warehouses and just had the run of the town. Along with the gay scene here, that was the nightlife. Gay disco at the Luv-a-Fair was hugely interconnected to some punks in our scene.

AU: Earliest bands that were the most influential?

ST: Early Vancouver was definitely influenced by the UK and protopunk scene of New York. DOA has been a massive influence worldwide. Chuck & Randy as a definitive rhythm section. Flea mentioned Chuck, everyone talks about those two guys, and of course, Joe who has been steadfast throughout the entire past 40+ years. It's an amazing run. Tunnel Canary has become iconic and we didn't appreciate what they were doing. Pointed Sticks for sure. Subhumans should be more influential.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk band in your opinion?

ST: Coming off a big production like the *PUNK* series, where only DOA were featured, means that all Canadian bands are underappreciated. For the west coast, Bob Rock has gone on record to say the music was so good, the best at its time. Duff McKagan says the same thing about the range of quality.

Subhumans music is grossly underappreciated on a world scale and is so so good. Art Bergmann - the Young Canadians - is good but Art is appreciated. Payolas - loved them and Paul

Hyde is extremely underappreciated. Pointed Sticks music is also underappreciated. And both Pointed Sticks and Subhumans have enough of a catalogue. Dishrags... too short lived. But they influenced me. And so did The Modernettes



with the Buck and Mary's chemistry. I think a lot of your readers would say NoMeansNo is underappreciated.

AU: Difference between punk rock and hardcore in your opinion?

ST: There is punk rock and punk attitude. And the two can be different. Hardcore is punk. My era - late 70s/early 80s was influenced by the punk ethos that was about being your own boss, and DIY. And mostly thinking for yourself. That is what I take from 'punk' and hardcore is a musical backdrop to some of that.

AU: Were you ever in a band?

ST: No, I was a radio DJ at CITR UBC radio and also appeared in the seminal late 70s live late night music show - Nite Dreams - a precursor to MTV. I was a media person.

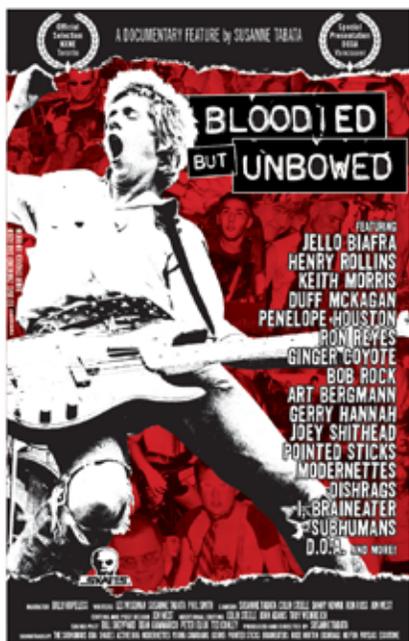
AU: What's your next project?

ST: Helping Scott Crawford out with his next project *Something Better Change*.

AU: Advice for aspiring doc filmmakers.

ST: Everyone will close the door on you at some point. Kick it down and grind it out. Always treat your subjects with respect. Earn their trust and don't betray it.

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The Dishrags

Interview with Jade Blade (guitar, vocals)
Absolute Underground: What was the genesis of The Dishrags?

Jade Blade: The Dishrags evolved out of a close friendship--Scout, Dale, and I all got to know one another as elementary school kids in Central Saanich (a rural community just north of Victoria on Vancouver Island) and the three of us became inseparable a few years later in junior high. One of the things that we bonded over was our love of music, and our taste in music was something that distinguished us (or maybe "isolated" is a better word...) from the other kids at school. Acts like David Bowie, Roxy Music, Lou Reed, T-Rex, etc. So then when we got into punk rock and started listening to and looking like the Ramones, Damned, Sex Pistols, etc., that was when we more thoroughly withdrew from the social scene at school and embraced being the misfits we were. Punk was truly transformative for us in that it was the first music we'd been exposed to that we not only loved and related to, but that we could actually envision playing ourselves. The DIY aspect of punk was a real game-changer in that it empowered fans like us to become bands, with attitude and energy being more important than expensive gear or instrumental finesse. So we acquired some instruments and just dove into it.

AU: What made The Dishrags unique when you were first getting started?

Jade Blade: There were a few ways in which we were unique. I guess the most obvious is that we were three girls in a band--this at a time when it was very rare to have women instrumentalists in rock bands. It is a huge understatement to say that rock music was male-dominated; even women singers, who are plentiful in pop, jazz, soul, etc., were relatively rare in the genre of guitar-driven rock music, and women instrumentalists were an even rarer breed.

And then we were also very young--I use the word "girls" deliberately to describe us, as we were 15 and 16 when we played our first big gig in Vancouver--so that set us apart from most other bands. We also started out not as a band, but as friends--so our ambition was not driven so much by a desire to "make it" as a band in terms of commercial success, but to have fun and live large as teenagers in a really exciting cultural moment.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

Jade Blade: There were plenty of both. Highlights

would certainly include getting to play with The Clash a couple of times, as well as the Ramones--so great to meet some of our musical heroes. We didn't tour much, but it was a thrill to play at the legendary Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco, and recording our first single in Seattle (for Modern Records) was a blast. And the Vancouver scene as a whole would qualify as a highlight: it was small enough that we really supported

and cared about one another--like some kind of weird extended family. We all made some lasting friendships with members of the punk scene, and I still feel a strong connection to other members of the scene. Plus, the talent in the Vancouver scene was truly remarkable as well as diverse--in addition to punk bands, there were a lot of artists, performers, and notable personalities of all stripes in the scene. Lowlights? Quite often we weren't taken very seriously because of our age/gender, and there was plenty of verbal abuse hurled at us from the non-punk members of the audience. Some bands wouldn't let us use their gear because they figured we were too incompetent; we were almost always the

opening act instead of the headliner; and it was a constant struggle to make ends meet.

AU: What do you remember about those first couple legendary shows you played with The Furies?

Jade Blade: We only played one show with The Furies, which was on July 30, 1977, at the Japanese Hall in Vancouver. That is said to have been the first punk show in Western Canada, but I've never done any homework on when things began back east--I am guessing that

there were earlier shows than ours. It's kind of funny how diverse our impressions of that first show are--I remember it as having quite a small audience of maybe 50-100 people, but others claim there were more like 300 people there. I really don't know who to trust on the details! I do remember being extremely nervous playing, and hitting some, well, interesting chords... I also remember my parents and aunt and uncle being there (essentially to chaperone). It was a pretty diverse audience as I recall--not just wet-behind-the-ears punk rockers, but assorted hippies of all ages, AV-club types, art school students, and curious onlookers who appeared to have wandered in by accident.



AU: What was the early punk scene like where you grew up?

Jade Blade: There was no scene where we grew up--that was why we needed to uproot and move to Vancouver! I was introduced to punk in two ways: I had an older cousin, Chris Arnett, who had always been a musical mentor to me. He introduced me to lots of glam artists, as well as Iggy Pop, the Velvet Underground and solo Lou Reed material that really primed me to be especially receptive to punk. And, importantly, he was the driving force behind The Furies (singer, guitar player, songwriter), which is how we got that first gig in Vancouver. We had gone to Vancouver to see Alice Cooper, who cancelled at the last minute, so we went to hear The Furies practice instead. Their manager dropped by and had heard that we had started a band and asked us to open for The Furies at that very first gig. The other way I was introduced to punk was via purchasing the first Ramones album before it was available in Canada. I was so excited when the needle hit the vinyl--it was unlike anything else I'd heard, and it really spoke to me. I loved the economical approach to everything: the brevity of the songs, the limited number of chords per song, the embrace of repetition (musically and lyrically), the minimal production, and the deceptively simple lyrics, yet each song was unique and exploding with musical energy and

great melodies.

AU: Did The Dishrags want to be like a female version of the Ramones?

Jade Blade: As noted above, yes--the Ramones were one of our earliest and most influential role models, although we also loved so many of the British bands: The Clash, Damned, Sex Pistols, and Buzzcocks being especially significant.

AU: What do you recall about opening for The Clash at the Commodore Ballroom?

Jade Blade: I remember being incredibly nervous, not just for the gig, but when meeting the band. But they were super cool guys, and really did their best to try to put us at ease--especially Joe Strummer, who was very friendly and supportive. It was the band's first North American show, and they spent some time in Vancouver just hanging out--they played soccer with some of the local punks, came to a gig at the Windmill (a small punk venue not too far from the Commodore), and did some partying. The highlight of the gig was when we played "London's Burning" for our encore and The Clash came and danced by the side of the stage where we could see them! Joe also dedicated the song to us when they played it that evening--another huge thrill.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk bands?

Jade Blade: I'm sure there are lots, but a couple of Vancouver bands fronted by Sid Sick come to mind--the Stiffs and Rabid. I don't think either band put out any product at the time or got as much recognition as they deserved (although Victoria label Supreme Echo put out an excellent collection of Stiffs material on vinyl a couple of years ago).

supremeecho.bandcamp.com/album/the-dishrags

PHOTO CREDIT: Bob Strazich





Somewhere To Go: Punk Victoria

Interview with documentary filmmaker
Paulina Ortlieb

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Paulina Ortlieb: I'm Paulina and I suppose I've been known for different things at different times... currently, in the context of this magazine, it would be for my documentary film *Somewhere to Go: Punk Victoria*.

AU: What was the genesis for the documentary?

PO: The story... the legend of punk in Victoria. It's an important piece of local history that needs documenting, and it's a damn entertaining narrative! So many interesting characters and the music that came out the scene was truly unique and outstanding. It was a prolific time. The innovation, collaboration and creativity that sprung from this subculture is really inspiring, even to this day.

AU: What bands are featured in the film?

PO: Lots of local bands that emerged between the late '70s and 2000s. Bands like Nomeansno, Dayglos, Neos, Infamous Scientists, the Resistance, Red Tide, Mission of Christ, Jerk Ward, Show Business Giants, Pigment Vehicle, AK47 and so many more.

AU: What makes the Victoria punk scene unique?

PO: I think geography has something to do with it. Victoria, on an island at the edge of the North 'Left' Coast, is somewhat isolated from the rest of the country. An intimate music/arts community is the result. Diverse bands and characters are continually influencing each another. Also, not many bands really set out to be famous or become a commercial success. Passion and community are the drivers. Genuine and unique music comes out of that.

AU: Have you worked on any other film projects since? Could there ever be a

CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE

Somewhere To Go Part 2?

PO: No plans for a Part 2... yet. Recently I produced a number of music videos and also started working on a documentary about public art in Victoria with local comic legend Gareth Gaudin as host! We interviewed about seven people before Covid hit and hope to continue the project this summer or fall. I've applied for a project grant so fingers crossed...

AU: What was the experience like screening the movie at the Roxy

Theatre jammed to rafters with every punk in town?

PO: Surreal. It was like a dream. To have all those people who were integral to the scene come together from far and wide (some after almost 40 yrs!) was exhilarating. It was so special. There could have been no better audience and I loved everyone in that theatre that night! I feel grateful to have played a small role in collecting and curating some of those sacred remnants of that era. The significance of those early days continues to resonate and inspire today. That was very evident at the screening.

AU: Where you ever in any bands?

PO: Ya a bunch, both here in Victoria and in Japan, on bass/vocals. My first band, fronted by "Mike Walker punk rocker" of The Resistance, was celtic punk band Big Whiskey. Then I joined Carolyn Mark's band

the Vinaigrettes which was super fun. I also played in a Pixies tribute band called Wave of Mutilation, and a surf band called HiFi Ramblers. After living in Japan and playing in bands over there for a few years, I joined Budokan and had the pleasure of playing with Andrew Molloy (BUM), John London (Jerk Ward, Mission of Christ), Craig Vischek (Pigment Vehicle, Show Business Giants) and later Graham Watson (Smugglers, BUM). That was the last band I was

in but I still play regularly with a group of friends.

AU: How can people watch Somewhere to Go: Punk Victoria?

PO: It's free on YouTube. There's a FB page with some outtakes and highlights as well.

AU: Is there still hope of a physical release of the movie?

PO: I've been thinking about it again recently because my boyfriend bumped into local punk celeb Tony Goluzo who inquired about hard copies and well, I'd hate to disappoint Tony, so I aim to have a limited number available this fall. Stay tuned.

Photo Credit: Doug Clement

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The Furies Vancouver's First Punk Band

Interview with frontman Chris Arnett

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk scene?

CA: I'm Chris Arnett and I helped form the Furies, the first "punk" band in western Canada, maybe the whole country. I put "punk" in quotes because we didn't ape any English or American acts. We were an original West Coast rock and roll garage band with leather jackets because that's what we wore in high school. I cut my hair short because I liked Lou Reed and was tired of hippies. With the help of an East Van artist community we put on the first "punk rock" shows in downtown Vancouver in "the summer of hate" 1977. I played guitar, sang and wrote most of the songs.

AU: What was the genesis of The Furies?

CA: Malcolm Hasman and I were in high school bands and always wanted to form a rock n roll band mostly to meet girls. We were not into mainstream. We had original tunes, FU attitude, hated professional rock musicians, and just wanted to play music our way. Malcolm and I checked out many musicians but none suited our style until we met Jim Walker, a Berklee school of music graduate who ended up in Vancouver playing in country cover bands. He liked our attitude and sound and we meshed perfect.

AU: Describe The Furies sound.

CA: Some people thought we sounded like the Stooges. We had catchy fast three chord songs We had a fast loud Les Paul wall-of-sound with slower more drawn out numbers. We only did two covers: Raw Power, once at our first Japanese hall show, and on two occasions an extended version of Sister Ray to run out the clock or clear the room.

AU: Who else was in the band and what would it say on their dating profiles?

CA: Malcolm Hasman from Manchester played bass. He was really a guitarist, and good at it, and gave up guitar temporarily to play bass so that we could gig. Dating profile: I can sell anything to anyone and will be rich.

Jim Walker was the drummer, a serious professional. Dating profile: Cook, clean and

Christian only please.

AU: What made The Furies unique?

CA: No one else sounded or looked like us anywhere close. We are the only Vancouver punk band that didn't emulate in dress and style the Sex Pistols or Ramones. We'd heard about them for sure but never heard their music until we were already playing shows. I think of punk as a critical mass that happened all over the world where youth were fed up with the rock and roll status quo. We certainly were and showed Vancouver how to do it.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

CA: We were too successful too soon. Our first publicized show garnered full page stories in the *Vancouver Sun* and *Georgia Straight*. We felt like rock stars. Jim was blown away. He knew we were good and pressured me to replace my high school bud with John Werner, a childhood friend of Jim's. We became a tighter unit but it wasn't the same. I didn't share their ambition. I wasn't into the career aspect. Never was.

AU: Did The Furies release any albums?

CA: We didn't release any albums. I had a questionable philosophy of not wanting to record music only play it. We played a party in East Van and made \$50 and Jim insisted that we use the money to make a demo. In late June '77 we bought an hour of recording and mixing at Ocean Studio in North Vancouver and recorded "What do you Want Me to be" (which has appeared on *Last Call* and other places) and "Come on Baby, Rock" which is unreleased. These were the first punk recordings in Canada maybe? The only other recordings were made by me of the band Live at The Blue Horizon and at an East Van house

party. Jim has these and maybe he'll release them one day. I also made tape at a practice which I gave to SOCAN (then Pro) for copyright purposes but they lost it. Someone has a Super 8 video of our last

show on September 2, '77 at the Japanese Hall so it may show up one day.

AU: What do you remember about those first couple legendary shows you played in Victoria and Vancouver with Dee Dee and the Dishrags?

CA: The first show we played was at an opening at Pumps art gallery in Gastown in late May 1977 for the late Richard Hambleton, a great artist who liked us. The July 30th Japanese hall gig was fantastic. No mixer, no monitors, just

amps pointed at the audience who were of all types, bondage punk weirdos, puzzled hippies, underage students, a few bums that stumbled in. About 400 people showed up beyond my expectations. Dishrags opened up and killed it. They played all covers (mostly Ramones) but they were 15 years old, dressed in black, eyeliner, loud, you get the picture. Jade, the singer guitarist, is my cousin so I was very proud. These could've been the first shows in Canada, who knows? Jade says they played the first gigs in the country but it was a New Year's party at her parents place out in Saanich so I don't know if that counts The Furies only did 9 shows including one at the Odd Fellows Hall in Seattle, (the first Canadian punk band to play the US). We had about 20 original songs. "Friday Night Date", "Way of Life", "American Rock", "What do you want me to be", they're all good.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian punk rock.

CA: We were the first I ever heard about in this part of the world. After our July press, the Skulls who we had known as a long haired Port Coquitlam rock band, cut their hair, got Sex Pistol replica shirts made and wore German helmets. We let them play at our last show because an act from Seattle cancelled. Their set replicated the Dishrags set with Ramones and Sex Pistol covers but they had one original song "Fucked Up Baby." We heard about the bands in Toronto like The Viletones with Nazi Dog etc, but they seemed like Sex Pistol replications. All style and no substance but "shocking!". Teenage Head didn't count as they were just a longhair rock band. The Skulls, who were not very good, left Vancouver for the Toronto "scene" and went nowhere reemerging the following year on the West Coast as DOA and the Subhumans. Practice makes perfect.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk rock?

CA: I was into punk before it was defined so it's hard to say. As far as seeing the first "punk" vibe it was in the early 70's with the NY Dolls appeared and playing Trash on Sat Night Live. I was ecstatic and proselytized to all that this was the future.

AU: Any other influences?

CA: The bands/musicians that influenced me the most were the Velvet underground, David Bowie and the Stooges. When we were active very few people in Vancouver and especially the burbs were listening to that stuff. If you listened to Bowie in Burnaby you were a "fag."

AU: Favourite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

CA: The Dishrags of course, all their singles and EP. The singles put out by Young Canadians (formerly The K-Tels) are great.

AU: First dangerous music you heard?

CA: Probably "White Light /White Heat" by the Velvet Underground, still one of my fav albums. Nothing quite like it.

AU: What sets Canadian punk bands apart from other countries?

CA: It would have to be the only thing that distinguishes punk and hardcore anywhere and that is the regional differences which are reflected in the lyrics but rarely the music. Musically the best punk for moi is Mexican.

AU: What were some early punk venues?

CA: When we started there were no such venues. We organized our own shows. Only when punk got trendy the following year did various clubs

start opening and attracting people dressed up and acting like "punks".



AU: Newer Canadian punk bands that hold the torch high?

CA: BC's The Rebel Spell were on it but Todd died and that was it.

AU: In your opinion who is the best Canadian punk band of all time?

CA: The Furies. I haven't seen/heard any better frankly. I know that sounds pompous but WTF. You didn't see our shows. We were original, unadulterated, "the firstest with the mostest" and the only Canadian punk band with a connection to the British punk scene thru our drummer Jim, who after the Furies disbanded, left for London landing a place in PIL.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk band?

CA: The Furies

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any bands that followed?

CA: We influenced The Dishrags, DOA, Subhumans, all the Vancouver suburbanite bands for better or worse.

AU: Craziest thing you've seen happen on stage?

CA: Maybe the guy who wanted to jump on stage at our first show and smash all his old records. We let him.

AU: Did The Furies have groupies back in the day?

CA: We had lots of pretty girls hanging around because we were good and good looking. I wasn't interested. I'd just met the love of my life. There was a show in Seattle with four girls in the front of the stage heavily made up wearing black raincoats and red fireman hats who had been with Iggy Pop the previous month. No thanks.



AU: Is the band still active?

CA: Back in 2007 John Werner, the bassist who replaced Malcolm, and I teamed up with drummer Taylor Little to reform The Furies. We recorded and released a self-titled CD on FU Records and have played two dozen shows or so since, the last one in 2018 at Pat's Pub in East Van. We could play again but my interest in music these days is saltspringunderground.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock.

CA: I don't follow it. What started out as a rebellious form of music became quickly commodified and formulaic by the time we broke up in Sept '77. Now it's a genre.

AU: How do people find your band online?

CA: There's nothing about us or what's out there is wrong. I don't have the time to do a Wikipedia or Website. I uploaded part of our 2007 album to youtube and there are a bunch of 21st century Furies videos www.youtube.com/watch?v=LX_H6uMoDT8

We were not well documented as all of the punk rock keepers arrived in Vancouver long after we were done.

www.saltspringunderground.com

Photo Credit: Don Denton

PHOTO CREDIT: Kat Hammond



Ripcordz

Interview with Paul Gott (guitar & vocals)

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in the Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

Paul Gott: Heya, Paul from Ripcordz here. Well, I formed Ripcordz in 1980 and have been with the band ever since. At the time we formed I had a Punk radio show on Montreal's CRSG radio Concordia called "Rhythm and Bruises." After about ten years the show moved to CKUT and lasted into the early 90s. I ended up as station manager at CRSG for five years in the mid-80s.

We produced some pretty huge Punk shows, and even built a recording studio in the University (without the University knowing about it). Recorded all sorts of bands including Fail-Safe, Ray Condo and the Ripcordz first album. Published *RearGarde* magazine from 1984-1990. It was a monthly music tabloid that treated local bands the same as touring bands (even if those touring bands included the Ramones, Metallica and Midnight Oil). Ran EnGuard records for about a decade starting in 1988, putting out 50 albums (even if we didn't have a bank account) including stuff from Problem Children, the Vagabonds and the Wet Spots. Published a (pre-internet) cross-Canada touring guide. Toured Canada 15 times. Printed up (literally) more than two million stickers for bands. Started the Punk Canada facebook page. Did all sorts of Punk posters and album covers. Other stuff, but this is getting long.



AU: Give us a brief history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore if you can.

PG: I don't think there's a way to do a brief history. The one thing I can say is that Punk didn't just start up in Toronto and Vancouver, despite what you may have heard from Canadian 'Punk historians' (who, incidentally, all seem to come from Toronto and Vancouver). It started everywhere. In Montreal, we had bands like the Chromosomes, the Normals, the Asexuals, Vomit and the Zits (who evolved into DBC) and the glam Punk of the 222s, amongst others.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk and hardcore? What was the early scene like where you grew up?

PG: I started going to shows in 1980 -- any shows

I could, really. And it was when there was no real line between Punk and New Wave, so I saw a bunch of good bands, and some terrible ones. But it was always fun. The first local show I can remember vividly was the single launch for Deja Voodoo's "Monsters in My Garage." I was thrilled coz they signed one for me.

AU: What were some of the earliest bands that were the most influential?

PG: Since we started in 1980, we had no choice but to look at old school bands. My favourites were the Adverts and the Vibrators. But I went to see the Clash and the Undertones and that kind of changed how I thought about music in general. So much energy, so much fire on stage (especially from the Undertones). I also didn't want to just copy the bands I liked, so I looked to their influences as well -- anything from Pub Rock (Eddie and the Hot Rods) to Glam (Sweet, Bowie) to rock n roll (Robert Gordon, Flamin' Groovies) to 50s artists like Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent and the Johnny Burnette Trio.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

PG: Canadian bands are better. Seriously. Our scenes have never had the support of huge labels and producers and studios, so it has always come down to the music. You have to have good songs and good stage presence to survive. And, perhaps outside of southern Ontario and the West Coast, there aren't enough venues to just keep playing your neighbourhood. So bands have to develop their own sound, get organized, and tour. And if

you're going to tour, you better be good. You have to be good.

AU: What were some early venues that supported punk across Canada?

PG: In Montreal, we had Cargo for hardcore, Station 10 which played live music seven days a week, occasional venues like the Hotel Nelson and Le Steppe and then Fougounes Électriques came on the scene and just kept growing. It's still

around today (if not nearly as Punk as it used to be).

AU: Who are some newer Canadian punk or hardcore bands that continue to hold the torch high?

PG: What a loaded question. There's so many! In fact, one of the reasons we still like playing shows so much is that we keep meeting so many great bands. Just a few to mention include Riot Porn (Montreal) the Whiskey Shits (Ottawa), Mandible Klaw (Calgary), Dysruptive (Quebec City), Welland Wasted (Welland, of course), The Beta 58's (Kingston), Chernobyl Wolves (Winnipeg), Alien Boys (Vancouver), the Gnar Gnars (Victoria) and the Hacked (Quebec City). But there's easily dozens more. The one thing I

can say is that, despite ups and downs and the stupid covid apocalypse, This Is The Golden Age of The Canadian Scene. There's more bands, more music, and more ways to find that music than ever before. Enjoy your Scene and stop living in the past.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk or hardcore bands?

PG: Stretch Marks, No Policy, House of Commons, Guilt Parade, Fair Warning, Amnésie... So many great bands that don't get the recognition they deserve. But that's not isolated to the 80s. It's been a constant problem in the Canadian Scene.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first getting started?

PG: Montreal was heading into hardcore and speed metal as we started playing shows in the early 80s. But we were unapologetically Sound of '77 Punk and proud of it. It meant we were terrifically uncool for a while (maybe still are) and played to college kids for years, but we didn't care. Though we were very happy when our crowds turned Punk at the end of the 80s.

AU: Any career highlights to share?

PG: Once the highlight stops being the next show or the next album, we'll stop playing.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

PG: I think you'd have to ask other bands that question. But the one thing I've always been amazed at is the number of people who've come up to me at shows and said "You were my first Punk show," and how many bands have said "My band's first show was opening up for you." Both statements make me very happy and very proud.

One thing I will say is that I've always tried to help out bands and Scenes in whatever way I can, and I'll continue to do it. 'Support the Scene' isn't a slogan, it's a way of life.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

PG: I'll say it again: This is the Golden Age of Canadian Punk. If you haven't found bands you can enjoy and music you can love, you just



haven't been looking. Punk shouldn't be a bunch of drunken old folks sitting around a campfire singing "Kumbaya" and talking about the Good Old Days. Punk is alive and well and living in a basement or seedy shithole near you. Go find it. Go enjoy it.

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Punk Rock Poutine and other cheesy delights

By Ty Stranglehold

Punk rock notwithstanding, Canada has always had a weird inferiority complex/identity crisis (or personality crisis, if you will, ha!) A large portion of the national identity revolves around distancing ourselves culturally from our often-overpowering neighbours to the south. This happens both overtly and subconsciously. While living up to those old stereotypes like being excessively polite, we often display a quiet moral superiority without even realizing it.

Whatever, enough of the sociology lesson, we're here to talk punk rock! I guess the reason I brought it up, is that Canadian punk rock has this way of being distinctly Canadian without even really trying to do so. For the most part punk rock eschews notions of nationalism, but for some reason there is something different about bands that form above that invisible line at the 49th parallel that is distinct, no matter how intangible it is. Maybe someone smarter than me can explain it?

My introduction to Canadian punk came right on the heels of discovering punk rock in general. As many of us grommets discovering punk for the first time in the early to mid 1980s, my gateway followed the tried-and-true Sex Pistols/Dead Kennedys model. Two things happened at approximately the same time that would steer things on to a more maple leaf trajectory. I started hanging out with a group of older skaters who introduced me to SNFU (which I detailed in my tribute to Mr. Chi Pig in these very pages), and my aunt started

dating a punk named Kevin. He didn't look like a punk in the least bit, but his record collection begged to differ, and he was more than happy to steer a young kid just starting out into a wider world of punk rock starting with some straight up canuck classics. The Subhumans self-titled 12" single and Forgotten Rebels' *In Love With The System* immediately grabbed me. The Subhumans in particular really struck a chord. The record only had four songs, but let's face it, they are four damned near perfect songs. Somehow the intensity and immediacy meant more to me knowing that they were from Vancouver, a city I had been to many times with my parents. It felt more real. They will always make my top five all time bands list.

While making my way through Kevin's record collection making tapes of everything that he told me to, I was also on the hunt in record stores. He also gave me a list of bands to keep an eye out for. My next two Canadian acquisitions were Dayglo Abortions *Feed Us A Fetus* and D.O.A. *Let's Wreck The Party*. The Dayglos blew my mind, and I played the hell out of that tape. Fast, heavy, and offensive. I hadn't heard anything quite like it. I have a memory of this album so Canadian it's laughable – My hockey team was playing in a tournament in Wenatchee, Washington. I was fourteen. As you might imagine, my life steering into skateboarding and punk rock wasn't exactly welcomed into my community of hockey playing friends and teammates. I was NEVER allowed to pick the music we played in the dressing room. There we were in America about to play against the home team and face their arena full of fans. We were alone and needed to get psyched up. I had an idea! I went to the biggest, toughest kid



on my team. A friend named Louie who loved metal and hated punk, but a friend none the less. I said I have something that would psych us all up, but the team won't listen to me. He said "give me the tape" and I queued it up on my Walkman and gave it to him. At that moment we propped the dressing room door open so the other team could here and played "Wake Up America" and "Proud To Be Canadian" back-to-back as loud as we could. Then we reworded it and played

it again. This time the entire team was shouting the choruses. The coaches (including my dad) were probably sitting there thinking "wait, who's getting fucked in the asshole?" but they let it go as we were now ready to go out and win, and we did just that... then the team went right back to hating my "punk rock bullshit". As for D.O.A., I didn't get the hype I had heard based upon *Let's Wreck The Party*. It would be several years before I

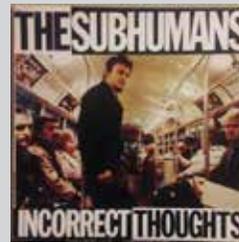
heard the good stuff.

In the early 90s I was getting out there and going to shows and festivals learning about different bands in different cities. It became apparent that there were amazing bands clear across the country. I was hearing and seeing bands I love like Ripcordz, Trigger Happy, Forbidden Dimension, Sparkmarker, Huevos Rancheros, Porksword, Propagandhi, Doughboys, Eric's Trip, McRackins and perhaps most importantly Nomeansno and Bum from Victoria, as they would form part of my desire to move to the island city I have called home for the last twenty-seven years. Moving to a city with an actual scene with bands was an eye opener and Victoria BC in early 90s was a hotbed of great music. Bands like Goat Boy, Breach, Render Useless, Gus, M-Blanket, L.I.D., Hudson Mack, Tim, Special Olympics, AK-47... the list goes on and on. I was finally home and going to shows all the time!

With the dawn of the internet, it became so much easier to find out about bands that I missed the first time around. I was finally getting around to hearing bands like Personality Crisis, The Modernettes, Teenage Head, Viletones and The Diodes among others. Into the 2000s bands like Wednesday Night Heroes, Fucked Up, Rebel Spell, The Excessives and Career Suicide were entering my sphere either through writing record reviews for various zines, or playing and attending shows. Hitting the road in my own bands, I would see local openers exuding that unique, intangible Canadian-ness without thought. It seems to be something ingrained in who we are, and it just comes out unintentionally.

We are currently seeing a "golden age" of reissuing long out of print or previously lost to the sands of time Canadian punk rock. Ontario's Chase The Glory Records has been reissuing long out of print gems from SNFU, Wheat Chiefs and Trigger Happy and very recently Nanaimo's legendary garage-punk label Lance Rock Records reactivated to reissue Calgary creeps Color Me Psycho's debut album (on vinyl for the first time). Most prolific in these endeavors, however, has to be Victoria's own Supreme Echo Records. In a journey that was kicked off by the 2007 release of the book and double CD *All Your Ears Can Hear: Underground Music in Victoria BC 1978-1984*, Jason Flower has taken on the near impossible task of finding the lost bands/records of Canadian punk and giving them the release that they deserve. From more recognizable names such as The Dishrags, Neos, Sudden Impact, The Stiffs and Dayglo Abortions to lost or forgotten bands like The Reaction (Newfoundland), Extroverts (Saskatchewan), Plan Nine (Calgary), a plethora of Vancouver bands (Culture Shock, Zealots, Private School) and of course Victoria (Jerk Ward, Pink Steel, Mexican Power Authority). Jason has a knack for finding lost master tapes

Ty's Top 6 Canadian Punk albums (right now)



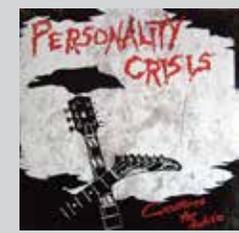
1. The Subhumans – Incorrect Thoughts



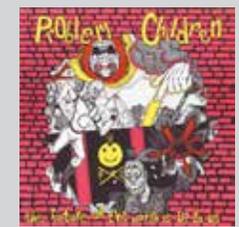
2. SNFU – ...And No One Else Wanted To Play



3. NoMeansNo – Wrong



4. Personality Crisis – Creatures For A While



5. Problem Children – The Future Of The World Is Up To Us



6. Furnaceface - Just Buy It

and the result is an entirely new (old) level of Canadian punk for the world to explore. I would also mention that he does this for Canadian metal as well, but this is a punk rock story!

I guess what I am trying to say in these ramblings is that while I may not be a flag waving patriot (let's face it, colonialism is nothing to be proud of), I am proud to be a Canadian punk. We have a worldwide reputation for quality bands and scenes, and for a huge land mass that is sparsely populated like this, that is pretty damn good. Currently there is bands from around the country that are blowing my mind. Chain Whip, Vic City Rejects, No Problem, Sore Points, The Follow Ups, Crom/Dam, Bootlicker and more that are carrying on our proud tradition of Poutine Punk. Now I will do my duty to live up to several of our stereotypes by cracking open a beer and politely argue with someone online about how our Subhumans are vastly superior to the UK Subhumans. It's just a fact, eh?

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Neos

Interview Steve Bailey (vocals & guitar)

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

SB: Steve Bailey from the NEOS, a Victoria punk band that existed from 1979 to 1983.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk and hardcore?

SB: In late 1979 a friend's older brother played me some early DOA and Subhumans singles (along with the Sex Pistols and Clash's first album). I was instantly hooked. Shortly after I got hold of the *Vancouver Complication*, a brilliant album featuring a wide variety of the early Vancouver punk bands. *Vancouver Complication* shows how eclectic the early West Coast punk scene was. As long as you were into high energy rock'n'roll, writing your own songs, and were basically misfits and weirdos you were welcome in the punk scene. No firm boundaries had been placed around what punk was at the point and that's what I found so inspiring. There wasn't a thing called hardcore then. I think I first heard that word in about 1981 - the first step in the hideous trend of breaking music down into micro-genres.

AU: What were some of the earliest bands that were the most influential?

SB: The earliest influences on the music I wanted to play were probably the Sex Pistols, DOA, the Dickies, No Exit, Black Flag and the Lewd. I loved a lot of other bands as much or more, but these bands made me feel that maybe I could play in a band. You could clearly hear what was happening in the songs as opposed to the hyper produced, multi-tracked music that was popular from the late 60s to late 70s which seemed very foreign and unattainable as a new musician with no training and very little talent. There was also a sense that rock'n'roll had become very competitive as an industry where millions of dollars were available to the "winners". Even local

rock bands seemed snooty and unapproachable. Early punk bands had no interest in making money and encouraged everyone to join in.

AU: What was the first dangerous music you ever heard?

SB: As a 10 year I was listening to early/mid 70s albums by Alice Cooper, Kiss, and Aerosmith. It felt kind of dirty and mean-spirited which I thought was dangerous and cool. I'd read about the Stooges and MC5 but never found there music anywhere.

Then in the late 70s I felt like music was getting more and more boring until I heard punk in 1979 at 14 years old. It brought back that sense of listening to music as an act of rebellion, only for me punk was as much of a rebellion against my peers and popular youth culture as it was against my parents and adult society. Punk made me realize that kids needed a smack in the jaw as much as the adults did.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

SB: I don't really feel that punk is divided that much by borders and I never felt that the NEOS were all that Canadian because we had far more fans in the U.S., U.K, South America, and Europe than we ever did in Canada. As far as I could tell Canadian audiences hated us. I guess the early 80s Canadian punk scene had a lot of that beer drinking, fist fighting vibe and we were the complete opposite. I think we identified more with UK bands like Rudimentary Peni and US bands like Really Red and the Dead Kennedys.

AU: Early venues that supported punk across Canada?

SB: I couldn't say because we only played one Canadian show outside of Victoria and that was with the Dead Kennedys in Vancouver at UBC. I know Vancouver had the Smilin' Buddha but there were no venues or bars in Victoria that supported punk in the early 80s. At that time it was places like FOE clubs, cultural centers, or old dance halls run by pensioners. You'd lie through your teeth saying you were putting on a "dance" and make it all seem very nice until the punks showed up and then they'd freak out. Unfortunately some punks in the scene had a habit of destroying halls and generally burning bridges so we were often shuffling from place to place trying to find any venue that would still let us put on shows.

AU: Who are some newer Canadian punk or hardcore bands?

SB: On the hardcore/grindcore side I have to give

a shout out to Victoria's Six Brew Bantha who are incredible musicians. I think Fucked Up's "Queen of Hearts" and "Under My Nose" are musically two of the most perfect punk songs ever recorded. When I listen to those songs I jump out of my rocking chair and run around the room bouncing off the walls. The Suitesixteen (Rob Nesbitt) put out a great pop punk album last year called *Mine Will be the Sun*. It deserves a lot more attention. Tons of other good Victoria and Vancouver bands from the last decade like Open Relationship, Bored Décor, Sporus, Jock Tears, Dummy Pops, Poor Form, Pooched, Jesus People and more.

AU: Best Canadian punk/hardcore band?

SB: I'll say that DOA might be the most important because they've been the face of Canadian punk for more than 40 years and did a huge amount to pave the way for North American punk in general.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk/hardcore band?

SB: I'm going to mention a person rather than a band - Chuck Biscuits from DOA. When I first saw DOA play in June 1980 (a week before their first album was released) I had no idea that Chuck was so young - probably 16 or 17 at the time. He was such a powerful, high energy drummer and they were playing all the early high energy singles like The Prisoner, Thirteen, and Nazi Training Camp only faster than on the recordings. There was a wonderful tension in the music with Chuck wanting to push things faster while Joey was trying to keep some of the rock'n'roll swagger in the music. I saw that and thought, "Somebody please unleash that monster and let him run." It cemented in my mind what I wanted the NEOS to do - abandon rock'n'rolls primal, sexual rhythms for something that was pure energy. Unrestrained music by and for angry pubescent virgins. I think it was playing DOA to our drummer AB that convinced him to embrace punk and join the NEOS. I think Chuck's drumming on those early singles probably inspired punk bands up and down the west coast to play faster. Because Joe is such a powerful presence in DOA, and Chuck only stayed in the band for the first few albums, I'm not sure he gets enough credit for being a huge part of the original DOA sound - the sound of early Canadian punk.

AU: Very first Canadian punk band?

SB: I don't know for sure but Victoria's own

Dishrags are right up there, having formed in 1976 and played in Vancouver's first ever punk show in June '77. A lot of people think there were no women in the early punk scene but the Dishrags were right there at the very beginning.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first getting started?

SB: Being young, being fast, and being dorks. Bands like DOA and the Subhumans were older, bigger dudes with testosterone to spare. We were skinny junior high kids who couldn't even scare our parents much less the cops or society at large. We had to play with a very high level of energy and intensity to avoid getting wiped off the stage.

AU: Any career highlights or

lowlights to share?

SB: Playing two shows with the Dead Kennedys in 1983. They were amazing and if it wasn't for the support Jello gave to the NEOS I doubt we'd be having this conversation right now.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any bands that followed?

SB: I've had people point out to me that the NEOS have had an influence on some forms of music but it's always been a bit too mind boggling for me to think that my weird high school band could have any influence on anything. All I ever wanted was to inspire other musicians to play music they loved, no matter how weird or unpopular it might be.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk and hardcore.

SB: Just hoping people keep their concept of what punk is very open. For me it's an attitude and not a musical style. I think of a pop band like Kyoto Banana Star from Victoria who are more punk to me than any

popular punk band that tour arenas backed by corporate beer sponsors. Stay honest, speak from your heart, don't try to make money from art, and never give a shit about what other people think about your music. That's hardcore.

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Punks & Provocateurs

Interview with photographer Linda Dawn Hammond

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in the Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

Linda Dawn Hammond: My name is Linda Dawn Hammond, a.k.a. Dawn One. I have been photographing music events since I first discovered photography while studying journalism at Carleton University, at age 18 in 1975/76. I volunteered at the Charleton, our student newspaper, and my first assignment was to write about and shoot a Bowie concert. My next music photo gigs were Rush and Lou Reed. I switched majors and universities and studied photography and film



DAU Club Punk/RnA Toronto, 1984

AU: What Canadian punk and hardcore bands have you photographed over the years?

LDH: American Devices, Androids ('78/'79), Asexuals ('85), Balthazar, The Basics, Bobo Blisters,

at Ryerson. At the time it was considered primarily a male profession and female students were a rarity.

AU: What were some other early bands you shot?

LDH: I took a year off school to travel in Hawaii, eventually ending up in LA. I almost shot my first punk band there, but an actual shooting and stabbing closed down that event. When I returned to Toronto in 1978 I started seeing a bass player in a punk band called Androids and of course began shooting his gigs and those of his friends. I decided in my second year at Ryerson to concentrate on punk and post-punk music photography, which did not go over very well with my instructor. He asked why I was bothering to document "those people" and my response was, "history is being made."

I believe I was right! I made an amazing connection with the owner of The Edge, a local bar which brought in American and British acts as well as supporting local Canadian bands. I had free entry, including backstage access, in exchange for a couple of prints. I got banned from Larry's Hideaway and Hotel Isabella (long stories both!) so that curtailed my Canadian content to a degree!

AU: What makes the Canadian punk and hardcore scene unique?



B.O.F.G., Corpuss, Deja Voodoo ('80s), Dick Duck and the Dorks ('79), DOA, 50% Off ('81), 222s, Forgotten Rebels, Genetic Control, Karotte Kiri (80s), Lard Bedaine, Men Without Hats ('83), The Mods, My Dog Popper, Nitroglycerine, No Policy ('85), October Crisis ('85), Rhythm Activism ('88), Ripcordz, Sum 41, Santeria, Sassy Scarlet, Shlonk ('80s), SCUM ('85) Snitches, Teenage Head, The Tools ('78)

When I lived in Toronto between '78 to '80, I photographed relatively obscure bands such as Androids & the Tools, and saw quite a few I missed shooting, such as The Dishes and The Diodes at The Crash 'n' Burn, which was the Diodes practice space.

In 1980 I travelled in Central and South America, which was an intense political awakening. I already had an interest in documenting homelessness and human rights issues, including gay politics, but what I experienced on that trip changed the direction of my photography and my political activism.

AU: What makes the Canadian punk and hardcore scene unique?

LDH: Each city I've lived in is different. Both the Toronto and Montreal punk scenes in the 70s and early 80s were influenced by a proximity to New York. Bands from the US visited us and vice versa. However Toronto in the late 70s was a much tougher, more confrontational scene than Montreal, which was decidedly more open and friendly in my experience.

I spent 2 years living on the West Coast of Canada and the Yukon, from 1980 to 1982. I unfortunately lost track of the local punk scene while there but when I moved back to Montreal in 1982, I soon reconnected with it. Montreal has the added benefit of being a bilingual city. While there certainly existed a linguistic and social divide for those who only spoke one language, for those of us who spoke "franglais", we were enriched and encouraged by a vital artistic community of musicians, artists and dancers. The 80s in Montreal was a wonderful time to be living close to the edge, as rents were cheap and people in my milieu were supportive of difference.

Hardcore followed fast upon the heels of punk in Montreal and I enjoyed the aggression and rush of shooting the thrash pit, where often the bands "on stage" (there often wasn't one) became secondary to the action going on in the "audience."

AU: Tell us about the exhibit you put on called Punks & Provocateurs.

LDH: In 2005 I had an exhibit in a bar I had considered my punk clubhouse when it opened in 1983, Les Foufounes Électriques in Montreal. My exhibit was a retrospective of 250 photos I'd taken since 1976 in Toronto, Montreal and New

York, of what was then known as the "alternative scene". I held a photo auction benefiting Doctors Without Borders at its closing. It can be seen on the internet at www.rebelrebel.com

AU: On the West Coast there was an influential all-female band called The Dishrags, were there any similar bands happening on the East Coast as well?

LDH: In Toronto there were/are primarily female punk bands such as The Curse and the B-Girls. These women still perform on occasion on punk nights at local venues such as The Painted Lady. Since I moved back to Toronto 17 years ago I've gotten to know this scene more intimately.

In Montreal there was Shlonk and Nitroglycerine, among others. Natalie Dion is still performing on experimental solo projects. Shlonk are now scattered across the country.

AU: What other subject matter have you explored with your photography?

LDH: I have an MFA in Photography from York U. My thesis work was a digital photographic tarot installation entitled "Schattenspiel." Other exhibits, such as my "Three Part Bodyseries", "Physical Addictions"

and "Personal Needs," explore the politics of gender, sexuality, difference and relationships. I am also known for my involvement documenting *Sexgarage*, a 1990 police attack on the Montreal LGBTQ community, which some consider to be the Stonewall of Montreal. I recently self published a book on my personal account and am looking for a publisher. That same year I photographed The Oka crisis, and have published and exhibited those images across Canada and in the UK.

AU: Most underappreciated Canadian punk bands?

LDH: Teenage Head should be far more famous. The Demics and Forgotten Rebels too! I also have to include the Diodes.

AU: Any other Canadian punk/hardcore bands people should check out?

LDH: I always loved D.O.A., and still do. I attended a show when I was 8 months pregnant and felt I was about to give birth right there! Also No Means No, and Fucked Up.

AU: Were you ever in any bands?

LDH: I once performed with My Dog Popper as a guest vocalist.

AU: Any advice for aspiring photographers?

LDH: Nurture your relationships with your local bands and try to authentically document your scene. Don't expect though that they will remember you if/when they become "famous", as by then they'll have no control over who commissions their publicity photos, and they themselves will have forgotten what it's like to be poor. Which, if you're a photographer, will still be you!

AU: Any plans to publish a book one day?

LDH: "Sexgarage" & "Punks & Provocateurs" are two projects I am hoping to find a publisher for.

AU: Anything else planned for the near future?

LDH: I may move to Vancouver Island and fight the logging of old growth trees.

AU: Final thoughts.

LDH: Punk is not dead, unless you are, so wear a mask!

AU: How can people see more of your photos?

LDH: Many of my past and present photos are on Flickr.com under "DawnOne", also at rebelrebel.com and IndyFoto.com - FB Linda Dawn Hammond Photography - Twitter LDH @ Dawn_One

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CANADIAN PUNK ROCK & HARDCORE



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forgotten rebels photo by steve burman

Forgotten Rebels

Interview with frontman Mickey DeSadist

Absolute Underground: Favourite Canadian Punk Rock bands?

Mickey DeSadist: My fave Canadian bands are Teenage Head, the Viletones, and the Ugly.

AU: What's on the horizon for your band?

MDS: Forgotten Rebels will be playing shows as soon as this disease rubbish wears off. I may play some solo shows with other guys for fun. I have enough recorded to release another solo record but I'd rather do a Rebels record.

AU: Early influences?

MDS: The albums which influenced me the most are *Raw Power* by the Stooges, and *Mott the Hoople LIVE*.

AU: First Canadian punk band?

MDS: As I remember the first Canadian punk band to me was the Viletones.

AU: Career highlights?

MDS: Our career highlights are opening for the Clash, the Cramps, the Gun Club, Iggy Pop, and the three times we opened for the Ramones. The solo show I did opening for the Saints, meeting Johnny Cash, Jello Biafra, Marianne Faithfull, Jimmy Jagger, having a jam at the El Mocambo New Years eve with Johnny Thunders. Playing on a record and stage with Sylvain Sylvain, a tour

with Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson. Having the best venue ever named "This Ain't Hollywood"... I could go on, its been a long fun road, two tours of Germany and a show in Zurich. My fave gig was at the Hollywood Palace opening for Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson of Mott the Hoople.

AU: Most underrated Canadian band?

MDS: Flesh Rag is a great band.

AU: What do you like best about Canadian punk and hardcore?

MDS: Canadian Punk and Hardcore is always great... lots of cool stuff I love seeing live.

AU: Describe your sound.

MDS: The Rebels sound is like the Stooges meet the Pistols meet the Ramones meet the MC5.

AU: Early clubs that supported punk in Canada?

MDS: We opened for the Dead Boys at the Horseshoe. Had great nites at the Turning Point in Toronto, and Bannister's in Hamilton.

AU: What made your band unique when starting out?

MDS: We were unique because we had a sense of humor and snickered at everything that society was trying to stick us with. We all did well in life in our own odd ways.

AU: Can you see your influence on any bands that followed?

MDS: I watched other bands and saw some who stole my jokes

AU: Any newer bands you like?

MDS: My fave punk band now is Surfbort.

AU: Anything else to mention?

MDS: Oh man, I just remembered jammin' with Billy Cowsill in Vancouver and at Ozzy Rexach's places... Long John Baldry's friends birthday and at the hall later that nite... historical or what? WOW... you made me think... once I was watching the BYRDS... and Gene Clark, the guy who sang "Turn, Turn Turn," walked up to me and started talking thinking I was a guy he knew from LA. Maybe I should try and recollect what and who I've experienced. I don't usually think and reconsider how much you've done and experienced cause I was having such a good time I didn't stop to think of what a good time I was having. Glad I got the memory floodgates to open.



Those times must be cherished as they will not repeat themselves.

Mickey DeSadist Artwork by Noah Pasternak

PHOTO CREDIT: Steve Burman

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Photo Credit: Pete Ellis

Scott Henderson Show Business Giants / Shovlhed

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore scene?

SH: You are talking to Scott Henderson aka Zipp Gunn. I have been recording bands in Victoria since 1982 with an emphasis on punk rock and other "unpopular" forms of music as well as playing in a variety of bands and even writing for the local news weekly Monday magazine (as Zipp Gunn).

AU: What bands have you been in?

SH: I have been in Shovlhed, the Show Business Giants, the Vinaigrettes, the Metronome Cowboys, High Arctic, People's War, and even the DayGlo Abortions a bit...

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk and hardcore? What was the early scene like where you grew up?

SH: I was first introduced to Canadian punk rock by Nomeansno and the DayGlo Abortions as well as the Neos and Infamous Scientists, all of these way back in about 1982. My first real transcendent punk rock experience was seeing Black Flag the first time they played the OAP hall.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

SH: I don't know if Canadian punk bands are much different from bands from other countries. All the countries of the world seem to have bands unique to themselves. I would say that Nomeansno is the best "punk rock" band ever to come out of Canada because they were original and innovative. They didn't sound like anybody else.

AU: Early venues that supported punk rock?

SH: Early venues included the OAP hall and the FOE hall in Victoria and of course the Smilin' Buddha in Vancouver.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

SH: I seem to remember the Diodes being the first Canadian punk band that I can remember.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk band?

SH: Certainly the most underappreciated early Canadian punk band back in the day was the Neos but they are enjoying a new surge of interest right now thanks to Jason Flower and his Supreme Echo label who are doing good work in reissuing a lot of old Victoria music, punk and otherwise.

AU: What made your band unique when you



Photo Credit: John Carlow - Finding Charlotte Photography

were first getting started?

My band Shovlhed was different because we played in weird time signatures and often did covers of prog rock bands like King Crimson, the Mahavishnu Orchestra and even the Gary Burton Quintet. When we first started out and didn't have any songs of our own we played a lot of Minutemen songs...

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

SH: Career highlights would include doing two tours of Europe with the Show Business Giants, releasing albums on Alternative Tentacles with my old buddy (and former Nomeansno guitarist) Andy Kerr and having several CDs released by the excellent label



CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE ANTHOLOGY

Konkurrent in Holland. Lowlights would include a terrible show supporting Fishbone and having a complete train wreck to open a show on national CBC radio which was being broadcast to zillions of listeners...

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

SH: I can't tell you what influence I might have had other than to always support each other in the scene and just get out and do it, don't wait for somebody else to do it for you. That was why I built my first studio...

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

SH: Punk and/or hardcore seem to be universal around the world; I don't differentiate between, say, Canadian and Dutch or American or Italian or whatever. To me it's all good and it seems to be happening everywhere that it isn't actively suppressed. Some of it is imitative now after 40 odd years of existing but a lot of it is still true to the spirit of itself, fresh and original. It is the latter that I sully my consciousness with...

[youtube.com/channel/UCCxq7AlgiYosUgnJ-ycdqRA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCxq7AlgiYosUgnJ-ycdqRA)



JESUS BONEHEAD

Legendary Drummer of Dayglo Abortions

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement with early Canadian Punk Rock and Hardcore?

Jesus Bonehead: Jesus Bonehead & I played drums for Dayglo Abortions from 78 till 2010

AU: What was the genesis of Dayglo Abortions?

JB: Cretin & I met in grade 6 @ boarding school as we were both kicked out of public school due to our poor attitudes. We met Spud a couple years later hanging around downtown Victoria.

AU: Describe the Dayglo Abortions sound.

JB: Veteran music critic Les Wiseman once described us as "the sound of the universe being ripped apart from its velcro seams"

AU: What made the Dayglos different when you were first getting started?

JB: There were no rules, and nothing came with any directions to playing punk rock, we just made it up as we went along! But judging by the disdain we were receiving, we knew we were on the right

track!

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights?

JB: So many great memories! I guess if I had to pick a few it would be our Musical Obscenity charge in 87. Which went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Our name got out to all sorts. My absolute fave is the syndicated columnist "Dear Abby" got a hold of Fetus USA Fetus & she did a whole spread on how we were 10X worse than she could ever have imagined, and how could the Canadian Courts not have us all in jail & de-programmed. As Gwar's Dave Brockie once said to me "Bad publicity is the best publicity" I remember the day the Toronto Police raided Fringe Product & seized all our records. We had been driving all night from New Orleans & had just settled in around the pool for a day off before playing the Axiom in Houston. The phone rings & it's Terry David Mulligan asking if we knew what was going on back in Canada? I wanted to say "Yeah, were getting paid a 100 bux a night & our roadie, Noid, siphons gas outta the parking lot while we play!" But instead I said "I don't know fill me in?" All I could think after our conversation was "Are we the poster kids for Censorship?" God help us all! After a few drinks around the pool it was agreed we would extend the US tour to avoid our fate back home. We traveled around in a big yellow Bible College Bus. For years we promised to remove the logo but we lied!



So we prolonged the inevitable by picking up house/frat parties in the South West on our way to the coast. We were Musical Terrorists running amok - Great Fun!

Other Hi lights:

Playing CBGBs with Gang Green & Raw Power, and Trenton's City Gardens with DRI & Discharge, which got us a invitation to appear on the Uncle Floyd Cable Show which gave Blondie & The Ramones etc an early audience in the Tri-State area. We played Animal House in Eugene, OR with Raw Power. Funny I remember the promoter saying "You've seen the movie?" And we are following directions past all these Alpha Delta frats & bang! There it is. I expected Belushi to fall off the roof. Pretty sure we have the honour of being that last 2 bands to play there as it was torn down days later. Something closer to home you say? Hijacking the stage from Trooper when Ray invited us to play this song we reluctantly recorded with them earlier that day but we busted into our set in front of their audience! Absolute Madness! Let's just say Ray was pissed but said to me afterwards "I would have done the same thing" Touring with Gwar & playing their hometown Richmond, VA. As Sleazy P. Martini pointed out to me, they were pulling out all the

stops on this show. "Stage 5" with each member being pulled through the crowd on chariots dragged by the Gwar Pit Slaves & ending with Cardinal Sin battling Oderus. Truly amazing show to be a part of. Brockie & I became very close over the years & were in the works to record "Big Rock Candy Mountain" together when he suddenly passed away...

AU: What were some of the early venues that supported the punk across Canada?

JB: Off the top of my head. The Rats Nest, Harpo's, Cobalt, Smilin' Buddha, Wash & Slosh, The Albert, Fou Foune Electric, The Zoo, Road House, Generator, Cathedral, El Mocambo, The Trashateria, Republic, Warehouse, Westward, Night Gallery, The Bronx, Paramount, Crocks & Rolls, The Schnitzel Haus, Lamp Lighter, Pete's Place, The Boot, The Vault, & of course the Canmore Hotel!

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

JB: For sure, just look at the release of FTW (DGA Tribute). I met Municipal Waste in Munich way back when & asked them about their sound as I could hear familiar references in their tracks & they told me Dayglo's & D.R.I. were big influences to their sound. It is a great honour to be recognized by other musical groups & to be still relevant after all these years. Best compliment ever!

Photos by Randy Rancid Stubbs




DUSTIN JAK

Keg Killers / Fully Crazyed

AU: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in the Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

Dustin Jak: You are talking to Rentsnorter aka Dustin Jak. I have been in more bands than most of you including Shut Down, Keg Killers, The Pricks, and The Shivs.

AU: What was the early punk scene like where you grew up?

Dustin Jak: Growing up in Victoria, BC with the Dayglo Abortions and Nomeansno usually meant shit would come to the island so I saw endless amounts of great bands... Gary Brainless' basement venue The Rats Nest was as wicked as you have heard.

AU: What was your first introduction to Punk and Hardcore?

Dustin Jak: I grew up on Heavy Metal but by grade 6-7 (1982) I started seeing Red Tide and D.O.A. posters around town at Lyle's Place. Like the usual story I scored Sex Pistols in grade 8 and by grade 10 I was into D.R.I. and Suicidal

Tendencies. By grade 11, I was hanging out at the M.O.C. house where Stephen McBean introduced me to so many bands that I felt like a chameleon on a pack of crayons. My first show was Black Flag's last time playing Victoria. (everyone claims they were at that show. haha) My dad would also drive us to shows at The Rats Nest and the rest is history.

AU: Who were some of the earliest punks around back then?

Dustin Jak: I didn't really know any punks yet so my introduction to these shows was through friends I had made skateboarding. The old punks were rude to us... lol. Except for Dayglo Abortions

who help a lot of bands get their first shows, including mine. They were also responsible for bringing the Jaks Skate Team to Vancouver Island via Mike Anus. And we had Scott Henderson who helped everyone record their bands. Scott did everything, from producing to even helping put our tapes out, eventually morphing into a small label showcasing local talent called Incentive Records.

AU: Early Canadian punk/hardcore bands that were the most influential?

Dustin Jak: I would have to say D.O.A. is pretty damn influential for Canadian Punk Rock on the West Coast. Then the faster stuff really appealed to me... SNFU, Stretch Marks, Dayglos, Death Sentence (what up Syd Savage!)

AU: Favourite Canadian punk albums?

Dustin Jak: My fave Canadian Punk album is SNFU ...And No One Else Wanted To Play. Runner-up is Personality Crisis - Creatures for Awhile.

AU: Most underappreciated Canadian punk or hardcore band?

Dustin Jak: The most underappreciated band is Car 87... but that's because of all the crap Bryce says.

AU: Who's the very first Canadian punk band?

Dustin Jak: I don't care who the first punk band was... they suck compared to any of mine. Lol, obviously joking. The Dishrags and The Skulls

(pre DOA) would be the first punk bands... I also heard about Pat Bay and the Malahats but the loser who was in that band destroyed all the tapes.

AU: List the bands you have been in.

Dustin Jak: Bands I was in...
1986 - Absolute Demise
1987-89 - Atrosity
1989-95 - Shut Down
1994-97 - Sick Sense
1995-97 - Assbackwards
1996-98 - Don Teflon
1998-2000 - The Excessives
2000-2002 - The Pricks
2001-2002 - Burnside Brawlers
2003-present - Keg Killers
2015-present - Fully Crazyed





No Policy Interview with guitarist Rebecca Sevrin

Photo Credit: Linda Dawn Hammond

No Policy was a favorite of the Montreal Hardcore scene in the early to mid 80s.

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

Rebecca Sevrin: This is Rebecca. I was a huge music fan in the late 70s and went to as many shows as possible. In the early 80s I played in a few bands, The Civilians, and Terry Fox's Right Leg, some members wound up in Genetic Control. Then I pieced together No Policy, I played guitar and wrote most of the music. I also drew many flyers in exchange for free tickets into the shows.

AU: What was the genesis of No Policy?

RS: My high school friend Julie and I wanted to play music so I sold her a bass and taught her how to play a few things. She had a boyfriend who played drums who had a brother who 'sang' with the band S.C.U.M. for a few shows. So instant band. Later Julie and Stuart left and were replaced with Mike and Denis.

AU: Describe No Policy's sound.

RS: Fast and noisy like a car crash. With a lawnmower for rhythm.

AU: Who else was in the band and what would it say on their dating profiles?

RS: Hmm dating profiles? We were the band from the land of misfit toys. I am going to base this in the 80s not the present.

Ron: Walking time bomb.

Mike: Bring your own beer.

Denis: Trouble maker.

Me: Nerd.

AU: What made No Policy unique?

RS: We had great songs and the music was super aggressive. I made the guitars I played on stage.

AU: Career highlights or lowlights?

RS: Worse show ever was at John Abbott College. My dad taught communications there. We got turned off within five minutes. I think he was embarrassed I was related to him. Highlight was playing at Montreal Punkfest '77 three years ago on the big stage 30 years later.

AU: Did No Policy release any albums?

RS: We had a cassette on Bluurg Records and the song "News or Propaganda," on Primitive Air Raid.

AU: What do you remember about the first couple live shows you ever played?

RS: Being really happy. I knew I found my place.

AU: First introduction to punk?

RS: I used to check out all the local bands. The Stains, 222's, The Devices, The Nils. I saw Teenage Head. I saw the Battered Wives open for Elvis Costello. Seeing D.O.A. resonated. Great songs with hooks. I like hard fast music. When No Policy started we rehearsed at what we called the Bleury Beach Club with some very cool bands. Fair Warning, Genetic Control, and Unriled.

AU: Earliest bands that were the most influential?

RS: D.O.A., SNFU, Devices, The Ugly, all the bands from *The Last Pogo* movie.

AU: Favourite Canadian bands and albums?

RS: *Bloodied but Unbowed* by DOA. *The Last Pogo*, Fair Warning, Genetic Control, S.C.U.M., Unriled.

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

RS: "Babies Run My World," by Cardboard Brains. It's on *The Last Pogo*. That bass!!!

AU: What sets Canadian punk bands apart?

RS: It's a sound I can't describe but you can tell.

AU: Early venues that supported punk?

RS: I am sticking to Montreal late 70s early 80s so Station 10, Hotel Nelson, Cargo, Rising Sun, Foutounes.

AU: Newer Canadian punk bands?

RS: I like King Khan & BBQ Show and I love Vulgar Deli.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk/hardcore band?

RS: No Policy.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

RS: Voivod said we inspired them. No Policy had a lot of stop start rhythms and aggressive beats.

AU: What's the difference between Punk and Hardcore in your opinion?

RS: Punk rock had a wide range of misfits putting together music and dressing weird, The songs didn't have a standardized tempo. It was artier. There was room for females, artists, film students, musicians, it was a way of life. Make your own reality. Hardcore was a sausage fest. There was a uniform and a stance, a little too jock like at the shows. I loved the music, so fast and driven, but soooo many rules. Must worship Henry must be like Minor Threat. Must have 16 hole Docs. I hate stupid rules.

AU: Tell us about Frightwig, the other band you were in.

RS: I saw Frightwig play at Raji's in Los Angeles. I thought, "I need to play with them." I learned the songs from their album *Cat Farm Faboo* and showed up in SF and weaseled my way into

crashing in their rehearsal room on Turk street. I loved the girls in the band, they were tough with a sense of humor and wrote beautiful noisy songs. I wanted to be one of them so bad. When I finally joined, we went on a mini-tour of the Southwest, then recorded *Faster, Frightwig: Kill! Kill!*

AU: What were some of the best songs?

RS: My fave song was "Vagabondage," but when I replaced Mia the song was dropped. It was her song. "Crazy World" is great and so is "Manifest Destiny." I also love "I'll Talk To You And Smile." We weren't a goth band. We played with the Butthole Surfers as well as 7 Seconds.

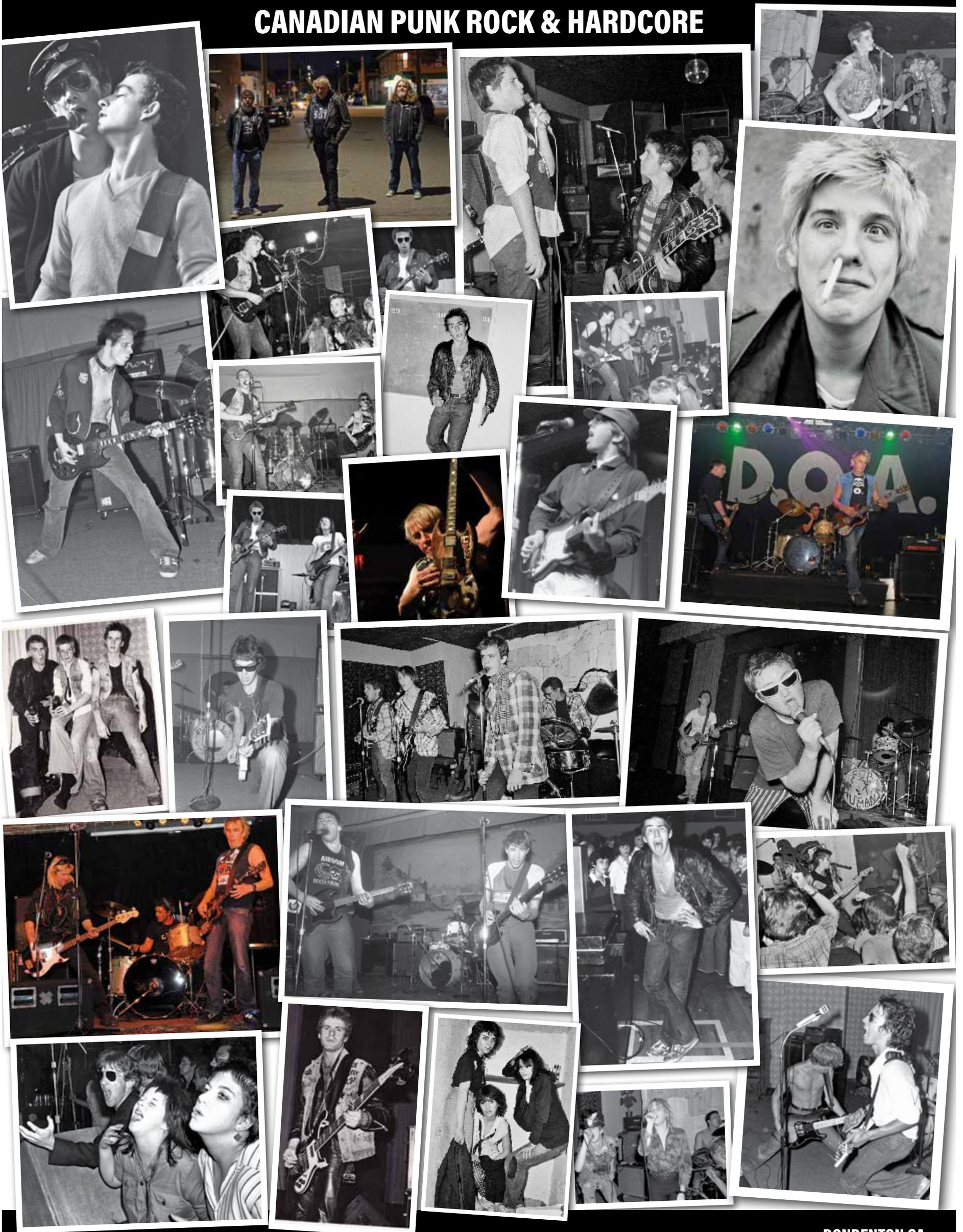
AU: What was the difference between the two bands?

RS: I love both bands. In No Policy, Ron was the voice, I wrote the music. It was fast and tight. I avoided the microphone, stood at the side and did my thing. Ron Denis and Mike are like my brothers, I watched them beat up some of my stalkers. We made great noise. I was so happy to have one more time on stage when we played Punk Fest. That was a gift.

Frightwig was a take no prisoners girl gang. I saw Deanna go after a non-paying promoter with a baseball bat. Susan and Cecilia are tall and intimidating. Males used to tell me we scared them. Hahaha. With Frightwig I was able to explore my taste in clothes which led to my career as a costume fabricator/designer. The songs touched a nerve, and I appreciated the subtle nuances of playing slower with passion. I loved each persons voice and I was encouraged to add to the mix. I wrote the song "Big Bang," and Susan helped me tweak it over cheeseburgers so it could be on the record. Frightwig encouraged me to be strong, be me as well as work hard. I am so lucky to have two bands that shaped me. I am so grateful, I just love playing.

CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND
HARDCORE ANTHOLOGY

CANADIAN PUNK ROCK & HARDCORE



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Les Wiseman Vancouver Punk Origins

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

LW: My name is Les Wiseman. I started writing about early Vancouver punk gigs in 1977 for *The Ubyssy*. Then, when I graduated UBC to become a ditchdigger, I sold an article on Vancouver punk to *Vancouver* magazine where I continued to work and write a notorious rock'n'roll column, *In One Ear*, for 11 years. In that first piece, I covered the Anarchists' Destroy Canada Day concert on July 1, 1978, as well as many of the bands that were creating the punk scene back in the day. Subhumans' Wimpy Roy, with movie-star Brooke Adams, were on the cover, and it was considered to be the story that brought punk to mainstream attention in Vancouver. With film-maker Susanne Tabata, I cowrote the documentary feature on Vancouver punk, *Bloodied But Unbowed* (2010).

AU: Give us a brief history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore if you can.

LW: I really only know Vancouver punk. We disdained Toronto as the land that punk forgot and dismissed its bands as skinny-tied bandwagon-jumpers.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk and hardcore what was the early scene like where you grew up?

LW: I was there, right from the first power chord, every gig, often as a journalist, and most every party as a bon vivant. I always have to preface these things with: As I recall it. Otherwise someone will pick nits with my memories. The first punk gig in Vancouver was The Furies at Pump's Art Gallery in the Inner City, east of Gastown, in May of 1977. The place held nearly 100, maybe. It was packed for an art opening by Richard Hambleton. The Furies were Chris Arnett, who became an archeologist with several academic publications of note, Malcolm Hasman,

who became West Vancouver's top real-estate agent, and drummer Jim Walker who went on to join PiL. Arnett was cool in black leather biker jacket. They had short hair while most of the audience had shags.

AU: What were some of the earliest bands that were the most influential?

LW: There is a lot of evidence that Dee Dee and the Dishrags from Victoria were the first punk band on the Canadian West Coast. They quickly moved to Vancouver and there ends my knowledge of Victoria punk until the Dayglo Abortions came along. The Furies, The Skulls --which became D.O.A.-- Victorian Pork, The Furies and Tim Ray and A/V played the first gigs at Vancouver's Japanese Hall. The Shmorgs

from White Rock contained Art Bergmann who with Barry Taylor on drums and the late Jim Bescott on bass became the K-Tels, who after a corporate cease-and-desist order became The Young Canadians of Hawaii fame. Ernie Dick and The Pointed Sticks represented the raw-power pop contingent that was more melodic and less concerned with politics.

AU: What are some of your favourite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

LW: *No Escape* by The Young Canadians, *Get It Straight* by Modernettes and

Part of the Noise (no longer available, so *Waiting for the Real Thing* is the preferred retrospective) by Pointed Sticks. These three compilations were released on Zulu Records (now distributed by Keithley's Sudden Death Records). For a soup-to-nuts lesson on D.O.A., *The Dawning of a New Error* (Alternative Tentacles) compilation is terrific. Plus, I love Let's Wreck the Party for its humour --and the fact that I came up with the cover. And the definitive early punk compilation is *Vancouver Complication* (originally on Pinned Records).

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

LW: Likely the fact that Vancouver bands were beer bands and thus, relatively, healthy. Heroin hit the UK and U.S. bands much earlier and the losses started piling up much earlier. In Vancouver, punks were still staggering around having fun.



AU: Who are some newer Canadian punk or hardcore bands that continue to hold the torch high?

LW: The Judys are the best contenders in this category, with roots in Rhythm Mission and A.K.A., Payola\$, Shades and Art Bergmann's Poisoned.

AU: In your opinion who is the best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time.

LW: D.O.A. were often the best punk band in the world, depending on when and where you caught them. Certainly at Rock Against Racism in Chicago's Lincoln Park, June 9, 1979, they awed the audience and all the other bands on the bill.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk or hardcore band?

LW: All of them. None went on to millionaire status, as far as I know, except for the guy who sells West Van real estate. There were so many not mentioned here, including No Fun, Exxotone, Enigmas, Shades, Private School, Active Dog, Mecca Normal, U-J3RK5, Rhythm Mission, A.K.A., Courage of Lassie and Los Popularos.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

LW: Either The Furies or Dee Dee and The Dishrags.

AU: Have you been in any bands?

LW: Classically trained, but no, I was stuck behind a typewriter, chronicling the whole movement.

However, I was accepted socially within the scene. Joe Keithley would often call me a brother. I often partied at The Plaza International, which was Vancouver's punk crash-pad, communal-living quarters on East Georgia Street. However, I was never a punk; I had a beard and a job.

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

LW: The early Mothers of Invention, The Velvet Underground and The Stooges. The Stones, especially Keith, and David Bowie presaged punk, but very much created the attitude and hairstyle that went through a blender and bequeathed The New York Dolls.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

LW: Joe Keithley, runs his own Sudden Death Records, which does well due to his unrelenting

work ethic. Plus, D.O.A. is on tour yet again, this time featuring the entire *Hardcore '81* album -- which is where the term hardcore comes from. Art Bergmann has resurfaced after years of health issues and is creating some of his most vital and poignant music ever with The Apostate and Last Stage Empire Dementia. Jim Cummins, who is I, Braineater, continues to create successful art shows and has a relentless work ethic, continually turning out wonderful new art. Tim Ray put out a remastered version of his ground-breaking work with A/V called *History Lessons 1978-1984*. Mecca Normal is planning some new gigs now that Jean Smith has become a successful painter, written up in the *New York Times*, and David Lester has become an award-winning graphic novelist.

The Pointed Sticks did incredibly well in Japan after a lengthy hiatus and have released some of the best music of their career in recent years, such as *Three Lefts Make a Right*. Buck Cherry of the Modernettes also did well in Japan and has a New Modernettes, which has recorded some great new tunes. Mary-Jo Kopechne, former bassist of the Modernettes, has worked with her partner, graphic artist David Cran, and has released a new line of T-shirts < redbubble.com/people/Memoryvault> featuring designs based around The Smilin' Buddha neon sign and Mary go-go dancing at a Young Canadians gig at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre -- which I produced and was one of the greatest shows ever.

And various members of the original Vancouver punk scene have passed away, Wimpy and Dimwit from The Subhumans (and D.O.A. and Pointed Sticks), Randy Rampage, Dave Gregg and Brad Kent from D.O.A., Simon Wilde and Zippy Pinhead from The Rabid. We shall not soon see their like.

wiseman-corridor.blogspot.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Alex Waterhouse-Hayward

CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND
HARDCORE ANTHOLOGY





Art Bergmann Late Stage Empire Dementia

Interview by Ira Hunter and Les Wiseman

Absolute Underground: Hi Art, how are you?

Art Bergmann: Well, the world is going off a cliff and you want to talk about punk rock?

AU: Yeah, we're going old school here. We were inspired by the artwork that Brian Walsby created for our cover featuring all the Canadian punk rock bands on there.

Art: Too many men, and where the fuck am I?

AU: This is our third attempt at this interview, yesterday you had to postpone because you were "Full of Hate" So hopefully you're not full of hate again today, are you?

Art: Actually, yes, I am. Not towards you guys. Alberta is just dead. Kenney is just saying they're not gonna make people isolate if they're positive or do any contact tracing. They're saying it's over when it's not over and our numbers are surging. So there's just assholes here, it's just unbelievable.

AU: My girlfriend got a kick out of that. She said, "I wish I could use that excuse to get out of work: I'm full of hate today."

Art: Yeah, mental health day off.

AU: I remember the last time you played in Victoria, you were at the Upstairs Lounge and were about to do a couple more songs and the fucking sound guy cut you off. I was just so gobsmacked by the disrespect of that because they wanted to start playing techno music for some dance night or whatever. I'm like Art Bergmann has the Order of Canada and you're cutting off his mic?

Art: I can vaguely remember that. They don't give us no respect, the disco people.

AU: Who are we talking to officially and what was your involvement with early Canadian punk rock scene?

Art: I had nothing to do with it, I tell ya. You're

talking to Art Bergmann of a little band called The K-Tels and then we changed the name, ironically of course to the Young Canadians. But K-Tel International wanted to sue us for damage to the goodwill of their name. We were around when D.O.A. was probably the first punk band, but all kinds of people came out of the woodwork after that. And we were all different, I mean, it's all on that record *Vancouver Complication*. There was no uniform. Just dress as crazily as you wanted to express yourself.

AU: Was there a difference between The K-Tels and Young Canadians?

Art: No difference at all. We were the same band.

AU: What else is on your musical resume?

Art: After Young Canadians I was in a band called Los Rádicos Populares. We travelled the land and broke up because Zippy Pinhead was scared to drive with us anymore because our headlights went out and we had to use a flashlight to get down the highway from Drumheller. Unique name for a unique place in time when Zippy quit our band. He was the drummer in the band, but rest in peace Mr. Zippy. After Populares, I kind of started up a band called Poisoned but then there was this awful glam metal hair band from LA, we didn't want any confusion with them. So I just veered off into my solo career.

AU: Who else was in the supergroup Los Populares with you?

Art: Super group of alcoholics is more like it. Buck Cherry from The Modernettes, Bill Shirt from Active Dog. Dash Ham from Active Dog. Tony Bardach from Painted Sticks.

AU: Describe the Young Canadians sound?

Art: We were a power trio, stripped down and took our inspiration from garage bands of the 60s and 70s, like The Seeds, and also inspired by the raw musicianship of The Who. Unfortunately, we all knew how to play our instruments, and the punk thing was you can start at any age and everyone should learn to punk, but after a while you do get better. So that was our problem. People hated me because I was too old, I was 24. But our sound was Say What You Want and Say It Like You Mean It.

AU: Looking back now, do you think you are more famous or more infamous?

Art: Depends who you ask I guess. I mean, record companies after dumping me, told me I was a

persona non grata and kind of tried to ignore me for the 90s. So I kind of gave up music for a while. In early 2000, I got spinal problems, osteoarthritis, my hands and feet were numbing out and so I had to get an operation. I could play again, but not that great, but enough to be pissed off enough still that things needed to be said so I put out the last three records under that aggressive need to say my bit.

AU: What helped you get back on stage after your back surgery? We heard it was drinking some Asian soft drinks with snake venom.

Art: Is that right? Snake venom has always been a secret ingredient of my long life.

AU: Tell us about your newest record, *Late Stage Empire Dementia*.

Art: It's all there, everything I wanted to say all my life about the greed whoring pigs that reign over us. I just tried to itemize it through the chaos of climate change and refugees, and the second amendment coming out of slavery in the States. I mean, it's all there. What do you want? Genocide, Ecocide, and Christo Fascists reviving themselves in the States.

AU: Why do you think you received the Order of Canada? Was it for your contributions to punk rock or was it more to do with your taking on social issues like you just mentioned?

Art: Well, they are one in the same thing. My aggressive appeal towards our better nature to try to equalize our society. I got it for my lyric genius, don'tcha know? I should have had a couple of drinks before this interview, you're making me do all the work here.

AU: You started off in Vancouver. Was there a rivalry between the West Coast and the East Coast bands in the early days of punk?

Art: No, we didn't even hear about each other. I mean, we only made it to Winnipeg on our first tour and that's a big stretch of country to try to get across, that Canadian shield

thing. So no, I never made it to Toronto until the early 80s and then we hung out for a month. Got one gig at a bloody disco somewhere and then we staggered back home across the country. That was with Los Populares. Eventually I got record deals in Toronto funnily enough, so I was big in Toronto for a couple minutes.

AU: Were the Young Canadians also popular with the young Americans?

Art: For sure, we used to do trips down the West Coast to San Francisco in the age of Dead Kennedys and Black Flag. We used to see Black Flag going back and forth down the highway, that was a hard working band.

AU: Going back to your new album, were there any special guests on it?

Art: Sure, the producer Russell Broom played the hell all over it. His beautiful guitar work is featured on it. Also Wayne Kramer from MC5 of course, how could I forget? We used his name ad nauseam. He plays on the song "Christo-Fascists," Wayne's actually in the video if you see there's a woman attacking a guitar player at the beginning of the video, that's Wayne Kramer in Detroit 1969.

AU: What made the Young Canadians unique when they were first getting started?

Art: Our raw talent I guess, my raging intelligence, and there you have it. *laughs*

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

Art: Highlights, definitely winning the Juno in '95 for "What Fresh Hell Is This?" and being kicked off Sony Records at the same time was definitely a special moment for me. Just to realize how inept and useless Canadian record companies were at the time. They were just looking for American clone bands or top 40 songs. They could have pretended I was Elvis Costello or Lou Reed or something, they might have done better, but no such luck.

AU: What did you see happening with Canadian punk rock in the early days?

Art: I saw some of my best friends in the scene

become the Squamish Five and take down some of the infrastructure of the great pigs



that reign over us with Direct Action. That was pretty cool. Gerry Hannah of the Subhumans, and Brent The Anarchist, Julie Belmas. It was amazing. They are still friends of mine. I played with Gerry Useless a couple years back. He's been out of prison now for many years. Also I remember getting busted at the Smilin' Buddha Cabaret by the city police. That comes out in a song "No Escape" by Young Canadians. It's on the "Hawaii" EP

AU: What early bands influenced you?

Art: Well, the garage bands like I said, and then you know Patti Smith, all the bands coming out of England; Liar, XTC, and Sex Pistols of course. Have you read *Lipstick Traces* by Greil Marcus? It's a good book about how unique and amazing and alien the punk sound was when it first came out. I mean it scared the shit out of people.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

Art: Nothing should really, we're citizens of the world and there's not a nationalist bone in my body. I refuse to wave a flag. Especially with what we know about Canada's history now, we're a genocidal fucking mess aren't we?

AU: Who do you think the first Canadian punk was?

Art: I'm not sure about this. Maybe Nazi Dog (Steven Leckie) was one of the first.

AU: What was it like working with director Bruce McDonald on the movies *Highway 61* and *Hard Core Logo*?

Art: Oh, awesome. He's a beautiful man who makes beautiful films. I loved his work on *The Rez* on CBC.

AU: What was your role in *Hard Core Logo*? Did you play yourself?

Art: Yeah, that was just the cameo. We played a song at the Commodore Ballroom, there wasn't much to it really. I actually played a part in *Highway 61*. The part of a washed up rock star. Which I know nothing about.

AU: Would you suggest the documentary, *Bloodied but Unbowed*, for people to learn about the early Vancouver punk scene?

Art: Oh, yeah, for sure. It's an awesome bit of work by my friend Susanne Tabata. It's amazing and features all the bands. Originally it was gonna be just about D.O.A. but some people put up a stink so she had to include a wider variety of music.

AU: What did it mean to you to receive the Order of Canada, and how have you been able to use it to broaden your voice?

Art: Well yeah, I thought it was a filthy joke at the time but it came out to be true and I'm listed for my acknowledgement of the severe social inequalities in our country. I wanted to burn it and give it back but an indigenous friend of mine told me I should use it so I can speak to the genocidal state we find ourselves in ongoing to this very day. So I'm going to hang on to it till somebody from the First Nations tells me it's okay to burn it.

AU: Did you ever get to go to fuckin' Hawaii?

Art: No, not yet. Hawaiian indigenous folks are telling us not to go there anymore. So maybe I won't go there because America has destroyed the place.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian band?

Art: Oh, geez. Rheostatics. Tim Ray has an awesome song on the *Vancouver Complication* album. U-J3RK5 were crazy good. I also love the Subhumans to this day.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock.

Art: Keep it up 12 year olds, learn how to play and change the world.

AU: It's been an honour to speak with you today. Hopefully we'll see you play in Victoria again and that next time they don't cut off your mic.

Art: Yeah, they better not. I've got nothing left to lose.

artbergmann.com

Color Photo Credit Kenneth Locke -
BW Photo Credit Bev Davies

Transcribed by Amanda "Baby Momma" Lawrence



Al Nolan

Almighty Trigger Happy

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in Canadian Punk and Hardcore?

AN: Al Nolan, Vocals for Deep End 1989-90

Suck Epidemic Records.

Vocals, Almighty Trigger Happy 1991-Present.

Releases *Disturbo* 1992 - *Uncooler* 1993 - *Killatron*

2000 1994/95 - *I'll Shut Up When You Fuck Off*

1996/97 - *A Matter of Fact* 1998 - *I Hate Us* 1999

CURSED BLESSINGS

- *Blood Red & Forever Blue*
2022 - *A Better Funeral* 2022

AU: Give us a brief history of Canadian punk rock and hardcore if you can.

AL: As far as I'm concerned... it began in 1976 in this order, New York, Detroit, Toronto, London, LA, and that's that.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk?

AL: I saw the Sex Pistols on the news.

Teenage Head, Viletones on CityTV Toronto.

Earliest exposure... my teenage friends were in bands. Malhavoc & Missing

Link in 85ish... Very educational. Punk Rock was for runaways & the disenfranchised... So we were told. Suburban kids vs city punks. Two different worlds.

Skateboarding brought it all together. I'm sure some of the '77 types were bummed. It's the New Guards right/responsibility to kill off & respect the ones that came before. They made it safe for you to be you. And your stupid band.

AU: What early bands were most influential?

AL: Minor Threat/Black Flag for philosophy.

An excellent example of "You want it?" "Kill for it" DIY has become "Live Laugh Love" Anyone can

do it... Punks were raised on Rock N Roll. I love Kiss. Which is very punk. Everyone hated what they were doing.

I wanted to be busy. Touring & regularly releasing records is success. Don't stop. What people are buying? That's two different things. I love American hardcore like SSD.

Nardcore stuff. NYHC too.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk bands and albums?

AN: Personality Crisis - *Creatures for Awhile*.

Fully Crazed - *Off The Hook*.

MVLL CRIMES - *You're Embarrassing Me*.

Sudden Impact - *Freaked Out* cassette.

Missing Link - *Murder Music* Cassette.

Most, if not all the bands on my record label Cursed Blessings.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart from other bands in the world?

AL: Bad decisions. Alcohol. Relying on outside scenes for validation. The geography & weather will decide your success if you do not want it bad enough. We have had the English & American influence on our music. The metal sound came later. Usually only about four bands a decade are allowed success outside Canada.

AU: What were some of the early venues that supported the punk rock scene across Canada?

AL: By the time I was touring... Crocks, Foufs, Royal Albert, Channel 1, Louis Pub, The Times, Bronx, Rev, Westward Inn, Republic, Town Pump, Hungry Eye/Cruel Elephant, Harpist, The Limit, Opera House, Ildikos, Latvian Hall, Moon Room, and Trasheteria to name a few.

AU: Any newer Canadian punk or hardcore bands that continue to hold the torch high?

AL: Choices Made, Dragged In, Slime, to name three.

AU: Best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

AL: Viletones.

AU: Most underappreciated Canadian punk or hardcore band?

AL: Almighty Trigger Happy.

AU: Very first Canadian punk band?

AL: Teenage Head

AU: What's the first dangerous music you ever heard?

AL: People are more dangerous than music. It's like chicken and the egg. Kiss had explosions. Merciful Fate was pretty wild. Ummm the BFGs (Bunchofuckin'goofs) cause they were in the city. I first heard of them when I was 12 in Grade 7.

AU: What made your band unique when you were first getting started?

AL: Well I knew what we wanted. And we weren't going to get it here... so we set our sights elsewhere. Our scene was dead, or trying to kill itself. Grunge & slow alternative crap was everywhere. We wanted Black Flag. We got Nirvana... Yawn. Hardcore never went out of style.

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to share?

AL: I did everything you've heard about me & more. Legend is better than truth. I'm the worst person til you meet me.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

AL: I'm still taller. And younger bands dress deplorably. Except Cory from No More Moments. So there's hope...

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

AL: Seems to be more rules than ever & even more overlooking of the rules than ever... you can be a decent person and still be punk rock. Some punks are more equal than others?!

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Jason Lamb

Host of the Punk Show

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

JL: I'm Jason Lamb. I've been the producer and host of 'The Punk Show on The Zone @ 91-3' here in Victoria, BC since 2011, but I started going to see punk gigs when I was a teenager in the 80s. I'm also currently writing a book, a full oral & visual history of Victoria band NoMeansNo.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian punk/hardcore.

JL: Let me recommend the book *Perfect Youth* by Sam Sutherland. Too much info to include in a sentence or two.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk rock?

JL: Other than being aware of stuff like the Sex Pistols, The Clash and Ramones as a kid, the first punk music I really heard was when a friend

played the cassette tape of Dead Kennedys' *In God We Trust Inc* EP when I was 14. That would've been around 1985. The next thing I heard was a local band, the Dayglo Abortions. The *Feed Us a Fetus* record. I think I was hooked from that moment on.

AU: What were some of the earliest bands that were the most influential?

JL: No Canadian band was more influential in my opinion than D.O.A. They set the blueprint for so many bands that came afterwards, and they carved out the touring routes that bands in North America still use today, 40+ years later.

AU: What are some of your favourite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

JL:
Dayglo Abortions – *Here Today, Guano Tomorrow*
NoMeansNo – *Small Parts Isolated and Destroyed*



Chain Whip – *14 Lashes*
SNFU – *If You Swear, You'll Catch No Fish*
No Problem – *Already Dead*
Subhumans – *Incorrect Thoughts*
D.O.A. – *War on 45*

AU: What sets Canadian punk bands apart from others?

JL: Much like our comedy, our friendliness, our beer, etc. Canada just produces the best punk, and I think it has a lot to do with the fact that we are influenced equally by American and British culture. We take the best of both and make it our own. Some of the best punk bands of all time have come from Canada. So many unique styles and personalities.

AU: Who are some newer Canadian punk or hardcore bands that continue to hold the torch

high?

JL: There are tons of great bands in Canada right now. Some of my favourites are METZ, Sore Points, Chain Whip, Booji Boys... there are some great bands in Victoria these days too... Vic City Rejects, Poor Choices, The Hex.

AU: Who is the best Canadian punk band of all time?

JL: Well, it's a no brainer for me. NoMeansNo are the best band ever to come out of Canada, period. Punk or otherwise. In my humble opinion, of course.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk or hardcore bands?

JL: There are lots of bands that deserved a little

more attention I think. Forbidden Dimension (and Color Me Psycho), Personality Crisis, House of Commons, The Gruesomes.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

JL: Tough question. In Ontario, I guess it was the Viletones and the Diodes... over here on the West Coast, definitely D.O.A. (The Skulls), Subhumans, The Dishrags, Pointed Sticks. Maybe the Modernettes and Young Canadians with Art Bergmann?

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

JL: Again – it was the Dead Kennedys, and then the Dayglo Abortions – especially the Dayglos. My young mind couldn't comprehend that adults could be singing about these things!

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The Infamous Scientists / Nomeansno

Interview with Andy Kerr

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Andy Kerr: I am Andy Kerr. When I lived in Victoria, BC, I played in the Infamous Scientists, Nomeansno and briefly The Show Business Giants during the 1980s.

AU: What other bands have you been in?

AK: Hissanol, She Bang, and Two Pin Din.

AU: What was your first band Dioxyn all about?

AK: Dioxyn was never a band. Just me and Kev Smith from the Neos and Scott Henderson from Shovlhed trying to make up our own Discharge song one night in a practice space.

AU: Describe The Infamous Scientists' sound if possible.

AK: Well, the I-Sci's were the first band I was in. Pop-punk mixed with a smattering of post-punk, I'd say, hahaha. Guitar, bass and drums.

AU: Who else was in the band with you?

AK: Kev Lee played bass, I played guitar, our first drummer was Murray Jackson and our second and last drummer was John Wright.

AU: What made your guitar playing unique when you were first getting started?

AK: Not much really. It was all a means to an end, namely playing live ASAP. I never had any inclination to learn complex lead runs. Too hard!! Hahahaha! So it was mostly chords for this cowboy, some single line stuff and also angular noise things that I always enjoyed doing.

AU: What did you bring to the table when you joined NoMeansNo in 1983?

AK: You'd probably have to ask Rob or John, but they have said on multiple occasions that adding

a third member who was very animated helped them break out of their more static stance as a two piece live. If I was singing Robbie could run around like a madman. Also, I suppose I brought another voice when working out the arrangements when we were writing, as well as the odd song or two of my own.

AU: How did the band evolve with you in the mix?

AK: The songs became more complex and less minimal simply because there were

more musical options. Yes, I was the one who ruined Nomeansno! Had I not joined, NMN may have been forced to evolve into something more radical and less traditional than what it turned into.

AU: What was it like working with Jello Biafra and NoMeansNo on the album *The Sky is Falling and I Want My Mommy*?

AK: We liked Biafra. We were huge DKs fans, of course. So in some respects it was a weird little fantasy come true of "playing" the musical roles of the Dead Kennedys. The beginning of "Chew," for instance, is me straight out ripping off East Bay Ray. Biafra brought a lot of cool music and lyrics of songs he'd worked out but we also contributed our own songs, too. It was fun to do. I just wish the album sounded a little better...

AU: What do you remember about the first couple live shows you ever played?

AK: With NMN? I was invited as a 'special guest' on two or three songs at the end of the two piece set. It was fun (though I had no idea I'd been

joining the band ever. They were just friends of mine). This happened a couple of times more, I think, and then we all got together and talked about the idea of adding me on guitar for certain songs on a regular basis. And so it went. People (most of whom had never seen NMN) would watch Rob and John do their thing for 20-25 minutes and then suddenly I'd come out with my guitar and the sound changed all of a sudden. It was a cool effect.

AU: Was being in The Hanson Brothers hockey band the funnest thing ever? Describe the live experience for the uninitiated.

AK: The Hanson Brothers started with Rob writing some fun punk songs for a fake band as a bit of a break from writing NMN songs (around the

time of Small Parts). We didn't have many songs, maybe seven or eight? And we'd sometimes add one to our set, or encore, just for fun. A couple of times we dressed up in some hockey jerseys. I guess people liked it as a kind of joke, and as some welcome relief from the "sturm und drang" of the regular NMN tunes. But the whole Hansons thing only seriously got going after I left the band in 1991.

AU: Give us a brief history of Canadian punk rock from your perspective if you can.

AK: Coming from Victoria, BC, Canadian punk rock started and ended with the Vancouver scene. We were in awe of all those bands, DOA, Subhumans, K-Tels, Pointed Sticks, Dishrags, etc. So, so much good music and created just across the water from where we lived. Only years later when we were touring did we clue into the fact that other scenes also existed in Canada. But, to be honest, those scenes were mostly from the second wave which morphed into the hardcore scene that was so strong in the 1980s.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk rock?

AK: I'd read a little bit about it in *Rolling Stone* magazine but when my 15 year old self finally got up the nerve to buy the Sex Pistols album, I was completely blown away. Ground zero.

AU: What was the early scene where you grew up?

AK: Victoria was different than Vancouver. Kids were younger. More suburban. Less threatening. But the great thing was after just a few local shows, all these bands starting popping up. Et voila! We had a scene! The big shows were when known bands like DOA or Black Flag came to town. As they were all-ages, everyone and their dog would go.

AU: Favourite Canadian punk/hardcore bands and albums?

AK: Incorrect Thoughts, Hardcore 81, Young Canadians *Hawaii* EP, UJ3RK5 EP, The Dayglos' *Feed Us A Fetus*, both NEOS EPs and, of course, Vancouver Complication.

AU: What sets Canadian punk bands apart?

AK: Hmm. I'm not sure. We're quite a goofy lot.

AU: Best Canadian punk/hardcore band of all time?

AK: NEOS

AU: Most underappreciated band?

AK: Subhumans

AU: Can you see your influence on any bands that followed?

AK: I can't, actually. But some folks claimed we had some kind of effect on them. Certainly our name gets mentioned on occasion as a bit of a Proto-math band.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've seen happen on stage?

AK: I think watching the totally pissed lead singer of Bludgeoned Pigs walk onto the stage at their Canada Day show with the Subhumans and fall flat down on his face.

AU: What's the difference between Punk and Hardcore?

AK: It's a bit of a case of semantics cuz I see "punk" as the larger term and hardcore being a sub-category. Sometimes it's more the scene you find yourself in more than your sound. For example I think of the Big Boys as a hardcore band but their sound was a world away from MDC.

Still, they shared a scene.

AU: Are any of your bands or solo projects still active?

AK: Two Pin Din and Hissanol are both on vacation at the moment but I have no doubt I'll return to both of those projects in the hopefully near future.



AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

AK: I was lucky to grow up when and where I did. Heard so much great music in Canada in the alt scene and not just punk and hardcore. Also I'm very grateful to having had the chance to play all across the country several times, meet wonderful people.

twopindin.bandcamp.com

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Perfect Youth: The Birth of Canadian Punk

Interview with author Sam Sutherland

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

I'm Sam Sutherland, best known for my humble nature in addition to my many accomplishments.

AU: What was the genesis behind the idea for your book, Perfect Youth: The Birth of Canadian Punk?

As I started to get into punk and music journalism, I loved reading other regional histories like Please Kill Me and England's Dreaming and wished there was a similar book about all the amazing bands that Canada had at the same time. So, I wrote it.

AU: What bands were featured in the book?

All the classics like the Viletones, DOA, Teenage Head, SNFU, and Subhumans, but also a lot of bands that never made it out of places like St. John's, Newfoundland (Da Slyme) or Winnipeg (Dub Rifles).

AU: What years does the book cover and what was involved as far as research goes?

The book generally covers what I consider to be

the "first wave," from about 1975 to '81, '82 when hardcore really took over.

AU: Where there any people or bands you wanted to include in the book that you couldn't get a hold of?

I was lucky enough to get time with almost everyone I wanted to talk to, even if it was quick, or weird. The one thing is that I spend a lot of time in the Subhumans chapter talking about the Litton Industries bombing, and I wish I had a chance to talk to Gerry Useless properly about his involvement in Direct Action.

AU: What makes Canadian punk bands unique in your opinion?

The isolation. No band in Edmonton in 1977 thought they'd get a record deal and get famous. It just wasn't a possibility. As a result you had people making music purely for the purpose of expressing themselves, hanging out with friends, finding something to do. New York bands were great, but they also all wanted to get signed to CBS, which changes your approach.

AU: I see that you are also involved in the film industry, what projects have you worked on?

I've produced a few documentaries, like Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and the Band, which we did with Martin Scorsese, and

Long Time Running, about the final tour of the Canadian band the Tragically Hip.

AU: What was the experience like when you did your book release. Did a lot of old-school punks come out of the woodwork?

Yeah! We had Arson play both at the Toronto and Hamilton events, and in Montreal we had the original Crash 'n' Burn sign brought out care of Ralph Alfonso.

AU: Give us a history of Canadian punk rock if you can.

Damn that's tough. But I hear there's a whole book about it.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk rock? What was the early scene like where you grew up?

I got into punk through Blink-182 being played on the radio and MuchMusic - but the great thing about that era was even the popular bands would constantly namecheck their influences or more independent peers, so you could go down the rabbit hole pretty easily if you were so inclined. I grew up in a Toronto suburb called Etobicoke, which didn't have much going on. But Toronto was accessibly by subway and always had amazing shows, and the next 'urb over had a really exciting scene with bands like Grade

AU: What are some of your favourite Canadian punk rock bands?

I have a Teenage Head tattoo and another that is kind of based off the cover of Personality Crisis' *Creatures for Awhile*, so gotta be those.

AU: First live show you ever went to?

Super punk - Moist, Matthew Good Band, and Serial Joe at the Air Canada Centre in grade seven.

AU: Who are some newer Canadian punk bands

that continue to hold the torch high?

Junior Battles for sure.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk band in your opinion?

I still think the answer is Personality Crisis. Totally original, never duplicated, only in Canada.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've ever seen happen on stage?

One time in Baltimore I watched a guy walk up to the singer of a band, stick his fingers down his own throat, and puke all over the singer.

AU: Are you in any bands?

I play in a band called Junior Battles.

AU: What's the next project you're working on?

Currently have a few film projects in development I'm super excited about, plus I'm doing a weekly podcast about "punk" songs that is consistently weird and interesting (at least to me).

AU: Any advice for aspiring writers and filmmakers?

Do stuff for yourself - make YouTube videos, start publishing on Medium, basically just don't wait around for permission and just make stuff you like.

AU: How can people find/buy your book?

You can order it to your local bookstore, or buy it on the big bad website!

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock.

It's good!

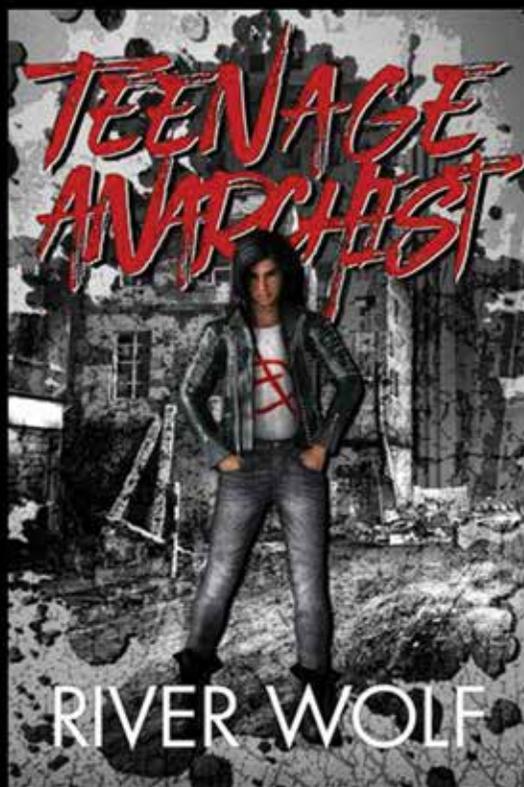
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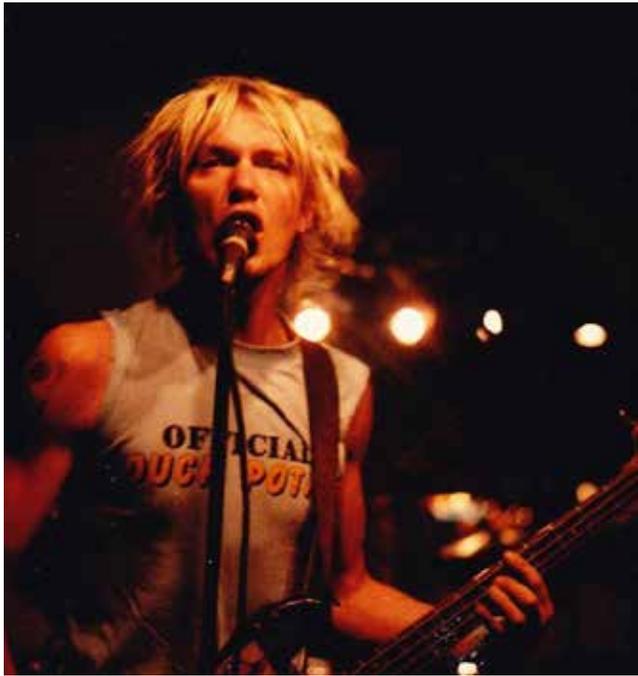
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**CANADIAN PUNK ROCK
AND HARDCORE**

Dead Kennedys.

AU: What made your band stand-out when you were first getting started?

Spud: Without a doubt our name but we also were unique in our style.

AU: Most underappreciated early Canadian punk or hardcore band?

Spud: There was so many... H.O.C. (House of Commons), the Bludgeoned Pigs... and the list goes on.

AU: Who do you think the very first Canadian punk band was?

Spud: I know DOA was not the first but they were the first to record as far as I know.

AU: Looking back now can you see your influence on any other bands that followed?

Spud: I think it goes without saying that we were a big influence on a lot of bands, not only our music, but the fact that we could tour and survived on our own showed bands it could be done.

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

Spud: This shit ain't ever going away and that warms my black soul.

**Spud a.k.a
Trevor Hagen**

Dayglo Abortions bassist 1979-1999



Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

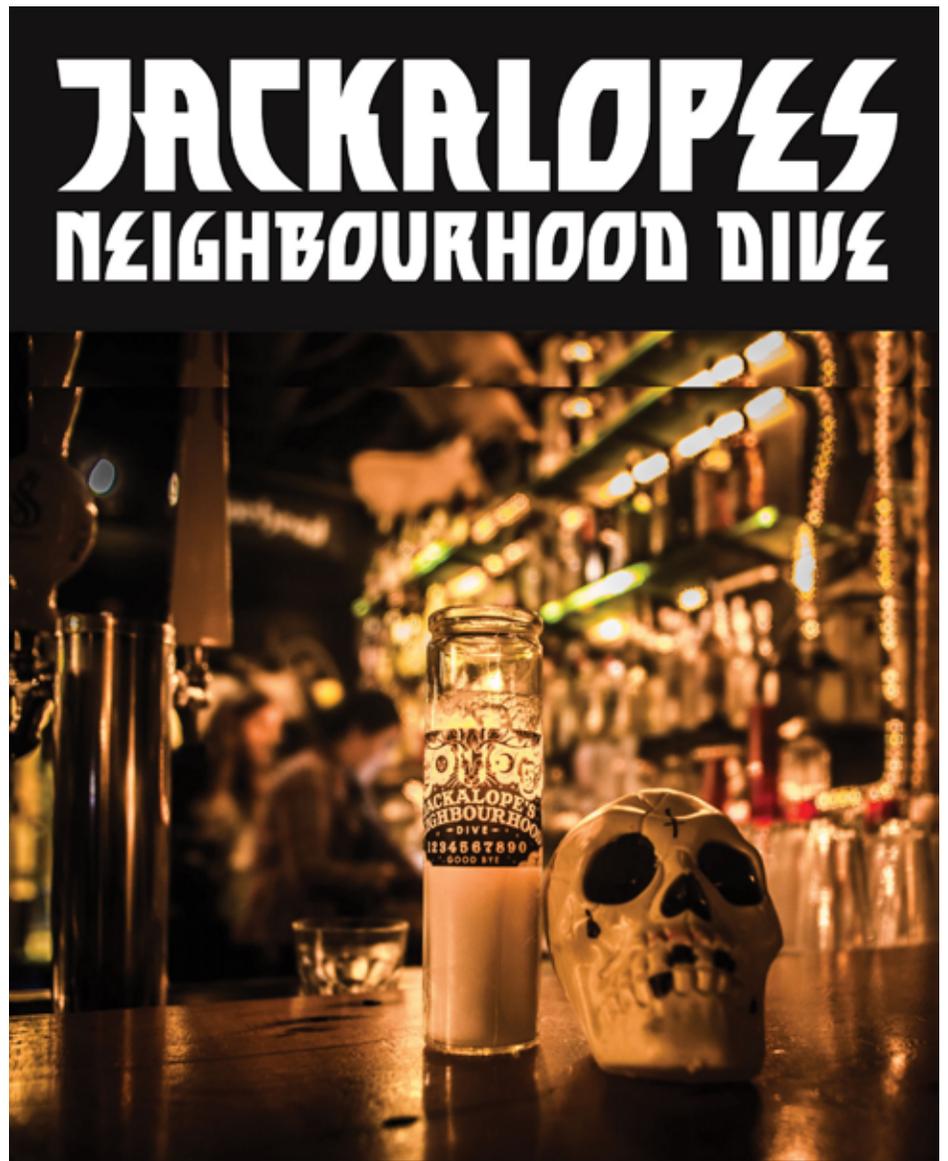
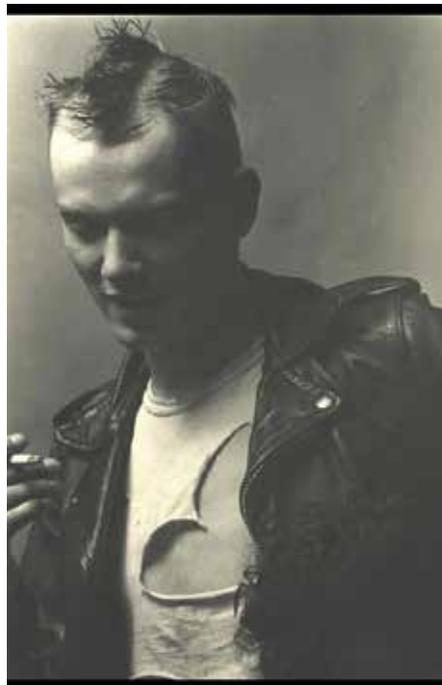
Spud: Spud Dayglo. OG bass player and part time singer for the Dayglo Abortions.

AU: What was your first introduction to punk?

Spud: My first introduction to punk was Murray "The Cretin" Acton. We were going to start a band. We were all sick of the 70s crap music that was out so we knew we wouldn't play anything even close to that. So he asked me what I thought about this punk rock and I admitted not much. I'd heard some Ramones. So Murray said you gotta check out more, so I did and never looked back. It was the 70s so there was no real scene in Victoria. We started booking the O.A.P. Hall, the DaVinci Hall and going to the Smilin' Buddha in Van. And of course there was the rocker scene that didn't get it so there was a few fights. But within a few years they were at the shows too cuz they were a blast.

AU: Earliest bands and albums that were most influential?

Spud: Sex Pistols, Subhumans, D.O.A.'s *Triumph of the Ignoroids* is still a fav of mine. Angry Samoans.



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Bev Davies

Camera In Hand

Photo Credit: Bev Davies

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what was your involvement in the early Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene?

BD: I'm Bev Davies and I had the great privilege to be around the Canadian Punk and Hardcore scene with a camera in my hand.

AU: What was your first introduction to Canadian punk and hardcore?

BD: I went to a D.O.A. show March 24, 1979. I was blown away. The energy, the music, the fans. It was magic. I didn't take my camera but the next D.O.A. show I was there with a camera, then I bought a flash and started going to as many shows as I could. I grew up in Ontario years before I came to Vancouver. When I came here there was a great music scene in 1968.



Hydro Electric Streetcar, Mother Tucker's Yellow Duck, Trials of Jason Hover, Yellow Brick Road and many more.

AU: What were some of the earliest bands that were the most influential?

BD: The punk scene here was very active with several bands, and there were bands that were members from other bands who played together making new bands, often playing instruments they were not really familiar with. D.O.A., Subhumans, Pointed Sticks, The K-Tels (Young Canadians), Rabid, East Van Halen, then Fuck bands like Rude Norton, such a long list really.



AU: What are some of your favourite Canadian punk rock bands and albums?

BD: Well Vancouver bands and their early releases. D.O.A. is going on a Hardcore 81 tour playing the album in celebration of the release 40 years ago.

AU: What sets Canadian punk rock bands apart

from other bands in the world?

BD: I could see them live, great to be there. The Vancouver scene was a do it yourself scene, no big record company taking over. Maybe too many songs with "Fuck You" in the lyrics for the radio.

AU: Who is the best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

BD: D.O.A.

AU: Who is the most underappreciated early Canadian punk band?

BD: I would name the Subhumans for that title.

AU: Have you been in any bands?

BD: Hahaha nope, camera only.

AU: What was the first dangerous music that you ever heard?

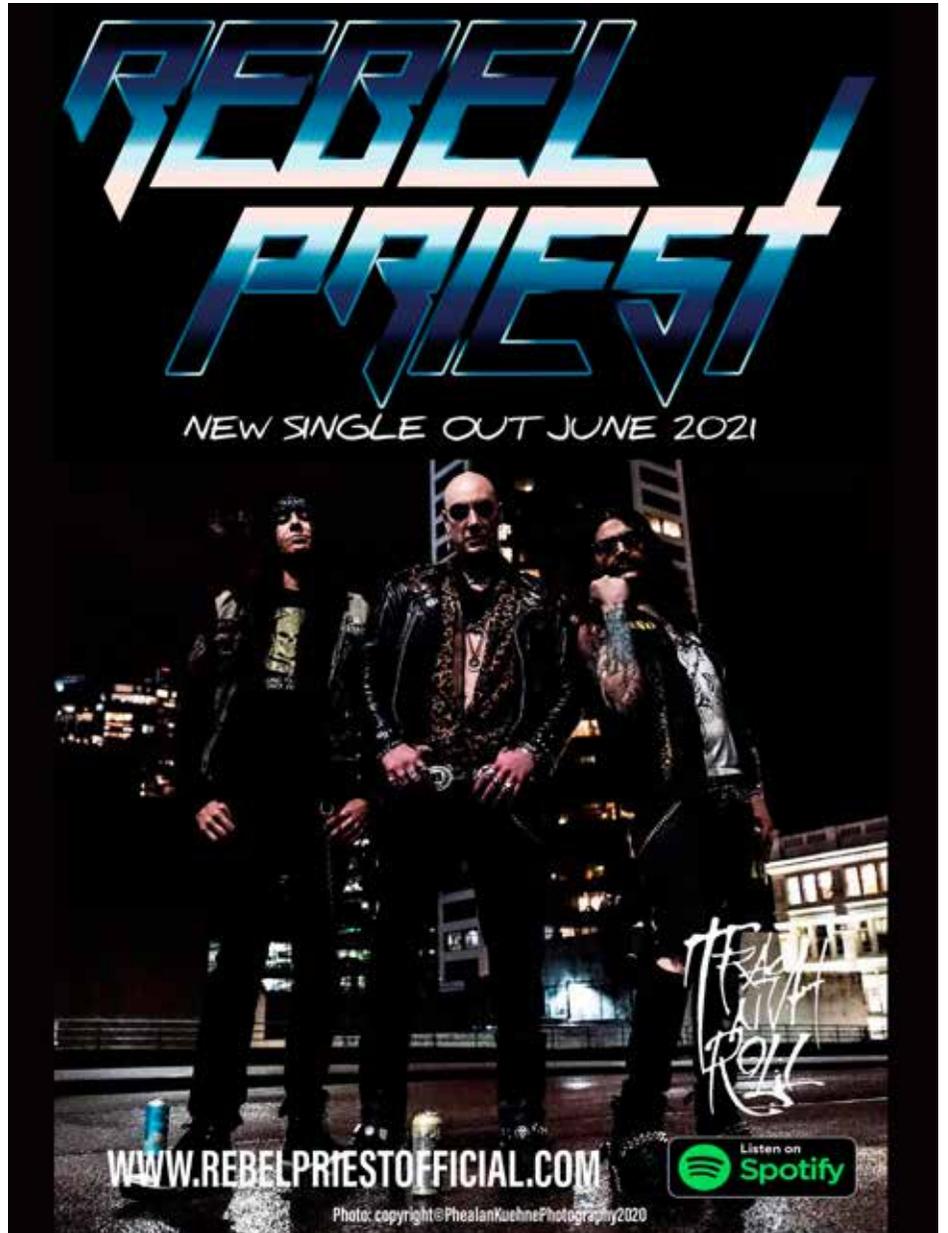
BD: Rock and Roll was the first dangerous music I ever heard, Little Richard ("Good Golly Miss Molly"), Jerry Lee Lewis ("Great Balls of Fire") Elvis Presley ("Hound

Dog") Bill Haley & His Comets ("Shake Rattle and Roll").

AU: Final thoughts on Canadian punk rock and hardcore.

BD: I was so privileged to have been part of such an amazing music time in Vancouver. I took photos and loved the music. I hope that love shows in my photos.

[flickr.com/photos/bevdavies](https://www.flickr.com/photos/bevdavies)





Brian Walsby Musical Artist

Absolute Underground: Please introduce yourself.

BW: My name is Brian Walsby. I live in North Carolina with my wife Kristin and our two children. I am a freelance artist and draw a lot of stuff all of the time.

AU: What's your experience with Canadian Punk?

BW: I started to write letters and draw stuff for people involved in the scene all over the world in the early eighties and that led me to discovering all of this cool music, not just from the States, but also in Canada.

It was very exciting. I knew a lot about some of those bands up there at that time because of punk rock mail correspondence and fanzines like *MRR* and *Flipside*.

AU: How long have you been an artist?

BW: I have been drawing since before I could personally remember according to my mother. I guess I was drawn to it.

AU: Describe the art you create.

BW: I would describe it these days as all done on a tablet with no paper. I use the program Procreate to do stuff. It's really been cool.

AU: Influences on your artistic style?

BW: Initially Charles Schultz and his *Peanuts* cartoon strip. It had a lot of heart and was really kind of weird... kids talking about adult problems, actually saying that they were depressed. That's kind of a big deal. Later, it was all about *Mad Magazine* and all of the greats that came out of that. Shawn Kerri was also a big influence. She was the closest to what I might be able to do one day if I kept drawing.

AU: What music do you listen when working?

BW: Anything really. I do listen to music almost all of the time when I am drawing, always have.

AU: Tell us about the inspiration and the process of creating the art used for the cover of this issue?

BW: I thought about all of the artists and musicians from my time period, which was the eighties basically, and chose some of those people to draw from blurry photographs and stuck them through the Procreate program to draw over/embellish things and there you go. I added the small handful of artists I've managed to know about since, like the Fucked Up and Propagandhi folks and stuck them in there too. It's just my tribute to some of those Canadian bands.



AU: Do you take commissions? Strangest thing you've been asked to draw?

BW: Of course I take commissions. The strangest thing...well, when I used to work for the Melvins and go on the road with them and sell their merch, I also made all of these homemade posters that were *Mad Magazine* sort of things featuring the Melvins. So I would get requests like... to have the band members engage in sexual acts and stuff. I wouldn't draw those though, ha ha. So I would say those sort of things, obsessed weird fanboys.

AU: Coolest projects you have worked on so far?

BW: Too many to comment on, really. I am grateful to still be doing what I am doing. So that in itself is the coolest thing.

AU: Done artwork for any album covers?

BW: Yeah, back in the eighties I did some. I drew a 7 Seconds cover that seems to still resonate with people. That's the biggest one. There were several other covers and single sleeves. I drew the *Nardcore* compilation cover back then too. I would say both of those seemed to have a really long shelf life and I have re-visited both of them several times for people over the years.

AU: I noticed some collaborations with Chris Shary, the artist for the Descendents.

BW: I have been friends with Chris for a long time now but in the early nineties he reached out to me during my short lived wilderness years. He called and asked me what the hell had I been up to and why did I disappear? It was his phone call that made me realize that I must have had some sort of impact on someone during the eighties and that I needed to reapply myself and improve my skills. So I did. Chris is sort of a spiritual brother to me, along with other nice guys like Jason Traeger. We were all artistic drawing guys who loved the punk rock/hardcore of our time and did a lot of stuff.

AU: Worked on any comic books?

BW: Not really. I have had about six ongoing books entitled *Manchild* released, but they weren't really comic books, more like anthologies of all of this stuff I built up over the years.

AU: Any hidden talents unrelated to art?

BW: I have played drums for decades with an assortment of mostly forgotten bands over the years. Bands like Scared Straight, Polvo, Double Negative, and Snake Nation.

AU: Advice for young artists?

BW: Just keep practicing. You do this because you want to, and because you love it. If you aren't enjoying yourself and if it doesn't make you feel good to do it, then get out of it and do something else.

AU: Introduction to Canadian punk/hardcore?

BW: DOA were pretty much the first Canadian band I knew about, the version with Randy Rampage and Chuck Biscuits. "The Prisoner" is what did it... still one

of their best songs. They were definitely the ambassadors to a lot of kids in the states as to what a Canadian punk band was like.

AU: Favourite Canadian bands and albums?

BW: The Neos from Victoria. Their *Hassibah Gets the Martian Brain Squeeze* seven inch had a profound effect on me. That's a big one. I think the second SNFU album is profoundly great. Propagandhi is another big one for me. The *Beyond Possession* album is still great. That Viletones "Screaming Fist" single is great. Lately I have been really into The Nils.

AU: Best Canadian punk or hardcore band of all time?

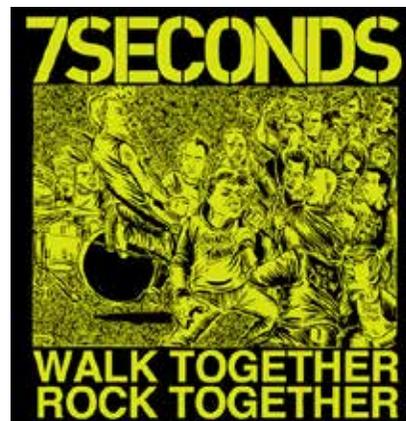
BW: Impossible to answer. But the top five for me is Propagandhi, No Means No, Neos, SNFU and I guess the Nils now. Those five. We didn't even mention VoiVod, the best metal band in the world, from Quebec.

AU: Most underappreciated band?

BW: The Neos. The dedication they had was poured into their few singles. They were a group I related to immensely. They were these outraged virgins pouring their hearts out.

AU: Final thoughts.

BW: I was always kind of fascinated by Canada when I was a kid, mostly because I loved SCTV.



CANADIAN PUNK ROCK AND HARDCORE

You had a lot of cool stuff coming out of Canada like Rush, who I always loved. There does seem to be this "Canadian thing" that an outsider like me can never put my finger on but it has led to me thinking that Canada is a breeding ground for great music and also for comedy. I have been told more than once that I must have been "secretly Canadian" - ha ha.

AU: Anything else to promote?

BW: I did a book last year called *Self Empunishment* where I interviewed a lot of people, just conversations of being self motivated and self employed. There are chats with actual real life Canadians like Rebecca Sevrin from Frightwig and No Policy, Todd Kowalski from Propagandhi and Michel Langevin from Voivod. The book was put out by Pelekinesis books. It's worth checking out and I am proud of how it turned out. Here is the link:

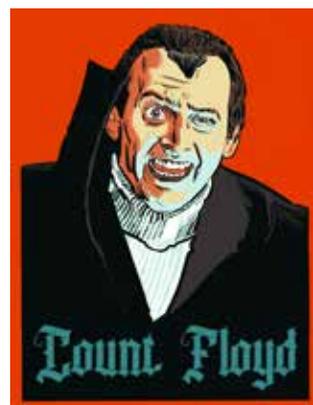
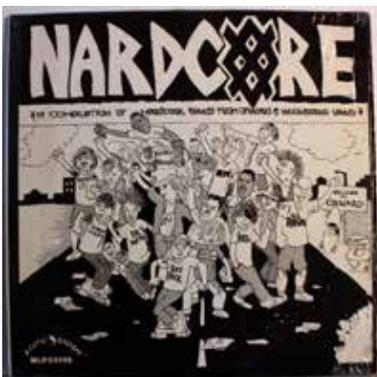
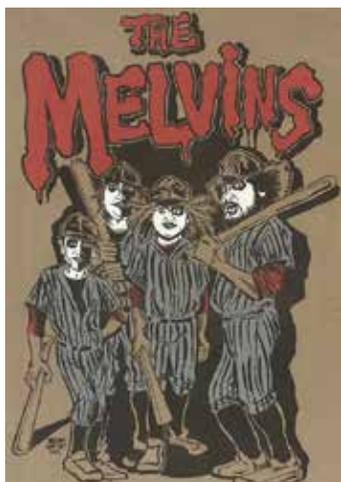
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PICTURE MY FACE The Story of Teenage Head

Interview with filmmaker Douglas Arrowsmith

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Douglas Arrowsmith, probably best known for “Love Shines” the film I did about Ron Sexsmith — it premiered on BBC Four followed by HBO Canada and went on to win an audience choice award at SXSW. And I also did a feature film with Stephen Duffy (founding member of Duran Duran) called “Memory & Desire” which was nominated for the Sound & Vision Award at CPH:DOX.

AU: What was the genesis behind the idea for your documentary, Picture My Face: The Story of Teenage Head.

Friends who’d been fans of the band forever encouraged me to consider a film project. Eventually I was introduced, in fact I think it was Gene Champagne [their drummer] who had seen my Ron Sexsmith film and had encouraged the guys to take a look at me. So there it was, we were both looking at each other at the same time, I guess. Then Gordie Lewis walked into the café and sat down. I felt, instantly, Gord was the carrier of some kind of deeper element that would be the work of the film. Turns out that was true.



AU: What made Teenage Head’s story so intriguing to you?

I’d always respected their music in high school and knew they were a huge deal but they were playing to the set 2-3 years ahead of me—my friends’

older brothers were going to shows, meanwhile my gang was caught up with the whole British Invasion thing and the New Romantic movement. So it was interesting to encounter Teenage Head’s

music for the first time now, during the making of the film and one of the first things that struck me was how melodic and catchy the songs are. You can’t forget them. It may be blasphemy to say it here but I think there’s more Bowie and obviously New York Dolls to their anatomy than ‘Oi!’ Are they a punk band? Marky Ramone says they are in the film, but I know the band has never felt entirely comfortable with being pigeon-holed in the ‘punk’ category. They have the MC5 influence but I also think the way they invented themselves out of the flatness of Hamilton is part of their success. They were deeply interested in art, image, and fashion. They made their own clothes and shoes, Gordie said to me the image was as important as the music to them. They had a fully integrated understanding of who they were and why they were doing what they were doing. Just look at the shoes they were wearing in some of the archival footage in the film, that tells you everything – was there another Canadian band sporting that kind of fashion at the time?? It’s fucking off the charts.

AU: What did you discover, that you didn’t know before, through the filmmaking process?

I really got close to the guys. We still talk regularly there’s an attachment there. And obviously if you care about what you do and you’re entrusted with a story like Teenage Head’s and particularly with Gordie’s personal journey you have to be emotionally open to receive all that. You have to travel within the depths of their own stuff and this experience only reinforced that as a filmmaker. It’s a role I take very seriously, you are in care and control of people’s souls and you’re recording it, you’re asking them to share not only with you but with an audience and you have to make sure they’re being true to themselves, so that when they see themselves on screen later they feel it’s honest and real.

AU: Any advice for aspiring documentary filmmakers?

Nobody wants any advice these days. When you offer it, it’s rejected or generally resented. I still look for advice myself but it’s harder and harder to find. In a previous life, I did a PhD in “Social & Political Thought” for fuck’s sake. The entire

thing was based upon trust and ‘advice’ from your academic supervisor. That relationship was crucial to the whole thing. With Teenage Head, Steve [Mahon] said they trusted me with the project, they really did. It reminded me of that same relationship I’d had with my advisor. Implicit stuff. And by trusting me with their story the band knew it would empower me to do the best job possible; to tell their story as fully and as honestly as I could. And I think I was able to do that.

AU: How can people watch/buy Picture My Face? Is there a physical release of the movie?



TEENAGE HEAD The Buchanan Tavern, Toronto, 2002

For people in Canada they can watch the film on TVO’s documentary platform, we are working on international distribution with Blue Ant. One thing I hadn’t quite anticipated was the intensity of the fanbase—They have some of their fans on Facebook who have reported watching the film 10-12 times. One fan recently used the opening sequence we shot in the graveyard in Hamilton to retrace the steps to Frankie’s grave and he found it! The feedback and reaching out from fans in the US and UK and Australia has been huge and ongoing. I hadn’t anticipated this kind of reach with the film, it’s been really amazing.

Band Photo Credit: Bev Davies

Live Photo Credit: Linda Dawn Hammond

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CURSED BLESSINGS

Vinyl Industry Delays Can't Slow Down Cursed Blessings

If you're pre-ordered a vinyl record from any of the excellent record labels out there, you've likely felt the sting of the "Sorry for the Delay" email or social media post. The fact is, the entire vinyl record-pressing industry is experiencing a boom like it hasn't seen since the heyday of the 1970s and 80s. This demand has invariably lead to long lead times for record labels and even longer wait times for fans.

Toronto upstart label Cursed Blessings Records has not been immune to these issues, citing delays of some form or another, in almost every release the young label has put out thus far. "It's a frustrating situation", said label owner and president Al Nolan. "We have such a fantastic line up of releases that we can't wait for people to hear, but it's unfortunate that, for the vinyl at least, waiting is exactly what we have to do." Not ones to be defeated so easily, Nolan and Cursed Blessings Veep and Label Manager Doug Smart put their safety pin-adorned thinking caps on and came up with a way to make sure the music is being heard and their customers (or "friends" as the label prefers to call them) are happy and placated while awaiting their wax. "We are so fortunate to have a global digital distribution deal with Believe Distribution (Montreal) that allows us to deliver our bands' music to the rest of the world digitally, regardless of industry hold-ups." noted Smart. "We feel asking someone who's already pre-ordered the music on vinyl to pay again to have the digital version is way uncool and it's not our way." Friends of the label who pre-order vinyl from the likes of Red Alert, Rough Cuts, The Black Halos, Almighty Trigger Happy & Revival will receive early-bird delivery of their digital MP3s as well

as a special gift of a flexi EP with a sampling of the Cursed Blessings punk, metal and hardcore roster.

"We will keep holding pre-sale events for all of our upcoming releases," noted Al Nolan (who also fronts Canadian punk veterans Almighty Trigger Happy). "There will be a lot of different and cool ways to say thanks to our friends for waiting for their vinyl. The flexi idea has really got us excited!" Upcoming Pre-Sales from Cursed Blessings Records include; Alberta hardcore elite No More Moments, Victoria BC's "hell on urethane"



Fully Crazyed, Canadian thrash icons Sacrifice and Slaughter, Audio Visceral, Modern Terror, Mvll Crimes, Richard Duguay, punk legends Random Killing, Juno-nominated industrial metal greats Malhavoc and Good Riddance frontman Russ Rankin with a solo EP recorded at the legendary Blasting Room by the equally legendary Bill Stevenson (Descendents, All, Black Flag). Follow them on social media @cursedblessingsrecords



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DANKO JONES Power Trio

AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

Danko Jones: My name is Danko Jones, and I just play guitar in a rock band.

AU: Give us a band history.

DJ: Well, we've been around for 25 years. We started in Toronto, Ontario in '96. This August will be our 10th studio album called *Power Trio*. It's been a lot of touring and a lot of recording.

AU: Describe your sound if possible.

DJ: Two words, Hard Rock.

AU: Who else is in your band?

DJ: JC (John Calabrese) is the bass player and Rich Knox is the drummer.

AU: Tell us about your latest album *Power Trio*.

DJ: Well, it's our 10th studio album, it comes out August 27, 2021. We recorded it last year with Eric Ratz, who's producing. There's 11 songs on it, we put out three already online for people to

hear. The last track *Start The Show* features Phil Campbell from Motörhead playing a guitar solo on it. So yeah, I think it's a great album.

AU: Does it differ from your previous album?

DJ: We have a sound and the albums don't differ too greatly. Unless you're very well acquainted with all the albums and you can sense all the differences in between. But for someone from the outside looking in, it's just another hard rock album by us.

AU: Who has a longer tongue, you or Gene Simmons?

DJ: I don't know. Gene wouldn't stick his out when I met him.

AU: The theme of this issue is the history of Punk Rock and Hardcore in Canada. What was your first introduction to Canadian punk rock?

DJ: Maybe it was NoMeansNo in high school.

AU: Favorite Canadian Punk bands or albums?

DJ: Let's see. Well, I like *Wrong* by NoMeansNo, and *0+2=1*. Those two are probably my favorite ones by them. *Tyrants Of Teen Trash* by The Gruesomes, they were always an influence on our band. *O.K.*, *Don't Say Hi* by The Leather Uppers. I

like The Mants as well.

AU: Are those the guys that dress up like ants?

DJ: Yeah, The Mants. They've been around for longer than we've been a band, and they were pretty influential on me starting our band. Them and The Gruesomes, because of the garage punk scene in the 90s.

AU: What are some other things you're into?

DJ: I don't have too many hobbies outside of music. I do a podcast on the side but that's also music related. I do articles for various outlets, but again that's music related.

AU: What's the name of your podcast?

DJ: I have two podcasts, one is *The Official Danko Jones Podcast*. I've been doing that now for 10 years. Another podcast is called *The Regal Beagle Podcast* that's about this show *Three's Company*.

AU: Wow. You have an obsession with *Three's Company*?

DJ: Yep.

AU: On your Danko Jones podcasts, are you interviewing bands?

DJ: I've done 249 episodes since 2011. I've had everyone from Duff McKagan and Henry Rollins, to Steven Page and Lee Aaron on the podcast. It runs the gamut, everyone from Scott Thompson to Damian Abraham. Yeah, it can be anyone.

AU: Any newer Canadian Punk or Hardcore bands that continue to hold the torch high?

DJ: Fucked Up just put out a great album this

year, *Year of the Horse - Act Two*. It's a fantastic album, and something that's leaps and bounds over contemporaries in other genres as well.

AU: What was the dangerous music you heard?

DJ: I suppose it was when I was six years old and I heard KISS for the first time. They were probably the first band that I found dangerous and we're kind of cool looking for a six year old. It's kind of like comic books come to life. So I joined the Kiss Army when I was six by writing to the band, and they sent me some stuff.

AU: Any tour plans for the new album?

DJ: Well, we just played our first show last week in Calgary and we have a show booked every two weeks from here till mid September. We're playing Quebec, Edmonton, Hamilton and Nova Scotia.

AU: At that show in Calgary, did you notice any differences? Were people wearing masks in the crowd? Or was it just like a regular show?

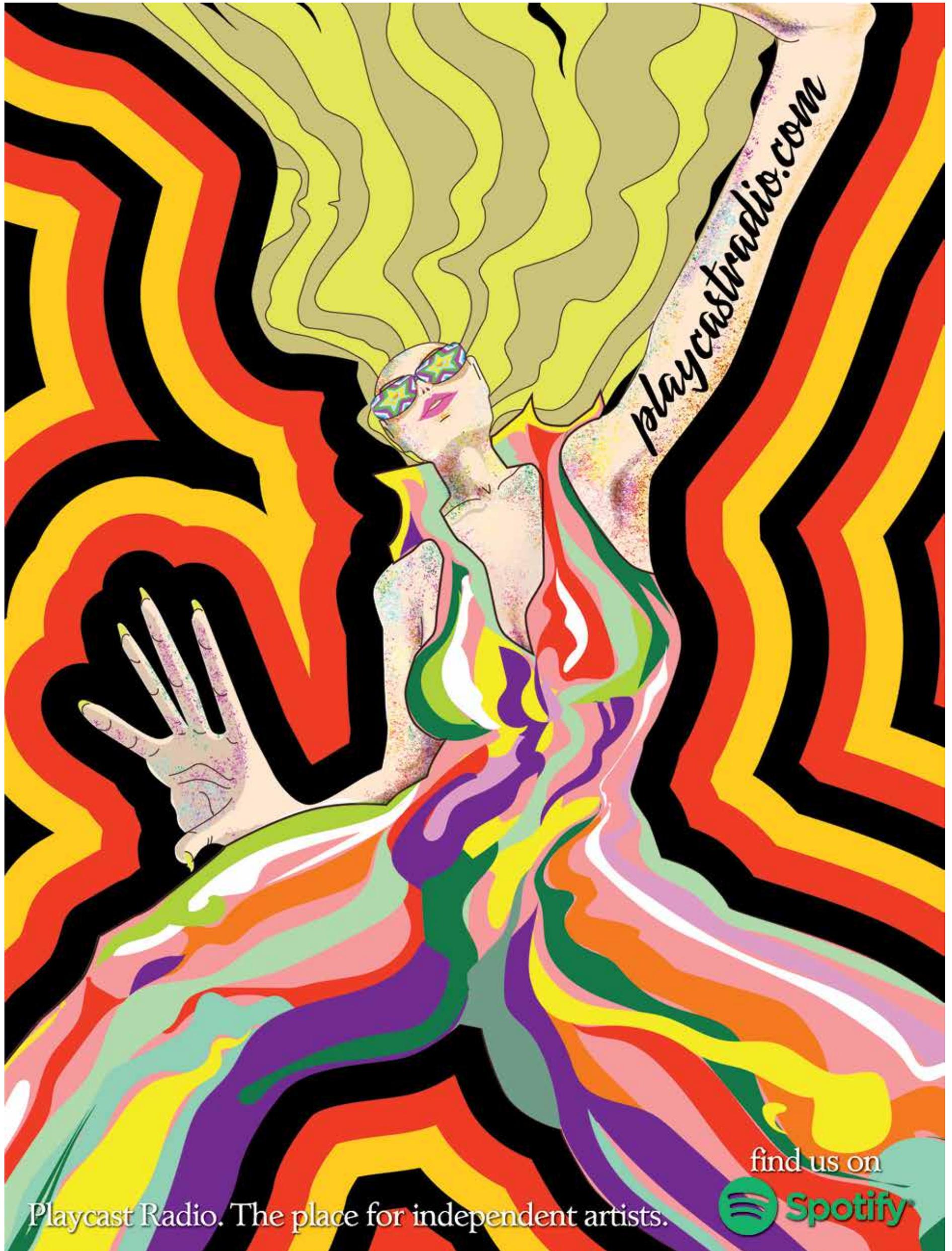
DJ: It just seemed like a regular show,

which is quite odd, but Alberta's vaccination rates are pretty high.

AU: How can people find you online?

DJ: The podcasts you can find on iTunes and Spotify. Dankojones.com and, of course, there's a Facebook page for our band, and I'm pretty active on Instagram and Twitter. It's at @dankojones on Twitter, and @danko_jones on Instagram.

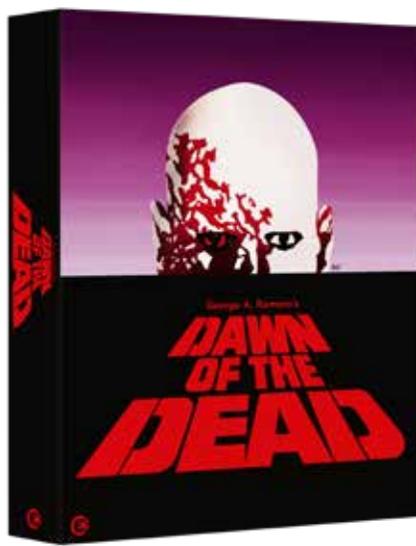
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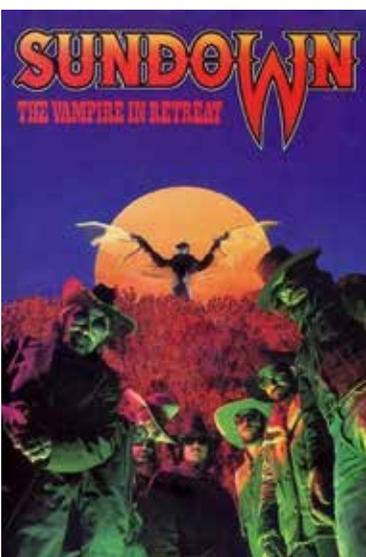
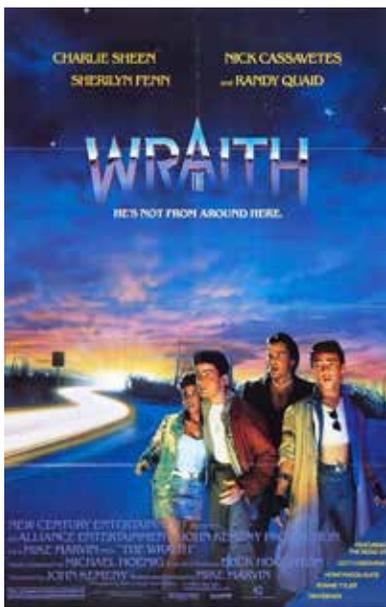
Cult Horror Returns This Summer

By Vince D'Amato

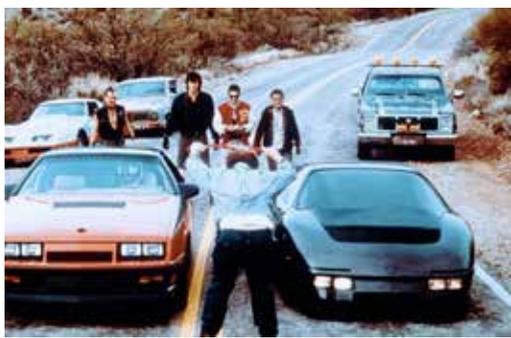
It's been on Amazon Prime for a while now, but this summer Lionsgate is finally releasing *The Wraith* on their specialized "Vestron Video" Blu-ray collection. For the uninitiated, as I had been up until a few weeks ago, Amazon Prime is a good

way to check out this bonkers 1980s cult-horror-sci-fi-action flick. One of the things that caught my eye was that it starred Charlie Sheen. Bored one night, I randomly turned it on as it was a far better alternative to spending hours surfing the streaming stations (as one may have circled the shelves of a video store back in the day; too many titles to make any decision an easy one). Once the movie started rolling, what I witnessed was some sort of crazy orgy of 80s drive-thrus with waitresses on roller skates, an alien dressed head-to-toe in black leather driving an indestructible black car that had to have come from some sort of excited inspiration from

TV's *Knight Rider*, a non-stop heavy metal/hard rock soundtrack, sex, violence, and a supporting cast that featured a super-young Sherlyn Fenn as the high school heroine, Randy Quaid as the town sheriff, and Clint Howard, the staple actor for any 80s horror movie. The plot boiled down is a vigilante/vengeance scenario set to the sounds of Ozzy Osbourne, Motley Crue, Robert Palmer, Nick Gilder, Lion, Billy Idol, and Honeymoon Suite. The only thing that left me bewildered was how the hell had I never heard of this movie before? But as Lionsgate saw fit to Collectors-Edition this sucker, I'll have to assume I'm in a horror-fan minority situation having never seen nor heard of it before. But if you're right now in the position I was several weeks ago, then check it out and get your mind ready for some serious melting. Also coming from Lionsgate's "Vestron Video" collection this summer is one of my all-time favourite vampire flicks, *Sundown: The Vampire in Retreat*, starring David Carradine, Dana Ashbrook, Deborah Foreman, E. Emmet Walsh, and Bruce Campbell. This one had made it to a special edition DVD a few years ago, but I have to say this Blu-ray re-release had me very excited. I'm not sure how hardcore horror fans would take to this vampire comedy, it's really



more of a cult film than balls-out horror; it's the amusement park ride of vampire movies, if you happen to be in the mood. Directed by Anthony Hickox (*Hellraiser III*, *Waxwork 1 & 2*, *Warlock 2: The Armageddon*), the story revolves around a family who moves to a small desert town in the middle of nowhere when the father is recruited to, unbeknownst to him, help the vampire citizens perfect a gooey serum that's supposed to be a synthetic nutrient replacement for human blood, so that they don't have to suck people's blood for sustenance anymore and live a quiet, vegetarian-esque lifestyle. Of course some of the old timers in the town think that this is all for the birds, and insist the old ways are better. With all of the vampire citizens walking around in broad daylight, the movie immediately shows it's going to be comedically gag-heavy and it's ready to turn every vampire trope in the book on its ear to achieve this. The results are duly charming, and Richard Stone's music score fits the style perfectly. There are also a couple of great releases from across the pond this summer; a couple of months ago UK distributor Second Sight boasted a



definitive and very long-awaited Blu-ray box set edition of George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*. Like the 2007 *Anchor Bay* DVD set, this set includes all three official cuts of Romero's masterpiece: the theatrical cut, the longer Cannes cut, and Dario Argento's European cut (formerly known as "*Zombi*"), plus a fourth disc that is loaded with special features and additional material, which is actually different from the supplemental disc that was included in the 2007 *Anchor Bay* release. A lot of the special features and documentaries on this fourth disc are new to 2021, which is bittersweet, they were of course produced after George Romero had passed

away. Second Sight's new Blu-ray set is actually very reasonably priced at under 30 pounds on Amazon UK, even with shipping and the exchange rate it came out to about two-thirds of what I'd spent on *Anchor Bay*'s DVD set fourteen years ago. One month after the mammoth *Dawn of the Dead* Blu-ray box was released this spring, another UK distributor, the boutique-style Indicator, released a 10,000 limited-copy deluxe dual Blu-ray set of Gaspar Noe's *Irreversible*. While there's really nothing more that can be said about Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* that had not already been said numerous times over the last 42 years, Gaspar Noe's film still has the power to ignite fiery conversation and debate 18 years after-the-fact. Originally released in 2002, *Irreversible* remains Noe's remarkable cinematic achievement that has firmly set the bar for the artist's subsequent attempts to surpass (much like Romero's *Dawn* was for him). Not only is it the film that's set the highest bar in Noe's works, it's also the singular point of measure for all of French cinema's transgressive filmworks, which is something amazing to consider just in itself. Again, this is another point where we can draw comparisons to the spirit of Romero's work, which had on more than one occasion set a fantastically high bar for cinematic horror. Many have contributed

to French cinema's post-millennium transgressive film movement, but quite honestly none have achieved the lasting power of Noe's *Irreversible* (although a couple have come very close). In 2020, Noe re-cut his film in chronological order which, if you can believe it, produced an even darker and depressing experience as we see the beauty, love, friendship, graphic rape, and graphic revenge take place in what the director calls "clockwise" order. Originally intended to be merely an extra feature on the Blu-ray, Noe's "clockwise" version (aka the "Straight-Cut") was so powerful it warranted a second release in Cannes in 2020, a screening which served to reignite all of the controversy and heated divisiveness of

the film all over again. Like the *Dawn of the Dead* set, Indicator's *Irreversible* box set (which includes both versions of the film and an amazingly in-depth glossy book) is steal-priced on Amazon UK for around 15 pounds at the time of this writing. If you have the opportunity to grab this while the limited copies are still in print, highly recommended.

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Absolute Horror



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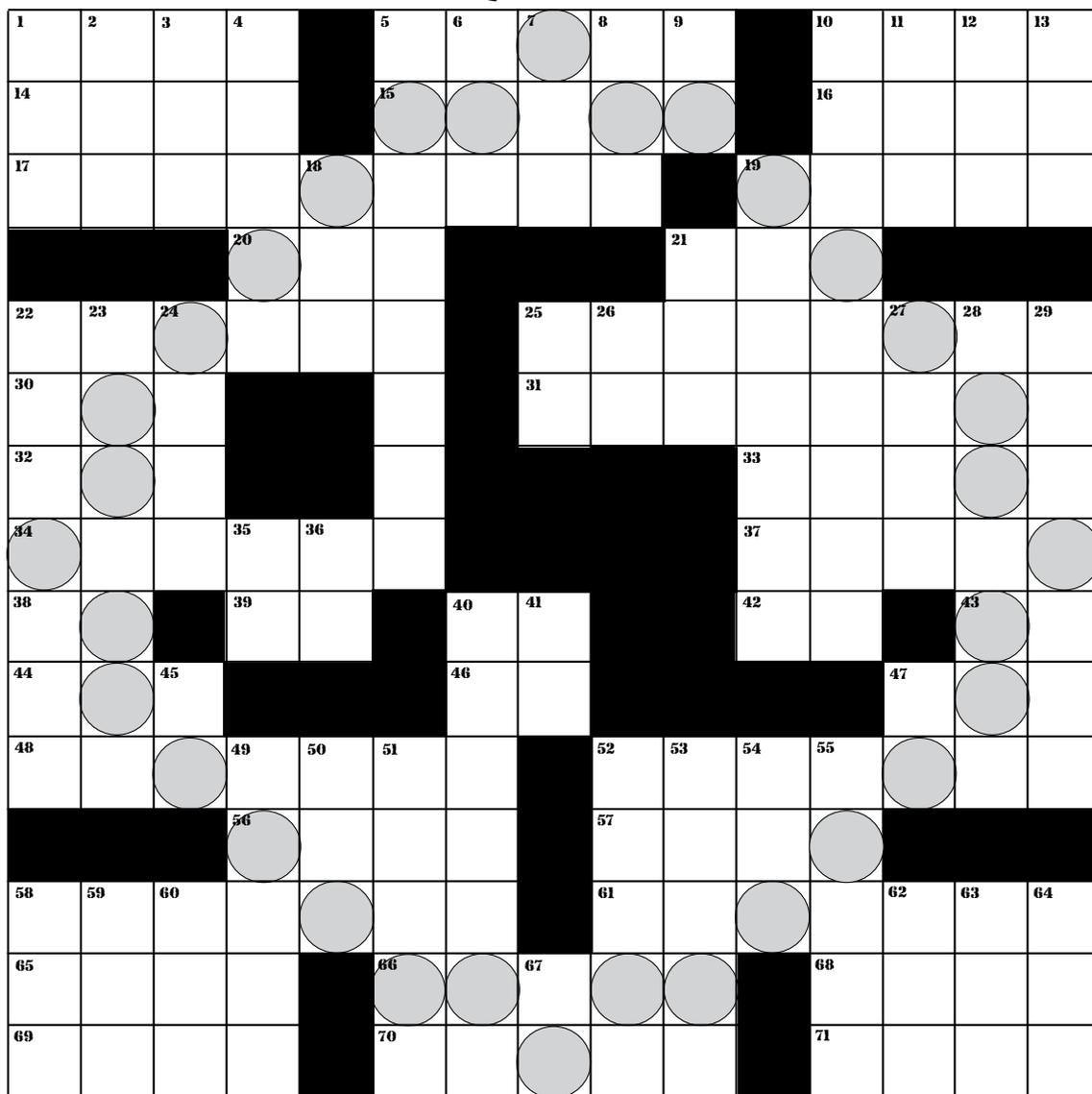
BACK IN THE PIT

ACROSS

1. "Days of Future ____"
5. Other: Fr.
10. Maiden or Butterfly
14. They're Motley
15. Tattooed
16. It can be breaking
17. Where workers go to chill
19. Can. Org. that gives out annual news awards
20. 'I know it's wrong'
21. A little: Fr.
22. Word for debt that's usually plural
25. Message from a go-between
30. British rock singer Chris
31. Send a letter to a Spielberg alien?
32. Weird AI movie
33. 'Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous', MTV-style
34. Leave on a journey
37. Droid's last name?
38. A very short chuckle
39. Last spike org.
40. A prof may have one
42. Correction note on an essay
43. Choices on many quizzes
44. Numerical prefix
46. Clooney TV series
47. "It's delicious!"
48. Montreal pop music fest
52. Chuck Berry character
56. ____ the line
57. Most amps have them
58. Word heard on CB radios
61. Initiate
65. What you can do in 17-across
66. Harm: Fr.
68. It supposedly surrounds you
69. Picnic pests
70. More than enough
71. "Quantum ____"

DOWN

1. Banned chemical
2. Airport info
3. Storm of Marvel Comics
4. Provoke in a playful way
5. Balloons, jets and gliders
6. Game played with 108 cards
7. How many boxing matches end
8. Dream cycle
9. Wood or Sock
10. Help at tax time?



CROSSWORD NO. 48

SUMMER, 2021

11. Communist
12. Have title to
13. They listen in: Abbr.
18. South Korean car company
19. How some albums are marketed
21. Tire reading
22. ____ judgement
23. Starts the trial again
24. Simple watercraft
25. Big clothing chain
26. Media helper: Abbr.
27. Ad slogan: "Just ____"
28. Poorly phrased description of Doogie Howser?
29. "My fault"
35. Trendy TV series of the 00s (with "The")
36. Hit flic featuring Ed Asner
40. Dried leaves container
41. Record co. dept.
45. "What?"
47. Criminal habits: Abbr.
49. ____-Unis
50. "Everything's alright"
51. Actress Davis
52. Words applied to eyelashes or exercises
53. Like a good funk song
54. Band name that originally started with "Charged"
55. Frequent end to commercial hardware liquid names
58. Bikini portion
59. Stimpy's pal
60. Summer hours in Sherbrooke
62. Name on many Quebec signs
63. Sinn Fein is its political wing
64. What some may do in 17-across
67. Modern address

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- Dayglo Abortions - "Germ Attack"
- Subhumans - "Fuck You"
- Genetic Control - "Suburban Life"
- Personality Crisis - "Mrs. Palmer"
- Red Tide - "War Criminals"
- Riot .303 - "Skate Punx"
- Bunchofuckingoofs - "Go Get Screwed"
- Unwanted - "Party Degs"
- Stretch Marks - "Dog's World"
- Death Sentence - "R.C.M.P."
- Down Syndrome - "Suicidal Eyes"
- Youth Youth Youth - "Fire In The Rain"
- Neos - "Illiterates"
- House Of Commons (H.O.C.) - "Low"
- Direct Action - "I like Speed"
- Dead End - "Depression"
- White Noise/Beyond Possession - "Final Daze"
- No Exit - "Energy Crisis"
- Forgotten Rebels - "Fuck Me Dead"

- Enigmas - "Teenage Barnacle"
- Young Canadians - "Hawaii"
- My Dog Popper - "Gino (I lost my job to a guy named...)"
- The Nils - "Scratches and Needles"
- Asexuals - "Be What You Want"
- Zero Option - "Reign Of Terror"
- Chronic Submission - "I Hate Preppies"
- Fair Warning - "Open Your Eyes"
- Vomit and the Zits - "What the Hell"
- Nomeansno - "Body Bag"
- The Fitz - "Poisoned"
- Sudden Death - "Beliefs"
- Infamous Scientists - "Trouble"
- Problem Children - "Thrashing With Yer Parents"



CANNABIS CORNER



What's the difference between CBD and THC?

By Julia Veintrop

If you want to truly maximize the positive benefits of using cannabis, it's important to understand the difference between CBD and THC. While the two cannabinoids have similarities, they work in contrasting, harmonious ways; each producing a particular effect on the human body. In order to tailor your cannabis use to your health, here is a look at the factors that separate THC and CBD.

The 'High'

Here is an analogy to help you understand the adaptive high that cannabis produces. Think of it like this; THC works as a painkiller and CBD works like a very strong anti-inflammatory.

THC - Painkillers can often get you high, unless they have a job to do. For example, if you give morphine to someone who just broke their leg, you would have a different effect than if you gave it to someone without any injuries. The feeling associated with THC is very much like this. The level of psychotropic and physiological effects it will have, depends on factors such as your current physical state, metabolism and tolerance.

CBD - CBD does not produce the psychoactive effect associated with THC, but some patients report that it does create a psychological effect. It is typically classified as an analgesic as well. If inflammation is causing you pain, CBD might make a significant difference.



Neuroreceptor activity

THC - When ingested, THC binds primarily with our CB1 receptor sites, as well as our CB2 receptors. Acting as an agonist, it stimulates neurotransmission, encouraging and producing activity.

CBD - Rather than activate your CB1 and CB2 receptors, CBD acts as an antagonist, blocking their processes. For example, Epilepsy is often caused by overactive neuroreceptors, resulting in seizures. When you introduce the right phytocannabinoids, they will take over and interrupt the effect.

Noteworthy Point - THC encourages receptor activity while CBD blocks it. So, if you have taken too much THC and are not enjoying the effect, taking CBD may help to block what's happening.

Molecule Structure

One of the biggest differences between CBD and THC can be found on a molecular level. Both cannabinoids have 21 carbon, 30 hydrogen and 2 carbon atoms but they are arranged in a different way. Chemically, both molecules are similar to a lot of the endocannabinoids our bodies produce naturally. As a result, THC and CBD can act as phytocannabinoids, enabling neurotransmission.

Cause and effect on emotions

THC - THC causes the release of chemicals within the reward and pleasure centers of the brain and as a result, it can give a sense of calm and euphoria. Depending on the dose, THC can help the brain produce proper levels of dopamine and serotonin. If you take a little more than you need, your receptors might become overstimulated and get you high.

CBD - Acting as an antagonist, CBD blocks the activity of the receptors that respond to stress. Instead of stimulating calming chemicals, CBD blocks physical fight or flight reactions when stress is occurring. This is why CBD doesn't produce the same feelings as THC and works more as an anti-anxiety agent; it's a blocker, not a producer.

Plant Structure

THC - If you want to get some THC in your system, you get it from the resin of a female cannabis plant. However, it's not that simple; Activated THC (Commonly referred to as delta-9 or delta-8 THC) is only present after the process of decarboxylation. Meaning, you need to get rid of a carbon atom and you can do this by adding heat.

CBD - This cannabinoid can be extracted from both male and female cannabis plants. Growing CBD rich plants can be a tricky business, especially if you are looking to smoke a CBD bud. CBD can degrade faster than THC, making it a bit more finicky when it comes to the flowering cycle. Because of this, growers will usually harvest CBD buds a bit sooner. Often, CBD will be harvested from hemp.

Dosing

CBD - Because CBD works to block your cannabinoid (CB1) receptors, you do not need a huge dose to create a therapeutic effect. In fact, any extra taken is excreted, making huge doses of CBD more of a waste, than a benefit to the body.

THC - When it comes to dosing THC, most operate based on the rule of 'start low, go slow'. A number of factors will impact the body's reaction to THC, including metabolism, tolerance and the current state of your health. If you are eating cannabis, the amount of food present within the stomach will have a significant impact on the overall effect and the time it takes for you to feel it. If you eat an edible on an empty stomach, expect it to hit you quickly. Munch that cookie on a full, Thanksgiving dinner style stomach and it might take a while to feel it.

Legalities

As of Oct. 17, 2018, Canadians can legally:

Grow up to 4 plants for personal use

Possess up to 30 grams of dried cannabis.

Currently, The Canadian Cannabis Act does not distinguish between CBD and THC but American laws do. In the USA, The Controlled Substances Act states that if there is less than 0.3% of THC within the CBD product, it is exempt from cannabis regulations. As a result, CBD imports from across the border are common throughout Canada.

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Mar Mar and the Grits

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves.

Marilyn: plant-wielder, dancing queen and drummer

Katie: death merchant, outdoors expeditionist, bassist and vocalist

Kat: jobsite rude boy, van and bike enthusiast, guitarist and vocalist

AU: Tell us about your band name.

MMG: It's really not that interesting. We originally wanted to be the bleach boys but the name was already taken by a French oi band.

AU: What kind of music do you play?

MMG: Apocalyptic menstrual spaghetti-western style that merges Dick Dale-inspired surf riffs with punk roots.

AU: Tell us about your creative process.

MMG: I think all three of us are driven by a prolonged teenage angst that includes a strong

disdain for humanity, apparently it was not a phase. This fuels a lot of our creativity and definitely gives our music a bit of punk tude.

AU: How did the band come together?

MMG: Kat, a natural born freeloader/cheap dwelling enthusiast was living in a trailer in Marilyn's driveway when she got inspired to start a band over a glass of wine while watching Pulp Fiction and admiring the soundtrack. Not long afterwards, Marilyn and Kat started jamming and realized how over their heads the writing process was. So, they reached out to Katie, who had a lot of previous band and writing experience and, even though she has scoliosis, has become a huge backbone to the band.

AU: Tell us about the album *Madness*.

MMG: Well... we had intentions of writing a fun surf album but I think a cerebral cocktail of cynicism and nihilism bled through and, for better or for worse, was a big contributor to the final product.

AU: Lot of great albums have come out of Circle A. What was it like working with Cory?

MMG: What a terribly wonderful person, it was

terrible spending so much wonderful time with him. Affordable, patient, great insight, great sound.

AU: What bands would you like to be billed with?

MMG: We are particularly keen for our friend's band Detritus to get their shit together so we can play in a swamp somewhere.

AU: What will the measure of success be for the band?

MMG: As long as the good times continue, talking smack, squawkin' and going on adventures, not taking things too seriously, and not getting burned out, then we consider this band to be a success.



Look for Mar Mar and the Grits on Bandcamp. Cassette copies of *Madness* available at Vinyl Envy.

Chat/ Photographs by John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography

John Carlow - Photographer

Local music sceneportraiture

www.findingcharlotte.ca



God of Riffs VR Preview In Review

By Ed Sum

God of Riffs has a long way to go before becoming a playable product in virtual reality. It's available to preview on Steam, and the platforms it's currently limited to are the Oculus Rift, Rift S, and Quest. It's also important to note the Quest 2 is an update to the prior model and both units can operate standalone. I was surprised that a PC is required to run the game itself.

The preview version shows potential as an optional version of Beat Saber to play. This highly popular game prefers techno and modern pop over other genres. The play style is easier, as we're not dealing with crazy timings to slice everything coming at you from various points in VR space. Here, you're bashing your axes (musicians call them guitars) over the head of your enemy, a huge skeleton army coming at you in time to the beats of the music. The game play is colour-coded so that only a red blade

can destroy a red warrior, and blue one likewise. Gold-coloured bones mean both weapons must be used.

Only four songs are currently available. I'd love to see an after-market option for fans to build and side load their favourite head banging tunes to the game. Only time will tell if Boss Music Games has the finances to license tracks from Metallica, Led Zeppelin, Judas Priest or even The Scorpions. I can picture myself slaying those armies of the undead with "Rock You Like a Hurricane" playing.

The targets are limited to skeleton warriors looking like they have been super deformed and perhaps also from a Ray Harryhausen movie. We even have the iconic skulls with bat-wings, and I love it since that was the first image I tried to create when I learned computer programming in school.

Just how often new content gets added will define this game's success in a tough gaming market. In its current state, it's not a huge winner. All it does is give a taste of what's to come as the developers continue fine-tuning this product.

SASQUATCH SISTERS



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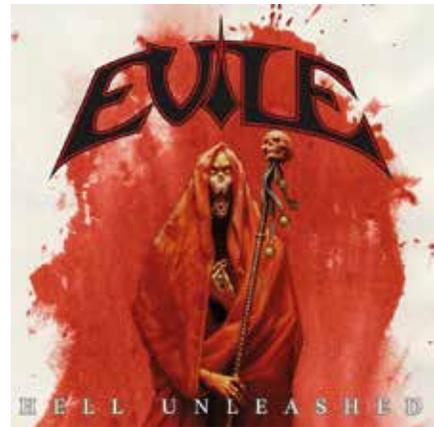
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Absolute Album Reviews

Evile - Hell Unleashed
Napalm Records



The UK's favorite sons, Evile, are back, and with *Hell Unleashed*, they've created a modern thrasherpiece. Formed in 2004, the band were one of the first to put neo-thrash into practise, and with their debut album *Enter the Grave*, proved they were a promising group of lads who could compose songs like the best of the 80s thrash

superstars. Unfortunately, the spark lit by that debut was overshadowed by the brigade of other new thrash bands (mostly out of the US) like Municipal Waste or Power Trip who found greater popularity and success than Evile.

Hell Unleashed marks a new beginning for the band, however. Vocalist Matt Drake left the band last year to concentrate on his family - thankfully his brother Ol Drake, who handled backing vocals and lead guitar previously, stepped up to take the frontman position. His lyrical style is harsher and more militant than his older brother, and adds a dimension to Evile which could be compared to the heavier thrash bands such as Sodom rather than the Metallica inspired output produced in their early years.

The nine track album is without any excess fat. "Paralysed" hits like a punch in the face, which makes way for "Gore," a track which is said to feature Brian Posehn, but he is hard to make out amidst the carnage of the song. Perhaps he's just blazing and listening to it. What is a thrash album without a war song? Evile sticks to the basics and pummels with "War of Attrition" before showing their horror influences. John Carpenter's *The Thing* is a methodical, slow moving film - not one you would associate with speedy, Slayer-esque thrash, but Evile manages to illustrate the frenzied feeling of paranoia in "The Thing (1982)" with a blisteringly paced track featuring the chant, "Parasitic death. Paranoid eyes. Finding who the virus hides. Finding who The Thing resides."

From then on, things get even heavier, with a Mortician cover, ("Zombie Apocalypse") and the ferocious title track closing out the album. The eight year gap since 2013's *Skull* was worth the wait, and with *Hell Unleashed*, I truly believe the band's sound lives up to its name.

- Ryan Dyer

Darkthrone - Eternal Hails
Peaceville Records

Ten out of Ten

A strong contender, not only for metal album of the year, but for the all-time great metal title! Eternal Hails! When live music comes back, expect to hear that phrase used often.

With Darkthrone, the bar is always high, the music is always true building on the huge knowledge and love of metal that Fenriz and Nocturno Culto have. While Darkthrone fans will not be disappointed (if ever an album captures the spirit of 1986 it's this one), there's an almost proggy sense of adventure, with both the moog and melotron enhancing the album to splendid effect. At times, I was reminded of the atmosphere of John Carpenter and especially Goblin, though of course, those immense Frosty riffs are in great evidence, but really, and I have listened to this album many times, the song-writing and joy of creation is so wonderful to hear, so uplifting in these miserable times.



I feel a big factor here is Darkthrone's love and commitment to the physical existence of music, whether on tape, CD, vinyl, to be real it needs to be real, not something disposable. Herein we have five tracks of pure quality, exactly what would fit on a single vinyl album

Once again, in an ever-changing world, Darkthrone create music for the right reason, love of music. What is good in metal? Without a doubt, *Eternal Hails!*

- Steve Earles

Absolute Book Reviews

Rock Critic Confidential

Released: June 28, 2021

New Haven Publishing Ltd

Canada's best known rock critic, Jeffrey Morgan, has been in the business of covering the music scene since 1964, and he has a style that many people, musicians included, like. He's written for *Creem* magazine. Other rags include

Cheap Thrills, StageLife and Roxy.

Rock Critic Confidential is his tell-all hardcover collection of his best interviews and recollections.

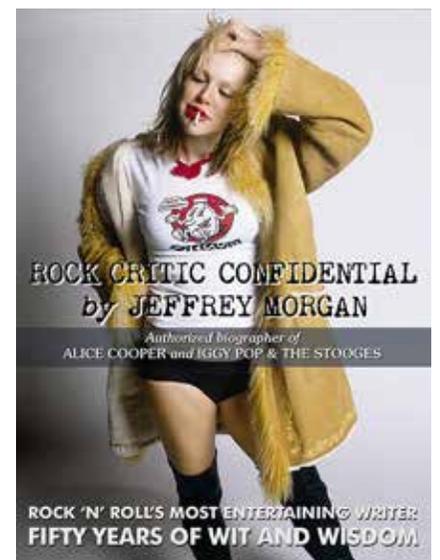
Reading it is a wonderful trip through memory lane for those who've followed this writer's works. Within this book are his "interrogations" with talents like Lou Reed, Meatloaf, Nash The Slash and Gene Simmons. There are

many more names, and I'm only offering a tiny part of a huge list.

It's funny to think Morgan wanted to make his mark in the comic book industry... Perhaps we all owe a debt to Stan Lee giving the boy the facts straight up! It's a tough business. To be honest, any industry is hard to get into. Jeffrey decided to become the writer we all know. That hasn't stopped his dreams though, as his first comic book story *Murphy's Law* went to press in '79 and he became a regular series writer for Dean Motter's Vortex Comics series *Mister X* in the mid-80s.

But to know this man means reading his autobiography, which closes off his book. I'm sure he has more unpublished images and half written pieces in his filing cabinet. All I can hope for is volume two which offers more interviews and photographs of the many artists he's put under the light.

-Ed Sum



Absolute Film Reviews



PICTURE MY FACE: The Story of Teenage Head
Directed by Douglas Arrowsmith

"Part of me doesn't want to do it anymore... at all." - Gord Lewis, guitar

Wrapped with interviews with The Tragically Hip, and their loss of Gord Downie... the interview crossovers to intersect with Teenage Head. Who are they? Are they Canada's Ramones meets New York Dolls, angry, grooving, moody, madness? All these superlatives wrapped into one. A force unto their own. They are more than that. Their own beast. If you don't know? Drop this mag and search now.

\Rock'n roll is a tough business. This film showcases the booze, the drugs, the ups, the downs. The storytelling is masterful

and gripping, soundtrack and cinematography illustrating a rising star in the late 70s (TH) cut short by a touring accident on a snowy highway which left guitarist Gord paralyzed, at the flash point of their music career.

After getting well, having missed the industry momentum; the tours are bars rather than arenas (like they deserved) and what could have been, well, that's what is. A sense of blame, "It's his fault", but its not. After the loss of Frankie Venom, the leader, the voice, and face of the band in 2008, depression sets in and its hard to keep everything going. To be so close to it (fame, money).

Mental health is a motherfucker. We all have to decide what level we engage with our team, family, workplace, band - who is affected. Are you gonna step up and help? Or sit down and watch? Ask yourself.



Your scenario. This movie asks. Are you gonna back your friends if they go down? Are you gonna stand up? Teenage Head stands.

Redemption arrives, at Hamilton with the Tiger-Cats halftime show. A rebuilt TH smashes it out of the park and our heroes take the brightlight again.

Open your mind... refind and re-imagine your heroes... fuck yeah Teenage Head, fuck yeah Gord Lewis... I love you... never quit... never surrender... Take your fucking hat off in respect to this great Canadian band in their complex and beautiful travels.

-ERIK LINDHOLM



Eh! C.A.B Punk Compilation

by Nate Trash

This comp was brought to my attention originally through internet whisperings and now I finally have the final product in hand and im INCREDIBLY pleased!

Bands involved are, in no particular order D.T.F, Dysruptive, Crooked Books, Dirty Bird, The Sham, Ripcordz, Artificial Dissemination, Chips Ov Oil, Broken Yolks, HARSH, Hippiecritz, Random Killing, T.S.F, and Terminal City Rats.

This compilation was put together in support of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association with all profits going directly to help!

Punk comps have always been a staple in the scene, im definitely seeing far more online compilations these days tho so its a damn cool sip of something tasty to see a physical copy in these beaten up and tattooed hands of mine!

Honourable mentions:

Broken Yolks - We're All Told
Dirty Bird - Masturbating Monkeys
D.T.F - Cold War

This Compilation fuckin slays from start to finish and anyone who goes to ehcabcompilation.bandcamp.com to gab one of these fuckers will not be disappointed!

Excerpts from interview on Trash Talk w/ Nate Trash (if you

would like to see this interview in its entirety it is available on twitch.tv/natetrashstalks as well as youtube.ca/natetrashstalks)

Nate Trash: What was the first compilation you owned?

Nick Press: Obviously the Fat Wreck comps (Fat Records) Live Fat Die Young, The Punk-O-Rama Comps from Epitaph as well. Like, whatever, I was a shitty California pop-punk kid through highschool. No two ways about it, I did NOT listen to the good shit yet... If there was one compilation that influenced me doing this it was the P.E.A.C.E/War compilation (R Radical Records. c.1984)

NT: How did you get all the bands together for the comp?

NP: Facebook Messenger. And Paul Gott (Ripcordz) just being the fuckin MAYOR. He referred probably half the bands.

NT: Any chance for more issues?

NP: I'd do a repress on CD easily. But I mean im still sitting on a few of the fuckin things so if people want em they're here for the taking! Hit us up on Bandcamp!





Danezig
The Gnar Gnars
The Mags
Poor Choices
The Phoenix Bar & Grill, July 24, 2021

It had been over 16 months since Victoria had hosted a live punk/metal gig. Sixteen long months without mosh pits, screaming guitars and people sharing in the moment of live music. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the seating capacity was set at 75 people – doors were at seven p.m., and capacity had been reached by five after six.

For all of us it was a night of joy and happiness as most of us hadn't seen one another in over a year. The local legends were on hand, Cretin and Spud from the Dayglo Abortions, the AWT crowd and of course a few JAKs. As Matt said early in the night, "hell they (the bands) could not play a single note and we'd still all be ecstatic," and he was on the money with that.

The Gnar Gnars did the honor of sound check which included their song "Rebel Yell," and at the end the place exploded in applause and pretty much a standing ovation – you could see tears running down the cheeks of people who were so moved by having just heard loud live music in over a year, myself included. Afterwards Hoon from the Gnars was repeatedly heard telling people who came up to thank him, "It was only sound check." But that sound check was pure magic to all in attendance.

All four bands delivered with Danezig finishing up the night with a cover of "Mother" (by Danzig), which earned them an outburst of applause and the screams of "yeah" and "fuck yeah" from the crowd.

It's so good to be back. Support your local venues and bands, don't ask to be put on the guest list, buy merch and vinyl/CDs/tapes, and stay safe everyone.

-Scott

PHOTO CREDIT: Scott Fraser Photography



Plague Fest
Pest Productions 15th Anniversary Road Show

July 25, 20 Years Livehouse, Tianjin, China

Since 2005, Pest Productions has been the top label in China concerning black and dark folk metal. With the Plague Fest road show, Pest has put together some of the grimmest, darkest and most cutting-edge bands on its roster to celebrate both the label and the current breed of exceptional bands practising the

dark arts in the country.

The Tianjin show was the last stop of the two-part festival run which began in May, meaning tonight would be the last stand - an all-out black metal assault from all the bands involved.

Throughout the tour, the festival would have different bands playing each night, with some reoccurring acts bringing the star power to each show such as Frozen Moon.

One main difference in this event was the abundance of merchandise on hand - many of the shows I have attended in China offer few things to take home, but Pest Productions went all out, with t-shirts, bags, CDs and patches available. For promotion and merchandising, a band could do no wrong with Pest Productions in their corner.

The poster for the Tianjin show had Obsession listed as one of the bands performing, though it was The Illusion of Dawn who were the first to take the stage. A body caked in blood and the band members faces smeared in corpse paint, TIOD are veterans of the black metal scene in China, being active since the mid 2000s. They revved up the audience from the get-go with primal riffs and depressive wails. During the penultimate song, members of the other bands from the festival took the stage for a duet. The final track, "Obscene Benediction" certainly made an impact, with audience members exchanging anguished, obscene screams into the microphone with the band.

I had seen Tianjin's Bergrisar twice before on different multi-band shows, but these concerts usually had the band as the odd-band out. With the Plague Fest, though, Bergrisar are now right at home among their black metal brethren. Emerging late last year, the blackened death metal band has made an impression in a short time with their debut album and crushing live shows.

They burst through tracks like "War" with unabashed fury, but with Bergrisar, there is time for old school ambiance as well - when the bell

comes out for "Prologue", you know shit is about to go down. "For Whom the Bell Tolls" indeed.

Vengeful Spectre put out what I consider to be a black metal masterpiece with their 2020 self-titled debut album. The hype for them at this show was real, with many anticipating seeing just how the band would deliver in a live setting. Vocalist Fan Bo is also known for being the front man for Frozen Moon, who would play later in the night. With Frozen Moon, Bo's stage costumes and eccentric, theatrical poses bring

the band to the high echelon of live acts in the country.

With Vengeful Spectre, he is no different, dressed in tattered robes with his face painted up like the band's moniker. Unlike Frozen Moon, Bo's demeanor with Vengeful Spectre is more menacing and merciless, matching the aggressive musicality of the band. The band played through the entire album, with songs like the hypnotizing "Wailing Wrath" bringing the tempo down to further transfix the in-awe audience.

After the life-altering spectacle that was Vengeful Spectre, it was time for the music to get back to its basics. Not burnt, not well done, but meaty, bloody, and raw, Throat Cutter, like their name, offered primitive poundings from a time of darkness. Three men on stage, their faces concealed by hair - possessed by the power of the riff. With Throat Cutter, singing was rare, with the stalking bass player giving the odd scream into the microphone after two minutes of raw string pounding - and the crowd loved it. At this point in the night, the audience was getting anxious to do a little throat cutting themselves, and used the music as a fitting soundtrack to animalistic shoving and dancing.

The primordial grind of an earth lit only by flame continued with Acherozu who brought a dose of blackened thrash to the 20 Years Livehouse. The Shenyang natives didn't opt for theatrics - being plain clothed and without a trace of makeup on their faces. Their musical output, however, is painted fully black. "Sun Katana" is the slogan beneath their name, and the sharp bladed, war themed songs performed by the band gave those in the pit one more battle before the final act of the night.

Like label-mates Black Kirin and Zuriaake, Frozen Moon have built themselves up to legendary status within the Chinese black metal scene. Their genre-defying albums as of late such as the *Legend of East Dan* EP and enthralling live shows are something to behold, and for the band to play last at the final Plague Fest show, was fitting and respectable. With lit candles, a table with a skull on it as well as other mythical objects, the band slowly emerged from the darkness, ready to mystify and horrify. They broke into the chanty "Legend of East Dan" as the audience got a good look at the band - Fan Bo's antler-mask gave him the appearance of a shaman possessed by several malevolent spirits. With each shrieked lyrics, his poses grew more maniacal. At one point, he acknowledged the table skull and did a sort of ritual before tossing Taoist Talismans into the crowd. The spell of Frozen Moon continued until they left the stage as suddenly as they appeared, much like apparitions. Did we just see that? Well, the photos prove that this was all real.

- Ryan Dyer

One of Us IV
June 25/26, 66 Livehouse, Tianjin China

"You will never be one of us." The Nails lyrics go through my mind every time I see the advertisements for the Chinese festival. Now in its fourth year, One of Us focuses on the thriving young crop of bands who are making huge waves in China. As the festival has grown, so has the number of days, with the festival now expanded to two, with seven bands playing each day.

Day 1

The first day of the festival proved to be the more eclectic of the two, with sprinkles of melody, hip hop and epic, cosmic metal mingling in with old school thrash and deathcore.

After the doors opened at the 66 Livehouse at 6:00PM, the first band of the night, Benetnasch, warmed up the crowd for what was to come. The new tower of

cube video screens on the side of the stage made their first impression - showing that even indoor venue concerts can have pizzazz.

The spacey Cosmos were a captivating band to see this night. Founded in 2019, the music is full of oriental flavor and tangible atmosphere. The vocalist is truly a talented dude who effortlessly holds the audience in the palm of his hand through epic, ballad-like cosmic metal. Progressive music fans should take note of these cosmonauts.

Scarlet Horizon were next up and the crowd were absolutely stoked for the gorgeous deathcore masters. One of Us veterans, Scarlet Horizon have played the last two years of the festival, and have the audience trained to their back-and-forth dance moves. Brutal, catchy, and beautiful, Scarlet Horizon are your band if you like visual kei with brutal breakdowns.

One of Us doesn't only focus on the new breed of Chinese talent, as one of China's oldest thrash bands, the legendary Suffocated made their presence felt next, showing the young studs just how it's done. Their placement on the card was key as they provided a bridge between styles and were pivotal for interested fans who may only like thrash to check out the festival.

Korsion were the first of two surprises for the festival in terms of broadening its horizons and including styles which aren't grounded in metal. Featuring a male and female vocalist and 80s looking sunsets on their video screens, Guangdong's Korsion brought an upbeat, electric shock of a set.

The next surprise of the night was Leeyon, who truly broke the mold for what the One of Us festival is about. It wouldn't be wrong to say this guy is a heartthrob, as his many fans in attendance can attest to, but it also wouldn't be wrong to say he's very talented. With songs including hip hop, emo and deathcore trimmings - one minute you're reminded of Eminem and the next of Bring Me the Horizon.

Awake Mountains represent the once silent and solemn mountains coming to life to inspire awe in the masses. The band was formed in 2017 and in just a short time, have proven to be headliner material with their made-for-TV form of accessible, emotionally driven metalcore. They were the perfect choice to end the versatile day 1 of One of Us, which featured some true superstars of the scene.

Absolute Live Reviews



Day 2

The second day of the festival was a who's who of Chinese core giants. The first four bands hitting the stage on this day are all smashing the barriers of heavy music in China and should be exposed more to the Western world. Well, I'll try my best.

Hangzhou's Lie to the Silence were the first to pummel the audience, and could be a headlining act on their own. Their use of symphonic backing tracks to their skin shredding form of deathcore is something I haven't heard utilized in such a way. Truly a new sound that others may be copying if they get wind of this noise.

Leviathan have gone through many change-ups throughout the years, and while I haven't seen their past iterations live, this one has to be by far the strongest. The sea god parted the pit and caused the good folks at the 66 Livehouse to crash together in a wave of death as they destroyed the stage like a raging ocean storm.

Straight from the streets and ready for a beatdown, Armed Conflict then hit the stage to put a kill-shot to anyone still standing after Leviathan's set. The young fellows are masters at creating churning slam parts that slow to a crawl. If there is any slam band who could reach the heights of one Dark Prison Massacre, it's Armed Conflict.

Guangzhou's Horror of Pestilence were perhaps the most anticipated band of the whole festival. The musicality of this technical death metal band is simply staggering -

like a symphonic plague. Apart from their heavy-as-hell side, they had the crowd lighting up their phones like Ozzy asking to see those cigarette lighters for the softer parts. Another Guangzhou act, The Will on Kill provided a pivot in styles for night 2 of the festival. Now clearly in the metalcore realm with clean singing and more melody than the wreckage of the last five acts, The Will on Kill captivated their many fans, having them screaming the choruses in euphoric fashion.

A bunch of droogs who opted to pick up some instruments rather than hang around at the milk bar, Clockwork Moon were by far the most melodic band of night 2, marking a much needed break in the heavy platter that came before them. The band was ethereal and dreamy - the perfect thing to

listen to under a golden moon. One of the longest running and strongest of China's deathcore bands, Four Five started in Beijing in 2004. Throughout the years, their style has morphed - covering death core, djent, hardcore, new metalcore and more - and with each passing year, their legend has grown. After two long days, the fans, now worn out, were ready for one more fight with the dreadlocked veterans.

When all was said and done, the tired, but mostly wired crowd left the livehouse, knowing they'd just experienced a concert for the ages - maybe the concert of the year. What's next for One of Us - a three day festival? An outdoor festival? I guess we will see next year.

- Ryan Dyer



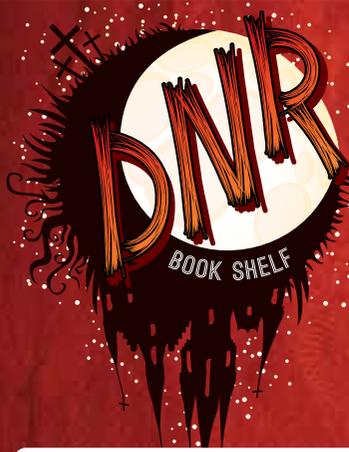


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WEDDING DAY MASSACRE

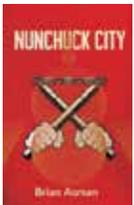


Aron Beauregard
independently published,
March 13, 2021
Most people dream about their wedding day. Finally finding that one person that completes you. And being able to celebrate their union in front of their family and friends in the most extravagant way possible. Taylor just hoped that her wedding would be the most talked about event of the year so she could push her "Social Media Influencer" persona into the stratosphere before ultimately divorcing Sebastian and taking a good chunk of his money with her. However, Sebastian is well aware of Taylor's true motives, and this fits into his plans perfectly. As he intends to kill as many people as possible over the course of the night. He wants to make history.

I've been a fan of Aron Beauregard's since I read his *Try the New Candy* Collection about two years ago. Since then, I've read everything that he's written. In my perspective, there are only two authors that are sitting on the top of the heap in extreme horror / splatter punk today. And Aron is one of them. This book, however, is his strongest work yet. If you're checking out the reviews on this book because you've already read some of Aron's previous work, then it would come as no surprise that this should be wrapped in layers of warning labels. If you're like me, you probably just tear those labels off as it's what has attracted you to the work in the first place. This one is an absolutely vile, disturbing, perverted, and evil masterpiece.

Michael Cushing

NUNCHUCK CITY



Brian Asman
Mutated Media,
April 20th 2021
We know from previous experience that Brian Asman is a fuckin' maniac! In way that we love around here at *Absolute Underground*. *Nunchuck City* certainly doesn't disappoint. You will laugh at this totally avant-punk bizarro, slap-stick literary artistic, fondue dunking ridiculousness.

Nunchuck 'Nick' Nikolopolis is an ex-ninja who wants to open the first drive through fondue restaurant in Turbo City with his best friend called, Fond Dudes. Makes total sense right? He just wants to get a license to get started... and then cue the insanity... Kundai Saru and his army attack the city and try to defeat and take over as Mayor. Lots of sickening beatdowns, pop-culture references, high energy and totally weird plot twists, variety of characters that just keep you cruising through this book. I have never really read anything quite like this before I have to say, it was so wacky in the old underground cult ninja/martial arts films that are on at 3am.

The end also has a bonus short story by Lucas Magnum titled 'Curse of the Ninja' which is a nice way to wrap up the entire experience.

You will wonder what the fuck you just read while wiping the tears of laughter from your eyes. It's gross, it's funny, it's an Asman... need I say anything else?

Demonika

THE NIGHT STOCKERS



Kristopher Triana & Ryan Harding
The Evil Cookie Publishing,
March 26th, 2021
I thought I would set the stage perfectly for the last 50 pages of this book by reading it in Ottawa's Heavy Metal Themed Restaurant / Satanic Temple,

The Koven, while I drank a six pack of PBR and afterwards ate the most Ungodly Burger I've ever seen. So I'm fairly intoxicated and bloated at the moment... but on with the review.

I can't help but draw comparisons to *Pandemonium*, Ryan Harding's Pro Wrestling splatter fest that he wrote in 2020 with Lucas Mangum. But even with that, Ryan Harding now has his name attached to two of the best books that I've read in extreme horror over the past two years. They are both pretty similar, but they are also incredibly bad ass.

This one was tons of fun! It owes a lot to *Assault on Precinct 13* if the gore and depravity factor were dialed all the way up. The employees of Freshway are attacked by the Satanists of Devil Foods. At the beginning of the novel I was kind of hoping for a gore fest and Triana and Harding delivered. There is so much perverted, demented, just plain wrong splattery goodness in this novel that I would recommend it to anybody that likes their horror on the extreme side.

Michael Cushing

PANDEMONIUM



Ryan Harding & Lucas Mangum
Death's Head Press LLC,
December 7, 2020
Wow!! Talk about a bloody fun read. This is what would have happened if ECW Era Paul Heyman was allowed to include homicide into the art of wrestling. And then hiring Dario Argento to be the head booker.

This is a story that will resonate both with hardcore wrestling fans, and fans of the depravity of extreme horror and splatter punk. There's a new Federation called BPHW (Bloody Pit of Horror Wrestling) that is about to launch its first event in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This event will feature a combination of up and coming superstars, as well as legends of the past. However, there is one name that is being tossed around a lot more than anybody else. The trailers for the BPHW show features vignettes from somebody known as the Crimson Executioner. Nobody has ever heard of him before, and are completely baffled as to who is under the mask. However, the big budget production of his vignettes where he's beating Luchador Jobbers to pulp look a little bit too real. This is wrestling, right? Everybody knows it's fake!

Once the carnage starts in this one, it doesn't let up till the last paragraph. You will find it hard to tear your eyes away from the pages. Even though the level of depravity detailed here will have you wishing that you could. This is definitely in my Top 5 Books of 2020.

Michael Cushing

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GLOBAL STREET ART



Global Street Art

Interview with street artists James Reedman and Crash Underwood
By Claude Montreuil



Absolute Underground: Where are you guys from?

James Reedman: England.
Crash Underwood: Ontario.

AU: When did art show up in your life?

Crash: I started when I was young and sold my first piece at 9 years old.

James: I start painting 10 years ago when I arrived in Victoria.

AU: Where do you get your inspiration from?

James: It comes into my head like a dream and I do my best to put it on a canvas or a wall where I can see my dream become reality.

Crash: Salvador Dalí, Mort Drucker, and Gary Larson.

AU: What types of music do you like to listen to?

Crash: Frank Zappa, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, some Jazz, and Gene Krupa.

James: Punk and Heavy Rock.

AU: Where can people see and buy your art?



James: In Victoria at The Headquarters 1315 Broad St.

Crash: Also at Cavity Curiosity Shop 2514 Douglas St.

AU: What is your personal situation now?

James: Living freely and loving it.

Crash: Overwhelmed and terrified.

AU: What is the best way to describe your art?

Crash: Cartoon surrealist.

James: Like a storybook about dreams and life.

AU: What else would you like to say to everyone reading this?

James: Life can be amazing.

Crash: I do art everyday and study the world around me so I can bring it into my art.

AU: Would you like to thank anyone who has helped you out and supported your art?

Crash: Thanks to Ryan Butler from HQ who is the true heart and soul in this city.

James: And also thanks to Andy at Cavity.

AU: Thanks to these two old school street



artists who still live free and create amazing art.

[facebook.com/crash.underwood](https://www.facebook.com/crash.underwood)

[cavitycuriosityshop.ca](https://www.facebook.com/cavitycuriosityshop.ca)

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PHOTO CREDIT: Raimi Butler

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PETER BAGGE



Peter Bagge

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

PB: I'm Peter Bagge!

AU: When did you first become interested in art and comic books?

PB: As far back as I can remember. My older brother drew comics, so I copied him.

AU: Who were some of your favourite artists that influenced you early on?

PB: Charles M Schulz, most of the MAD artists, Warner Brothers cartoons, and later on Robert Crumb.

AU: Tell us about working on PUNK magazine?

PB: They were going to run some short comic strips I already made, only they went out of business. A year or two later they ran them in a final special edition of PUNK.

AU: How did you first get involved in the comic industry?

PB: Just by making the rounds, showing samples to whomever I hoped would be interested. I got rejected a lot. Such is life.

AU: Describe your artistic style.



PB: Lively!
AU: What is the difference between underground comix and mainstream comics?

PB: Mainstream comics both then and now reinforced the status quo. They're very moral. UG comics either challenge or ignore the status quo -- sometimes willfully, but also out of some compulsive need.

AU: How did you get your big break?

PB: My two biggest opportunities early on was being asked by Robert Crumb to help him edit his US magazine WEIRDO, and shortly afterwards being offered my own title by Fantagraphics.

AU: Tell us about the origin of your comics Neat Stuff, and The Bradleys.

PB: Neat Stuff was what I came up with for Fanta. It was a 1 man anthology, in that I used a number of sets of characters and stories. The Bradleys were just one of many.

AU: How did The Bradleys morph in your comic called

HATE?
PB: They -- and especially Buddy Bradley -- simply took over. I had the most story ideas for them.

AU: What was HATE all about?

Were some of the stories autobiographical?

PB: Of course! Though a lot of it was purely made up, of course. Still, all fiction is autobiographical to some degree.

AU: What work have you done for Marvel and DC?

PB: I did two satirical comics for Marvel, two short lived series for DC and one graphic novel for DC.

AU: What are some of your career highlights and works you are most proud of?

PB: I'm most proud of the full color issues of HATE, as well as the biographical titles I did for D&Q in the past decade. I also really liked the way my comic strip BAT BOY came out! I did that for the Weekly World News back around 2004-5.

AU: What is the secret to writing a solid comic book script?

PB: It takes years of trial and error to find your own voice and how to hone it. But in general it's best to work and re-work the entire script before you draw it, -- and also to try to be as concise as possible.

AU: What sorts of bands are you into? Have you ever done any album cover art?

PB: I mostly like '60s inspired pop rock. But I've done dozens of record covers for all kinds of bands - mainly punk/

garage type bands.

AU: Have you ever been in a band yourself?

PB: Yes, I drummed for a band called the Action Suits back in the late '90s, and more recently played guitar for a band called Can You Imagine?

AU: Do you have a favorite Canadian Punk Rock band?

PB: No. They're all too fabulous!

AU: Any upcoming projects to promote?

PB: I'm currently and mainly just doing short bio comic strips for REASON Magazine:

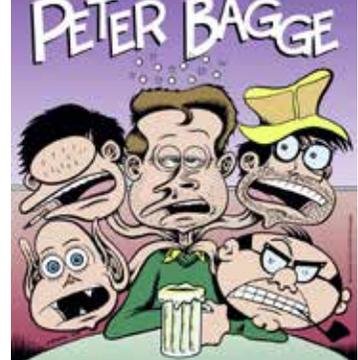
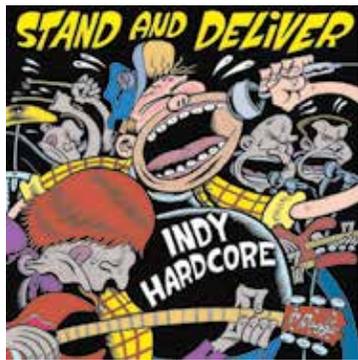
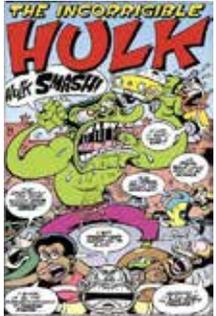
reason.com/people/peter-bagge

AU: Any advice for aspiring comic book artists?

PB: Just to be true to yourself, and say whatever you feel compelled to say. Otherwise

there's no point.
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COMIC-GEDDON

Canadian Musician Apricity makes her Comic Book Debut in The Fear.

By Ed Sum

There's a new Canadian talent to keep an eye out on, and Apricity (Mandy McDonald) is the word. Her love for musical theatre speaks about her style. Her experience of working in front of a camera during her days as a television presenter in Scotland translates well past the MTV generation.

Apricity moved to Canada and met Toronto-based Juno-nominated and platinum awarded music producer Thomas McKay. Together they worked on developing a style and have a brand that works. In an interview by Jenna Melanson for CanadianBeats.ca, she said, "My stage name is taken from an old English word which means 'basking in the winter sun,' which I thought was very appropriate for a Canadian artist.

To see that McDonald embraced a supernatural style and is inspired by Evanescence says it all. She made her debut last year with the "All My Lies" music video. Its Emily Brontë-cum-horror design shows she's a very visual artist, and I'm hooked. Her latest, "The Fear," includes a comic-book teaser which makes me wonder if there'll be a continuation. It's in the works, and this artist revealed they are aiming for a Halloween 2021

release.

The four-page teaser by Cassandra Kirkwood is included in the album release, and it sets up the music video. The moving image furthers the exposition about an apocalypse which has displaced families and lovers.

"After searching far and wide in a post-apocalyptic world, I find my companion, Jason, only to discover he is now being used for sport to fight the captured zombies," Apricity revealed of her multimedia project's plot.

What we discover is that others have found their loved ones turned into the walking dead, and not everyone's living that happily ever after. A zombie bride also appears, and she looks lost!

The pairing of two terrific artists akin to the Steinman and Meatloaf partnership is solid. We have songs about the heart, rock-and-roll, dreams and breaking free. The themes she explores are part of that goth lifestyle too.

We see in her past songs an exploration about death, and the afterlife.

Considering this latest music video aptly reveals the state of life, perhaps it's best to handle getting back to normal "One Step at a Time" if we're to believe she's making a statement about the pandemic that's showing no sign of dissipating.

For more information, please visit <https://apricitymusic.com/>



THE FEAR

subculture

By **wendythirteen**

Well here I am again, sorta fresh off a chain smoking-caused bout of Congestive Heart Failure. 28% heart function. Do not recommend. Cold turkey has entered my life once again. I miss you ciggies.

I always find my extremism in vices comes to a violent pushback from my body. My excessive consumption of Jagermeister led to a pickled liver almost 8 years ago. Booze. Gone cold turkey.

I'm running out of vices. I smoke the odd doobie but I'd hardly call weed a vice when used in moderation. Definitely a medicine for loads of people. I love puttering. This pandemic has been an interesting learning curve. I'm enjoying not having to be anywhere too often. That satiates my inner eccentric homebody. I love being surrounded with relics from my lifetime, the dimly lit darkness backed artscape, skulls and other oddities, his husky furriness, plants and my various aquatic critters. It's really helped my recovery from 44 days in the hellscape of hospital food, fluorescent light at night and constant bloodletting.

I see the pictures of the music industry struggling to come back. Cringe. Since we are still in phase 3 in B.C., that means sitting at tables during a vigorous show. Seems wacky. Unnatural. That's a hard no for me so far.

Having worked hundreds of shows in my life, I guess I'm not missing live shows as much as the general fan base. I'm sure there's industry people that have taken this break just fine as long as there was some sort of monetary subsistence



in play. Thank you CERB / CRB. Life has come with a sigh of relief courtesy of the Government of Canada. Working weekends for years is its own kind of grind. As a self employed person in a paused industry, I was very grateful that subsidy existed. It's been cut now so I'll have to be careful.

Pandemic wise, I'm still wary. It still seems too risky for me. So many reckless, inebriated people, unmasked and closer than 6 feet from me makes me shudder. I do not want to end up with that virus and be back in a hospital.

I have a feeling all these hastily booked shows come with the risk of being scaled back again. The general public is clustering with careless abandon, maskless with deranged thinking that the virus is at bay. I, for one, don't want to catch that shit or unknowingly spread it.

I still haven't eaten in a restaurant since March 2020. I still wear my mask. I got double vaxxed. I'm in and out of stores with a list. I stay home. I'm still nervous.

I marvel with a startled shudder at you brave, unsickly souls. I feel very wary and am not ready to book anything anytime soon, especially with unknown peril on the horizon.

Besides the fact that I'm once again starting over courtesy of the City of Vancouver buying my workplace to house the homeless, with Atria as "managing" overlords. Suddenly there's "no heavy music" or any live music after 10pm restrictions. Kind of puts a damper on live music when most people don't head for a night out until after 10pm.

Another lost venue. Sigh. Maybe something will come to fruition by the time I'm ready and the

waters have been well tested by others.

I'm thinking it's about time a gaggle of heavy music promoters banded together and made their own venue happen. Say 4 peeps. Everyone could throw 2 shows a month. Split up the duties. The competing shows problem would be solved. Do any shut down, non gentrified or yuppified venues exist?

Stay safe. Get vaxxed. Avoid idiots. Wear a mask. XO W13.

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R.I.P. Randy Rampage

Today I write this on the approach of Randy Rampage's third anniversary of his death. We had a large service to Randy in 2018 at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver and he was eulogized by Nick Jones, John Armstrong, his ILWU500 brothers Tony and Dave, and Joe Keithley. Both Billy Hopeless and Art Bergmann played songs. It was followed by a full casket burial at Mountain View Cemetery. The casket was designed by Jim Cummins, and the design was Randy's chest tattoo – the heart and cross. Part of Brad Kent is buried with him, along with a poem from Art Bergmann, his book

co-written by Chris Walter, one of his DOA guitars, a couple of private letters, Doug Donut's rose, some photos by Bev Davies, the ILWU500 Longshoremen's autographed vest and a send off from the boys and girls at the Boot.

Gerry Jenn Wilson died this year and we are interring her ashes in the same burial plot as Randy, on August 15th and she will be officially registered with the Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver. With Zippy also passing not that long ago, his partner Kathy, will be doing a little sprinkle of Zippy in the same plot as well.

This is part of the punk rock family and this is what the punk is – family.

- Susanne Tabata

FALLEN SOLDIERS



Walter Kot Rest in Punk. Walter "Killer" Kot 1957 - 2021

Walter Kot was playing guitar for the early Winnipeg punk band Le Kille when I met him in 1981. Le Kille might not have been the most technically proficient band in the world, but they were a lot of fun to watch. To get in the right mood, they'd usually pig out on booze, acid, and downers, or whatever was around. Walter "Killer" Kot customarily drank three-quarters of a bottle of tequila before hitting the stage. "We thought getting fucked up was really

cool. Then we'd play and we'd be horrible," says singer Mitch Funk, "Walt was a bit of a bleeder. He'd bang his forehead against the mic to get the blood flowing."

Walter, who habitually wore a marching band jacket with gold piping and epaulettes onstage, also had a habit of accidentally booting out the bottom speakers of his guitar cabinet with his flying bootheels. When Le Kille folded, Walter helped form the legendary Personality Crisis with Mitch and others. Although Walter left the band before they recorded their only album, he was a big part of their development and performed many shows with them.

Walt also played several songs with Personality Crisis at their last show in 2017, and I was fortunate enough to be there. Walter was his affable old self that night, but an aggressive form of cancer came for him in 2021. In all the decades I knew the man, we always got along well, and I was very sad to see him go. Walter is survived by his wife Laura and his extended family.

- Chris Walter July 2021

PHOTO CREDIT: Doug Humiski

Grant Wilson has died.
Grant was born in Victoria in 1966 and got his first job at a comic shop when he was nine. He worked in the comic mines for decades. He sang in a band, he played floor hockey, he collected cool stuff, and he opened Legends Comics at 633 Johnson Street in Victoria, BC on his 26th birthday. He knew comics and he liked to smoke. He moved to Nelson and drew amazing artwork while listening to Elliott Smith. He was cool.



Grant Wilson has died.
1966-2021



PETE "CLEAVER" KELLER
FRONTMAN OF DEATH SENTENCE
MAY 14, 1958 - MARCH 2, 1997

Photo: Bev Davies



Dusty Hill - ZZ TOP

1949 - 2021

"The sharp dressed man - rest easy"

Photo credit: Brian Clausen - Warner Music



Joey Jordison - Slipknot / Murderdolls / Scar the Martyr

1975 - 2021

"rhythm cannot be silenced"

Photo credit: joeyjordison.com

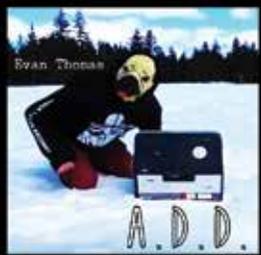


Mike Howe - Metal Church

1965 - 2021

Photo credit: metalchurchofficial.com

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The Lowdown: Time and time again the "dive bars" of this city have closed, leaving voids here there and everywhere. We've strived, over the past 13 years, to create a real public house; Somewhere comfortable where you can kick back and relax with some good friends, good food and good music. Much like the music scene in this city, we're not going anywhere!!

The past year venue after venue closed for good across Canada. Bands, musicians and artists are looking to tour and may not know of a location in your city. In order to support the venues that provide an invaluable service we are going to do our best to support said venues. If your hometown/city has a place that offers live music and you'd like to let the public know about it, reach out and send me an email.

scott@absoluteunderground.ca

PHOTO CREDIT: Scott Fraser Photography

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