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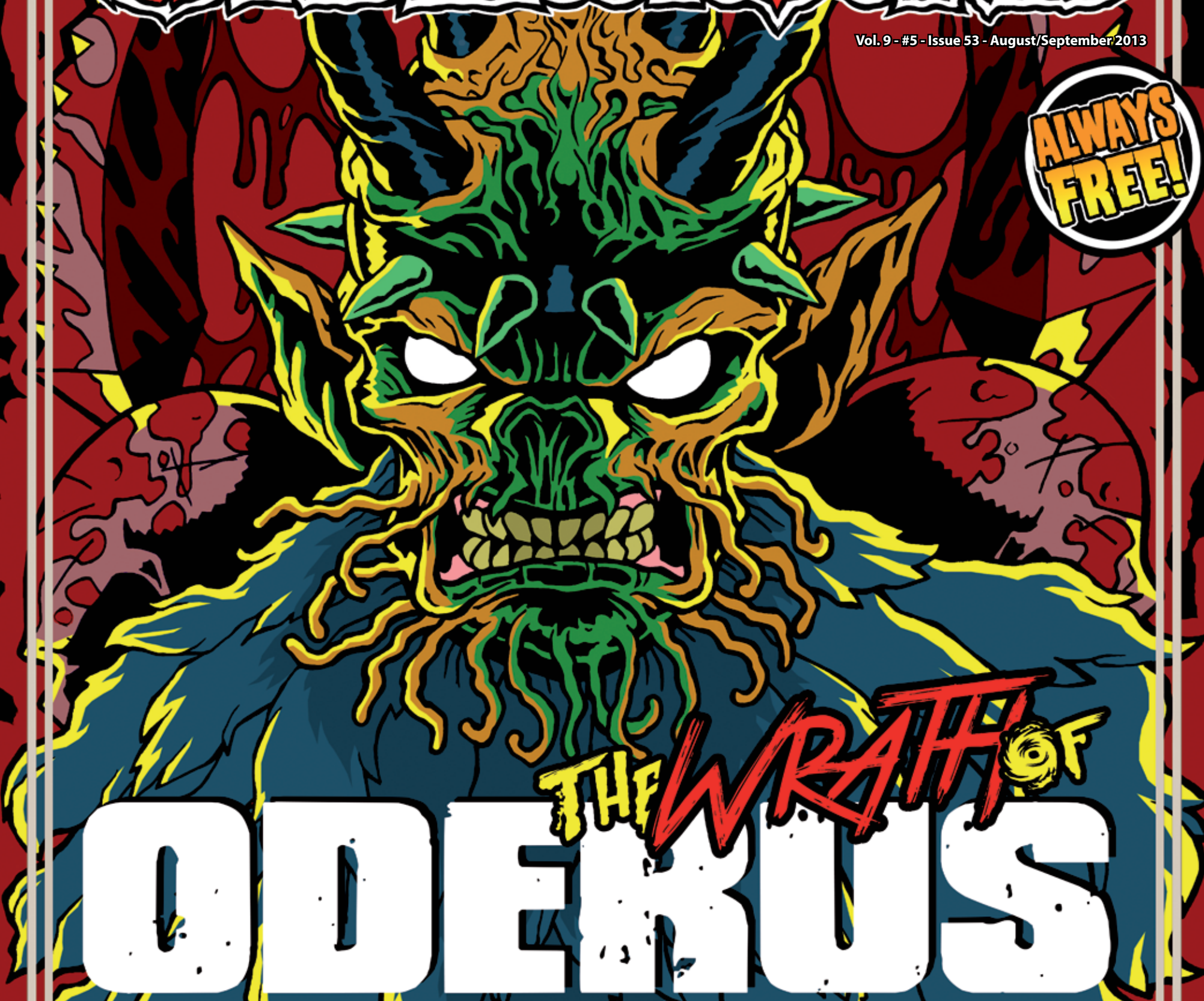
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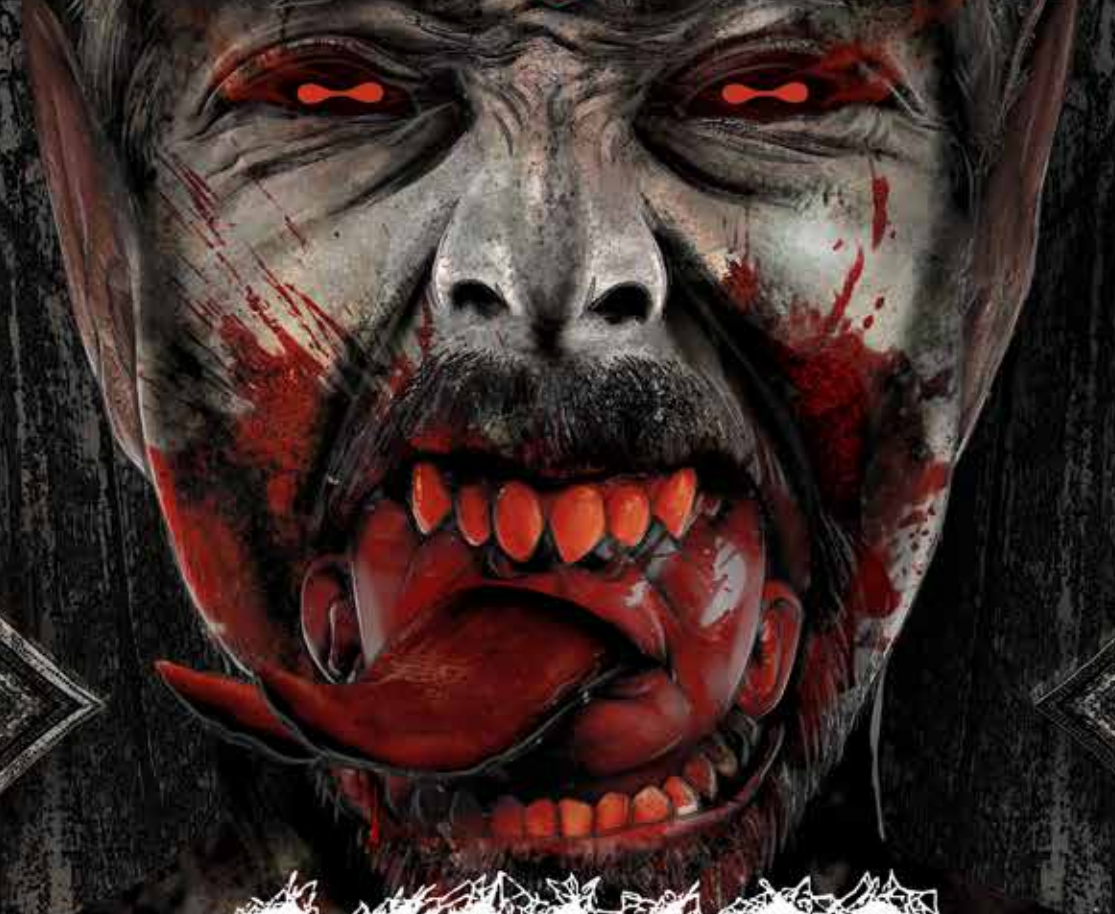


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COVER ARTWORK by Tank Standing Buffalo
COVER DESIGN by Demonika

Writers - Michael Luis, Jake Warren, Mr. Plow, Milton Stille, Allison Drinnan, Charley Justice, Matt Gordon, Anita Fixx, Alicia Gilmour, Erik Lindholm, Willow Gamberg, Dan Potter, Michael Allen, Dustin Blumhagen, Sean McKay, Cody No Teeth, Cam D'Andrade, Ed Sum, Rod Rookers, Skylar Anderson, Mr. Plow

Photographers - John Warnock, Chad Persley, Demonika, Ira Hunter, Jake Jackoff, Keith Norton, Justin Poulsen, Mike Chow, Chris McKibbin, Scott Alexander, Ryan Dyer, Krista Robson, Zia Marashi, Travis McDermid, Brad Reckless, Nathaniel Shannon, Brydon Parker, Pamela Porosky, Dani Eggen, Robin K, Mr. Sable, Jen Warnock, Jason Shultz, Joelle Prevost, Patti Gordon, William Smart, Allison Drinnan, Milton Stille, Alicia Beisel

Comic Artists - Robin Thompson, Randy Chaos, Dick Kaupf, Ricky Jak, Mark Lehtimki, Tim Canepa

Transcription - Erik Lindholm, Pauly Hardcore, Steve Boyd

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Logo Design - Dirty Donny

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Absolute Underground
 PO Box 48076, Victoria, BC V8Z 7H5
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Torrefy

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself to the people, names and superpowers.

Torrefy: John Ferguson - Sonic Disruption (Vocals), Simon Smith - Thunderbringer (Bass), Ben Gerencser - Boner Sorcerer (Rhythm Guitar), Dan Laughy - Skin Ripper (Drums), Adam Henry - Molten Blues (Lead guitar).

AU: How did Torrefy form, and how long have you been around?

Torrefy: Torrefy was born and bred in the grim depths of Saanich, BC. Old and new allies aligned on what began as a jam night, "just for fun". This led to the birth of riffs that could not be contained in a jam room and, at that point, Torrefy made its presence felt to the metalhead community of Victoria. Torrefy has been in existence for two years.

AU: Describe your sound/musical style for someone who's never heard it before

Torrefy: We're not super excited to put labels on things, but Torrefy is a thrash band with classic

rock and black metal influences.

AU: You have an album in the works, when will it be released and what can you tell us about it?

Torrefy: We are in the process of releasing an album that we

on us, because we are going to be releasing our album, and you are not going to want to miss this CD release party from Hell!

AU: Victoria seems to be all about the punk and ska these days... what's it like being a metal band in the Vic scene?

Torrefy: Victoria has been an excellent place to play metal! Crowd response has been really exceptional here due to the ironclad, show-going moshers in our town who are always keeping the scene alive and are super stoked to get fucked up in the pit! Torrefy is always down to party and so are these local lunatics! The coolest thing about thrash metal is how much bloody fun it is, and that energy is truly contagious! Come out to a show and you will see what we mean! \m/

AU: What are your plans for the band's future?

Torrefy: We are just getting started! We are going to play shows, record music, bang our heads,

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY

and continue stoking the flames of this metal community with scorching new hellbent riffage.

AU: Any BC bands you're dying to play with?

Torrefy: We would be seriously down to play with anyone who wields the flag of heavy metal and rock and roll. We don't judge! Want to slay the stage with us? We are in! On an unrelated note... 3 Inches of Blood!

AU: Anything else you'd like to add? Final words? Website?

Torrefy: Thanks to all the Victoria metalheads for coming out and supporting our band. As long as you guys keep this metal ball rolling, we are going to continue to bring it on stage with our blackened, thrashing, unholy hymns!

<https://www.facebook.com/Torrefy>



have recorded with Jorge Anstey of Scimitar. It's going to be a seven-track ripper that we are really excited for everyone to hear. Message us on Facebook to get a copy or, even better, come and get one at a show!

AU: What influences you thematically and musically?

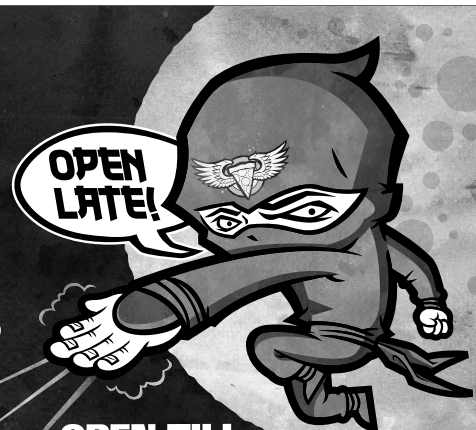
Torrefy: All five members of Torrefy bring their own individual influences, drawn from the past, present, and the black future to the table. We are motivated to write songs that get us fully stoked to bang our own heads and hopefully get a crowd full of maniacs to join forces with us in fevered pits of musical frenzy!

AU: Any exciting gigs coming up this fall?

Torrefy: We are always down to play a show and get rowdy with the locals! We usually get a couple of weeks' notice before we are asked to play shows, so stay tuned and keep your eyes

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Black Wizard

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you famous for?

Adam Grant: Adam Grant, I sing and play guitar in Black Wizard. Hahah, famous...

AU: Describe your sound for the nice people.

AG: We sound like four dudes in a smoked-out jam space, making noise and having a good time while we do it.

AU: You just released your second full-length album, titled Young Wisdom, on Friday, June

28th, which will also be released on vinyl later under War On Music. What can you tell us about the new album?

AG: Don't want to sound redundant, but we're super stoked on it. Glad we got around to releasing it. It's a mix of the old stuff people dug but also a bit more 'out there'.

AU: How has the reception been so far?

AG: Unreal, people seem to be really into it. We've already shipped out a bunch of CDs all over Europe, which is wild.

AU: Do you find your sound has evolved at all since your first release?

AG: Most definitely. The first record was really fun and it reflects our band at that time, but this one is more focused, I think. We spent a lot more time on lyrics and riffs, we didn't want to get pigeonholed as a "stoner rock" band that can only jam one riff for too long.

AU: You guys are each in like 300 other bands... how do you balance your time and energy?

AG: We don't, non-stop riffin' for these boys.

AU: Looks like you guys have done a few tours so far, what's the craziest thing that's ever happened?

AG: Uhh, a bunch of stuff, probably wouldn't look too good on paper. We got stranded in Fernie one time 'cause a guy named Carl crashed the van, haha.

AU: Best festival you've played at?

AG: We only played one festival so far, and it was the GHBR Crust Fest in Squampton. We aren't allowed back.

AU: Any plans to tour for Young Wisdom?

AG: Oh for sure, hopefully some West Coast shows in the fall/winter.

AU: What are your plans for the future of Black Wizard?

AG: To tour the shit outta this record and the next one, and the next, and the next one, then hopefully we don't suck by then and we make more!

AU: Favourite weed? Beer?

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE



AG: Pre-rolled and free, Steamwhistle if you're buying. We've been rockin' the Raindeers (Rainer) hard these days, though.

AU: Any secret superpowers?

AG: Whaaaaat... nope.

AU: What else should we know about you?

AG: We're playing September 13th with Valient Thorr at the Astoria, gonna be a fuckin' real party!

For more information on Black Wizard, check them out online at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Black-Wizard/> or <http://blackwizardband.blogspot.com/>



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Exit Strategy

Interview by Allison Drinnan

In Alberta, there is a band that has become synonymous with setting the bar for extreme metal. Exit Strategy, including bassist Greg Musgrave, drummer Casey Rogers, guitarist Joe Sikorski and their new vocalist, Wes DeLeeuw, has been pulverizing crowds with politically-conscious death-grind since 2006. With a new album, *The Atrocity Machine*, to be released this September, *Absolute Underground* thought it would be a great time catch up with the band to see what the local legends have been up to.

Absolute Underground: Tell me about the addition of Wes as a vocalist to Exit Strategy. How did that come about?

Joe Sikorski: We have all known Wes from the local Calgary music scene for the last few years. When we found out about his current availability, as well as our need for a new vocalist after the departure

of Therese Lanz, we decided to approach him. Wes had always been a big proponent of Exit Strategy, even prior to his involvement, and that was the kind of self-starting person we required to get things recharged.

AU: Tell me about the new album coming out in September. What types of themes can we find in this album?

JS: In previous albums, we focused more on themes of the impact of war on humanity, the effects of forced ideology, and bias in the media. In the new album, we are more focused on concepts that ask you to think as an individual. We still have topics like those

mentioned above, but we also branch into some other topics of interest beyond the usual gamut for us, like lycanthropy, underground military complexes, and even some sci-fi concepts. We are broadening the concepts we discuss, as our interests don't just lie with social policies and ideals. We like concepts that activate our imaginations, too.

AU: What was the writing process like on this album?

JS: Our writing style has evolved with the integration of D.I.Y. home recording. We are able to create ideas and pass them around, even before they resemble a song. This allows for significant arrangement and re-constructive ideas during song creation. This way we can better use our rehearsal time, and learn songs in advance of initial rehearsals

AU: What was it like having your band member Casey do most of the production?

JS: In previous instances, I would do the majority of the music recording process. With the new CD, we all feel Casey did a great job, and was able to accomplish it in a more timely manner than I was able to previously. This time, initial stages saw me scratch track the guitars to a click, then hand off the project to Casey to finish writing drum lines and record the drums. Next, I took the project and added all the guitar lines, and recorded the bass tracks with Greg. Upon completion, I handed the project back to Casey, who recorded the vocals and mixed and mastered the project. As a result, I think this was the fastest that we have recorded a project of this size to date, even though we did push our due date too close.

AU: It's been a while since you guys have released anything. Why the wait?

JS: Good things take time, and we wanted to get everything sorted out in advance. This album is put together completely differently than we have done in the past, and the extra time we took reflects that.

AU: After being in the local music scene for so long, why do you think Exit Strategy has remained such a well-respected and popular band?

JS: I think it could be ethics, hard work, and trying to be unrelenting at our shows. We want to put on a good show and make sure the audience has a good time, too. If a bands asks for venue contact info, or if a promoter calls to fill in a show last minute, we try to direct them to the best resources we have. The longevity of the band is also based on our abilities to get along with each other collectively, as well as others with us.

AU: How have you guys seen the Alberta music scene change or grow?

CALGARY CARNAGE



JS: Music moves in positive and negative trend cycles [that] we've all seen. It comes and goes in terms of its popularity, as different bands break and genres move in and out of favour. What is popular today is unfavorable tomorrow. However, I've seen it [grow] from a tiny group of people going to weeknight shows at the Back Alley ten years ago, to seeing the Calgary Metalfest and Noctis events with their respective turnouts. I'm proud of what has been accomplished by all those whom took it upon themselves to make things better for all us in the metal community.

AU: What are the plans for the near future of Exit Strategy?

JS: I guess we'll put *The Atrocity Machine* into action and see what turns out. We do have numerous shows throughout western Canada scheduled, so check our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/exitstrategycalgary>) for updates and upcoming shows.

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BUSINESS PROFILE



Sacred Herb

Interview by Ira Hunter

AU: Please introduce yourself.

Paul Reid: My name is Paul. I've lived in Victoria for over 20 years, and I have a beautiful wife and two wonderful boys.

AU: What's the history of your store, Sacred Herb?

PR: Sacred Herb has been in operation since 1995, when the incomparable and far-too-soon departed Ian Hunter opened it as an activist headquarters/retail shop.

AU: How did you first become involved with the shop?



PR: I was hired by Sarah Hannah, my current business partner, in 1996 and ran the shop when she left to travel and pursue other interests. When the city did not want to re-issue a business license to Ian in 1998, Sarah Hannah and I bought the business from him.

AU: What sets your store apart from others?

PR: Aside from selection and product knowledge, I would have to say our commitment to supporting a local economy [sets us apart]. We will buy everything as local as possible before heading elsewhere. We are very proud of the fact that

our glass hand-pipe case is filled with over 700 pieces, all made on Vancouver Island.

AU: What's been the secret of your success and

longevity?

PR: I believe we've been around for over 18 years because our goal has always been to provide excellent customer service, and to treat customers the way we would want to be treated: fairly and with respect. Our manager, Dan, has been with us a long time, is very knowledgeable about the industry and is right on top of emerging products and tendencies.

AU: Can you tell people what the best vaporizer is?

PR: There are new vaporizers on the market every day, but I have owned my Volcano for over 8 years and have never had an issue with it, so to me, it is still #1.

AU: What do you know about the newest sensation called the Sublimator? Do you carry them at Sacred Herb?

PR: The Sublimator is a Canadian-designed and manufactured sublimation device that is taking the market by storm. There are two models available: the Apollo for flowers and the E-Nailator for extracts. We stock both, so come on down and see for yourself.

AU: What are your thoughts on the current state of things concerning medicinal legalization?



PR: The current state of medicinal legalization is a mess. It is now (and has been for quite a while), common knowledge that cannabis is effective medicine. It is absolutely ridiculous that sick people are made to jump through so many hoops to legitimately gain access to a plant that can help them improve their quality of life.

AU: What do you believe is the best solution to the situation?

PR: Stop legislating what people put into their own bodies and let people grow or safely access effective medicines.

AU: Anything interesting on the horizon you'd like to share?

PR: We are always

evolving to suit the needs of our clientele. Our success is based on communication with those that help us pay our bills, to provide products that they want. Talk to us. We smoke/vaporize/sublimate just like everyone else... one tokes at a time.

AU: Final words of wisdom?

PR: Be you...everyone else is taken.

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10th Annual Festival of Fear Preview

By Ed Sum

Rue Morgue's 10th Annual Festival of Fear in Toronto's Metro Convention Centre will, no doubt, be a celebratory event. Taking place on August

22-25th, the festival will feature Ron Perlman (Hellboy) as the guest of honour. Zachery Quinto (American Horror Story, Star Trek), Tristan Risk (American Mary), Joe Dante (Gremlins) and Slash (formally of GnR) are just a sampling of the other celebrities scheduled to appear. Slash will unveil his new production company, Slasher Films, and most likely talk about how the first film, Nothing Left to Fear, will bring back 70s and 80s style horror to the masses.

For fans who went to the Vancouver show and want to draw comparisons, this event is bigger, louder and wilder. Special reunion panels are set to occur, namely Re-Animator, and screenings will feature the directors offering a very special Q&A at the end. Don Coscarelli will be in attendance for Phantasm II.

A very special highlight at this year's show will be with Rue Morgue's Shocktail with Vancouver's own self-made stars, the Soska Twins, hosting the "Birthday Massacre" party with Barbara Crampton (Puppet Master, Lords of Salem). They will be presenting at more than just one event; their job includes appearing at other of panels to talk about the filmmaking industry and gender roles in horror movies.

"It was a no-brainer to bring the Soska Twins in," said Ron McKenzie, office manager for Rue Morgue Magazine, "They're cheerleaders for the genre. And they're two of the most sweetest people I've ever met. Having them on board has been an incredible blessing."

The Vancouver connection is even further enhanced with both Ken Kerzinger and Brad Loree suggesting that they may also be in attendance. "I didn't know what to expect from the people in Vancouver, but they're just as big as fans as anybody, not just for Jason, but for the Fan Expo experience. I can't wait to go to Toronto to see what they're like," said Kerzinger.



And Loree is open to attending these shows for years to come. Both have attended them for more than eight years now.

For those not following Rue Morgue's Facebook feed, recent information includes news of Foresight Features giving a sneak preview their three latest films. They are the company who produced Exit Humanity, a brilliant zombie style film starring by writer/director John Geddes and Monster Brawl, a fun popcorn flick by writer/



director Jesse T. Cook.

Although nothing has been revealed yet, maybe Alice Cooper will host a jam session with Slash. If this potential is not tantalizing enough, maybe we'll see another screening of The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh, with the publisher Rodrigo Gudiño hosting a real Q&A session afterwards. That is more exciting than what Cineplex's Sinister Cinema offered, when this movie was screened in other cities.

Anything is possible, because this show is operating in Rue Morgue's hometown. The talent the organizers have for bringing people together is known to be amazing; just a gathering of like-minded individuals, just wanting to have fun. That said, they're also ready to show that the horror community has a champion in Canada; that's all that is needed to bring fans and filmmakers far and wide to this show.

"If there's anything we can do to help them, or any Canadian independent film-makers, we're behind them 100%," said McKenzie.

More information at: www.rue-morgue.com/festival-of-fear

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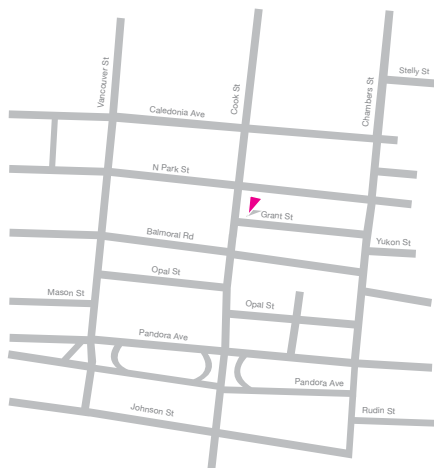
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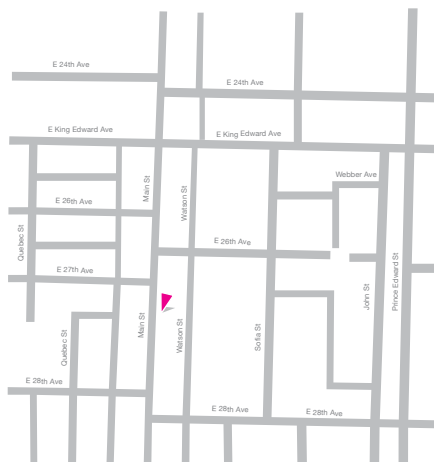
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Billy Gray

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself to the people.

Billy Gray: Hello, my name is Bill, I have been tattooing 17 years from coast to coast. The only thing that keeps me busier than tattooing is booze and women. And sometimes I walk my dog.

AU: Where are you located?

BG: I'm currently located in downtown Montreal at Slick Styled Steel (1841-D Ste-Catherine West).

AU: What makes the shop unique? How would you describe the shop's style?

BG: Our shop is unique because it is not full of pretentious assholes trying to sell you stuff you don't need. We approach our work with professionalism and integrity, and we love to have a good time. We have a good crew, with an old-school tattoo shop feel.

AU: What styles do you specialize in?

BG: All of them except color portraits, but I'm working on it. I can't stand single-style specialists. I think to appeal to a wider range of customers, you should be able to do a little bit of everything. Any pussy can do [just] one style.

AU: Do you think your technique, style, or skill level has changed over time?

BG: Fuck yeah; I'm not fucking people up on my kitchen table anymore. Traveling and working with so many shops and artists across Canada has allowed me to learn and improve both as an artist and within the industry.

AU: Do you incorporate any secret techniques when doing a tattoo?

BG: Yes. But they're secret. I'm not telling. But I can say it involves a virgin's pubic hair and the tears of my apprentices to clean my tubes.

AU: Where do you draw your inspiration from?

BG: Truck stop bathroom stalls and Montreal whorehouses.

INK SLINGERS

AU: What sort of tunes can one expect to hear when getting tattooed at the shop?

BG: A bunch of shit I don't like, but when I get to pick, it's punk or rockabilly - The Matadors, Misfits, 50s rock 'n roll. I love me some Southern Fried Cuntry as well.

AU: What are you most proud of in regards to your work?

BG: I'm proud that I get to work with the people that I work with. I'm proud that people consider me good enough to teach them how to tattoo. Over my career I've had 13 apprentices, most of them are still tattooing today, and a few of them are now shop owners.



But I don't fuck up, when the needle is in my hand, I'm 100% focused.

AU: Any advice for young up and comers?

BG: Don't do it, find a better job, and go to school. But if you do really think this is for you, fight for it; give it every single part of you. Don't give up.

AU: What's the craziest request for a tattoo you have ever gotten?

BG: Infinity symbols, birds bursting out of feathers, pretty much anything that comes off the first page of Google or Tumblr. Why the fuck would anybody go to a custom tattoo artist willing to draw you a nice picture and ask for the same thing everyone else has?

AU: Tattoo request you are anxiously waiting for?

BG: I would like to take a beautiful woman with no tattoos, a blank canvas, and tattoo one third of her body.

AU: Final words for people reading this?

AU: Does most of your work tend to lean to the side of Good or Evil?

BG: The work is good, to balance out the evil I do in my off hours - if people knew what I did the night before, they would never sit in my chair the next day.

BG: Drink. Fuck. Tattoo. Repeat. Try to do some good drugs along the way. Love ya mah. But not really.

AU: Website?

BG: www.slickstyledsteel.com

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Delaney and Paris

Interview by Mr. Plow

I first came across Delaney and Paris three years ago, at an open mic night here in Portland, Oregon.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing; a female duo that sings dirty acoustic songs. They are like the musical dirty comedy version of Cagney and Lacey. We have shared the stage a few times from that point on around town. They just released a new CD and I had a chance to talk to Paris while we nibbled on Voodoo Doughnuts like little rats.

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do??

Paris: We are Delaney and Paris and we write and perform raunchy acoustic music about dicks, murder, ranch dressing, and the like. Songs about your typical girl next door.

AU: What kind of response do you get being two cute girls singing dirty songs?

Paris: It varies. Oftentimes on newer victims, their first reaction is shock and that gets us off. Sometimes

we get hit on, of course. Other times people will approach us and thank us for saying the things they wish they could. And on rare occasions folks get offended and walk out.

AU: You have a song called "Hipster Douchebag"; is it self-explanatory, was it inspired by a certain individual or is it about everyone in Portland?

Paris: It was inspired by a few individuals, the most influential was a former co-worker of Delaney's that offered to produce our music after she had sex with him. His whole crew were a bunch of college jerk-offs who had no experience nor regard for our artistic integrity and creative control.

AU: You've been seen around town playing in just bra and panties. Does that increase the amount of creepy perverted groupies by the time you get off stage?

Paris: Surprisingly, no.

AU: Have you ever been asked to tone down your act at a venue?

Paris: We were taken off a bill without notice once because one of the venue partners did not care for "Murder Is Fun."

MR PLOWS PICK

When we played the Portland Music Awards in 2012 we were asked to pick 3 of our least vulgar songs because there would be children present and it was being televised and radio broad-casted.

AU: You have a brand new CD, what can one expect from it and where can they find it?

Paris: Beautifully sinful music, for your pleasure. Also pictures of us frolicking in a pile of stuffed animals and a cartoon unicorn with an almost hidden penis. You can always purchase copies at one of our shows, or on www.delaneyandparis.com.

AU: I read you were having issues booking a tour, were promoters not taking you seriously because of the music or because you were girls playing music?

Paris: We think it is mostly because it is our first time touring and we cannot guarantee any draw in their town. There may be some sexism involved as well, but that has not been made clear to us.

AU: Has there ever been a line you wouldn't

cross when you sit down to write a new song, or is everything fair game?

Paris: We would never make racist or homophobic statements in our music, nor promote addiction or abuse of drugs or alcohol. We use the word "fag" on occasion but not in a degrading way targeted at any specific groups or individuals.

AU: What are three things you know about Canada? If you know three things

Paris: The legal drinking age is 18. They have 1 dollar and 2 dollar coins, (the loonie and the toonie) that confuse American strippers touring through.

Vancouver, B.C. is used as a generic backdrop for different American towns in Hollywood films.

AU: Shamelessly plug whatever you want (website, CD, etc.)

Paris: Website: www.delaneyandparis.com
Our debut album is titled "Cute But Not Nice", and includes 13 of our more popular tracks and one-of-a-kind artwork.

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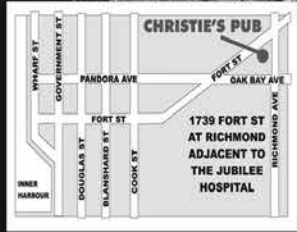
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Black XIII

Interview by Lacey Paige

One of the most distinctive bands to shred their way into Edmonton's metal scene within the past few years is Black XIII. Formally members of the seven-piece progressive nu-metal band Infernus, Bill, Matt and Dan reunited to form their dream project after years of having parted ways musically.

"We just wanted to do death metal," drummer/vocalist Dan explains. "We didn't really know what kind of death metal or what it was going to sound like. We just write it, downtune it and throw in heavy vocals."

Black XIII delves deep into the phantasmagorical realm of creative, dark fiction—literature, cinema, comic books and Anime—for song concepts. The three down-to-earth, beer-guzzling metalheads feel that the reality of their everyday lives is

simply too easy-going to draw influence from, and they prefer not to pretend to be emo for music's sake. They would rather present inventive ideas that will pique the imaginations of the listeners rather than give people a reason to sulk about their latest break-up or one of life's inevitable defeats.

"I'll just pick something I like, like if a movie has a really cool premise or there's a character I really like, I'll write some song about who he is," says Dan, the primary lyrical wordsmith of

Black XIII. "The majority of the band's origins came from the Stephen King Dark Tower novels. That's where the name came from. Our first three songs were inspired by characters from those books."

Dan says that although he writes the majority of Black XIII's songs, he's open to contributions from his bandmates. The essence of their style is in the way they collectively piece their tunes together.

"I think the greatest thing about writing about movies and comic books or whatever is that people can relate to it a lot easier than the shitty date I had last night," bassist Matt explains. "I mean, if you write about a movie and a specific character in a movie, people will be like, 'Oh man, that's so rad,' like they can relate to it. It's easier for them to get into it."

The guys believe that their approach to songwriting is an exceptional way to get listeners to connect with their material, saying that it ultimately arouses people's interest and engages them in various other creative outlets.

"There's a reason for them to look up a history," Dan emphasizes. "It's kind of neat."

Although the guys have been lurking around the shadows of Edmonton's metal milieu for over a decade now, they openly reveal that it's actually a tough scene for them, noting how oversaturated the metal market has become.

"There are a lot of bands and a lot of guys in bands," Dan says. "We don't know a lot of people so we're just here to try and absorb as much as we can.

All these guys are younger and they're all friends and in the same social circles. So we're just trying to incorporate ourselves into it in a positive way."

The guys are ecstatic to be sharing the stage with a fresh wave of exceptionally talented fledgling metal ensembles.

"It's cool that we can play shows with these crazy talented kids that like blow my head off," Matt says, making note of the piercing audio shrapnel that some of the younger bands are capable of detonating.

Despite the evident generation gap, Black XIII feels that they've still managed to make a solid mark within Edmonton's metal scene. They've been invited to play shows alongside a colourful array of alternative bands, including some of Edmonton's veteran metal acts as well as their contemporary counterparts. For example, this year they've opened for local death metal pioneers, Civil Savage, and up-and-coming black metallers, Runeblade, for a cancer benefit show.

SHR-EDMONTON



They've headlined an exclusive crossover show at the Brixx, playing alongside With Malice and punk band Fight to Swill. They've also become a favourite of Edmonton's Raised Fist Productions, having torn up the stage of The Studio in a maelstrom of guttural growls, explosive kick-pedals and shrieking strings.

The University of Alberta's radio station, CJSR, has played the band's demo with zeal.

"I shot DJ Shadow a demo and he was all over it... he's played us consistently ever since," Matt boasts.

The band has yet to release a full-length album, but they plan to make it happen sometime in 2014. No exact date has been set yet as they are currently working on new material.

Follow Black XIII on Facebook for upcoming show dates, and check them out on Soundcloud.com/BlackXIII and ReverbNation.com/BlackXIII. Max out the volume and prepare to have your face melted.



Dead Ranch

'The Thin Line Between Stoner and Sludge'

Interview with Chad Alsop
By Charley Justice

In Winnipeg, the life expectancy of a band is short. Sad truth. And the bands that matter – whether they were awful or fan-smashing-tastic – are the ones that last. Four years ago, I remember wandering into a scantily-packed, scummy basement show and inhaling (literally) in my first taste of Dead Ranch. It tasted great, smooth and sweet, and gave me a killer buzz. It was new and hungry. Starving. It sounded like Kyuss had been working out to 90s metal mixtapes and had

steroids-ripped (the music eh...not the members, for fuck's sake!). Anyway, it was great, but in the slough of come-and-go Winnipeg band tradition, I didn't expect that a few short years later, Dead Ranch would be far from dead; instead they are a living, kicking beast, absolutely dominating the stage and killing this scene on a monthly basis with dumptruck-loads of mega-sludge.

Absolute Underground: Dead Ranch - one word?

Chad Alsop: Loud

AU: Round of introductions please (including superpowers...)

CA: Drums and flight, Ryley; Bass/vocals and super strength, Steve; Andre has laser vision, and plays guitar/vocals. I, (Chad), play guitar/vocals as well; I used to be able to do one-handed cartwheels.

AU: Shit, seems like it's been a good past year for DR?

CA: Totally has been! It's been a really busy year, which is awesome, it's opened up a lot of doors for us. We've met tons of amazing people and musicians through playing a bunch of wicked shows, released our Birds of Pray EP, did a mini eastern Canadian tour, and we recorded our debut full-length, Antler Royal, in B.C. Probably the best year I've had...ever...

AU: Just recorded with Jesse Gander...umm, hell yes!

CA: Hell yes, indeed! He's got one hell of a stacked resume under his belt! Bison B.C., Haggatha, 3 Inches of Blood, and Ahna, just to name a few. It was a huge honour. He is also one of the coolest cats I've ever met. I had never been to B.C. Before, and he was a great host. Not only did he let us live at The Hive Creative Lab while recording, but when we had a bit of down time, he'd show us places to check out and let us shower at his place. Stand up dude and recording wizard!

AU: Birds of Pray killed! Where does it go from here?

CA: Thanks man, we're planning on releasing Antler Royal on 12" and digital through No List Records in the fall, and on touring to support it.

Royal... who will we hear on this album (major influences)?

CA: Haha, had a feeling this question was coming. Influences are all over the map for me from Waka Flocka Flame to Brahms, but I think people are going to hear some Melvins, some Kvelertak, some Bison B.C. and some KEN mode. I think. Everyone's ears are different.

AU: Collaborative project? No wait, let me guess...you write all the songs and tell everyone exactly how to play them, right?

CA: No, if that were the case, we would have so many half-assed songs that suck, haha.

When a riff or song is played at band practice by any member, everyone digs their talons in. It gets changed, extended, shortened or sometimes just trashed. Then everyone writes their own part, which is put through the same process.

AU: Tour. Where. When.

CA: We are planning on heading out on a Canadian tour in October. Going out east as far as Montreal and then out west as far as Vancouver. We're shooting for Europe and the U.S. in early 2014.

AU: So where is 'Dead Ranch'?

CA: In the Horsehead Nebula, and in the hearts and minds of every koala bear.

AU: Or is it some kind of necrotic salad dressing?

CA: Haha, expired in 1987...

AU: Do stoner metal bands like being called

WRETCHED WINNIPEG

stoner metal bands? Are you guys a stoner metal band?

CA: Haha I don't think we are a stoner metal band, but I don't mind the title. Call us what you will. We've been called lots of different things: stoner



metal, hardcore, punk-metal, doom punk, noise metal, prog on fire, which I was later told is a prog-y High on Fire, and my personal favourite, speed sludge... the list goes on. I don't think a band should mind being called a certain genre, even if it's not "what they're going for". People are thinking about you guys, investing their brain cells to file you in their mental catalogue of music. Pretty cool.

More information online at <https://www.facebook.com/deadranch> or <http://www.deadranch.bandcamp.com>

Photo: Al Broderick

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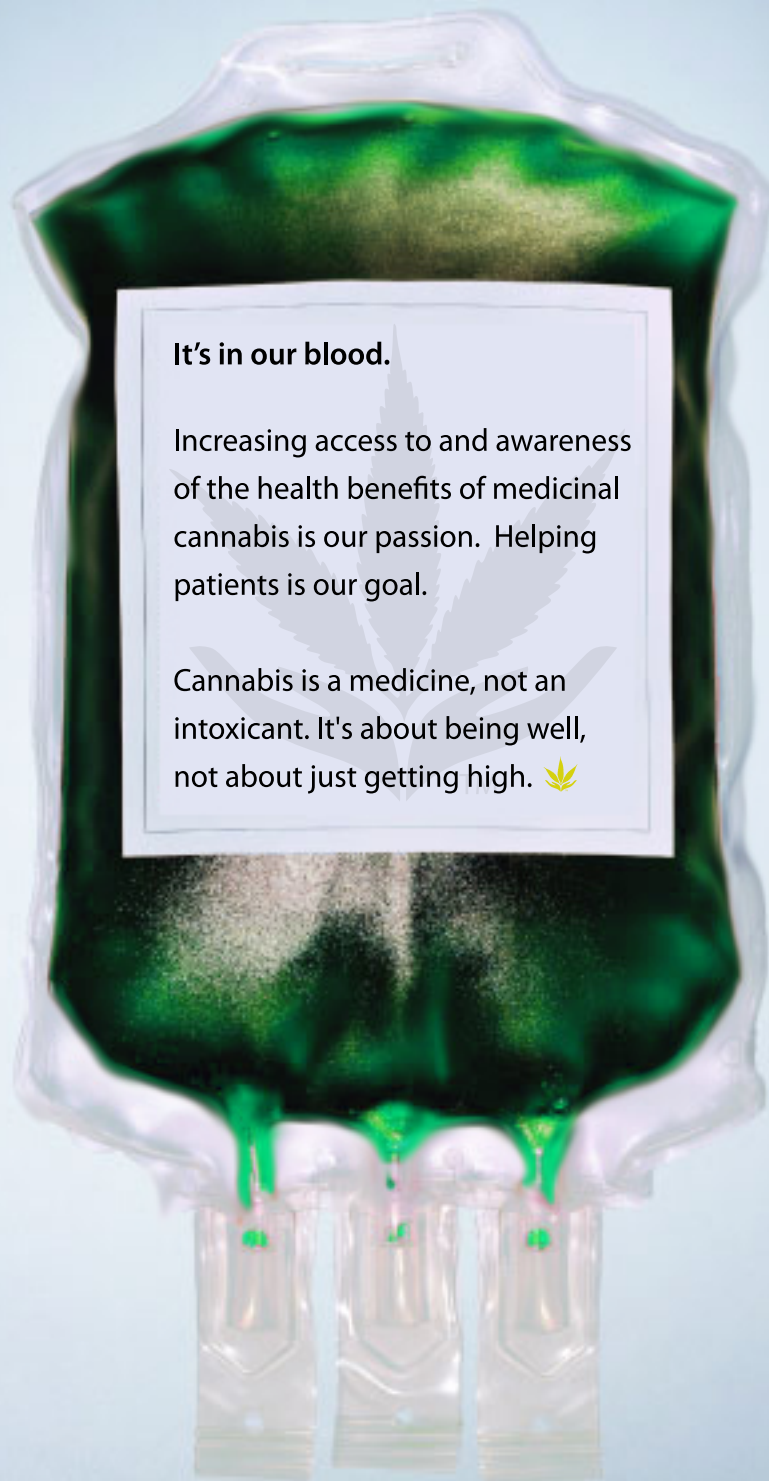
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WRATH OF ODERUS

With the new album *Battle Maximus*, set for release September 17th, a cable sitcom, a North American tour, and a guest spot at the Noctis 666 Metal Festival and Conference in Calgary, AB on Sept. 20th, the leader of Antarctica's GWAR has his filthy puss and spooge stained hands full. He took time out from masturbating with said hands in order to speak with us.

Lord Oderus! Who is in your shit-list for 2013?

Oderus Urungus: Well, I am not allowed to say ANYTHING!?, But I can assure you we have a brand new cast of inter-galactic ass-holes... and some more terrestrial fuck-heads who all will die very messily and in great amounts of obtuse agony. So in that respect it will be like every other GWAR show you have ever seen, except... completely different.

You can't name any names? You recently had some less than kind words on twitter for As I Lay Dying's Tim Lambesis in the midst of his legal troubles.

OU: WHO!?? Actually, I have nothing against Tim Lambesis, I am actually more shocked at the way the metal community has turned on him the way they have without knowing all of the evidence. Maybe it's complete bullshit and the cops are persecuting him, it wouldn't be the first time this shit has happened, artists being framed by authority figures. It is sad to see the way the metal community has condemned him.

Now, I am perfectly aware this a completely hypocritical thing to say considering the size of the new asshole I ripped into him almost immediately, but keep in mind who you are talking to... I am Oderus, I am allowed to completely contradict myself, and I like to make shit up as I go along. We will see what happens, I mean everyone thought O.J. and George Zimmerman were both guilty, and look how that worked out for them.

What about accused murderer, pro football's Aaron Hernandez?

That's another thing!! Yes, he looks like a complete moron. Yes, he has stupid tattoos all over him. Yes, he is a fucking mongoloid. Yes, he can fucking suck my fucking dick... but guess what... we haven't seen any proof, we don't know for a fact he did this thing, we don't know shit.

Tell us about Comicon, you were promoting your TV, tell us about your sitcom on Fearnert, Holliston?

The Holliston people were wonderful, they got me all fucked up on whale tranquilizers so I didn't kill any of my cast members. Apparently if we get a third season, I can't star in it all by myself, like they told me what was going to happen, so we need those cast members. Originally I was like why are all these other people here, I thought this was my show, but I am only in it for like two minutes. What can I say Laura Ortiz is really cute. But I am glad I got out of that convention in San Diego, it was full of nothing but a bunch of weirdos in stupid monster costumes.

How did you hook up with this show?

Adam Green, director, writer, star, and lead cocksucker, has been a GWAR fan his entire

pathetic life. As a result he has bothered me for years about this show, but I paid no attention to him, he just looked like a zit faced GWAR freak to me, but it became reality. So by the third meeting with Fearnert, they said they had some money for me to do this, and I said "money, I don't need money" but then they said they would pay me in crack and I said "I need it".

It started with that, moved into the second season, a very bizarre element of my career. Who expected Oderus to show up on a sitcom with a laugh-track? A very horrible laugh-track I may add, and that is something Adam has told



me he has done on purpose.

In the show, you are Adam's imaginary friend so your scenes are only with Adam. Do you interact with the rest of the cast?

I see them more at conventions and chats and crap like that. They do myself and Dee Snider in just a few days and bang out our scenes. But the cast is so very sweet, and they are very nice to me, but all I wanna do is rip them limb from limb and make garlands of their innards. But I have been assured by Sleazy P. Martini that would be a bad career move, I guess I will let them live and hope for season three. Apparently the show is huge in South Korea, which makes no sense to me what so ever. They had to get a South Korean actor that sounds like Oderus and I don't know what to make of that.

Has the cuttlefish been censored on Holliston?

Yes, I am dealing with censorship. They said "Oderus, you can't have your dick hanging out" and then I said "well can I cover it up with a vagina?" and they said "oh yeah, that will work".

The Man-gina, which what I wear over the cuttlefish, is not as obtusely disturbing. However, right now my representatives are in high-level

talks with the Holliston people, trying to get the my cock on the show.

I just think if I had my dick all up in that show... it would be a runaway hit. Plus, I could use it to have sex with my cast-mates.

Would the cuttlefish receive separate billing in the opening credits?

Oh yeah definitely, Oderus Urungus as himself, the cuttlefish of cthulhu as the man-gina as the cuttlefish.

You have a big GWAR-B-Q coming up in your hometown of Richmond VA?

Oh my god, its gonna be huge, Municipal Waste, Pig Destroyer, C.O.C, its quite amazing what we have going on this year. There is a launch ramp where people can jump their bikes into the lake and drown. There is a haunted house where you can go in there and get lost and die. We are debuting our new GWAR beer, our new GWAR bbq sauce, as we blatantly exploit ourselves at any possible chance for us to make money to afford our massive drug bill. I mean drugs have gotten more expensive and our tolerance has gone up. It takes me five times as much to get high nowadays and its ten times expensive!

You will see me prostitute myself at various levels and this GWAR-B-Q is one of those levels. This will be the most massive one yet.

You are coming to Calgary for the Noctis 666 Metal festival and conference, what can we expect from that visit?

Indeed I am, I have no idea what the hell they want me to do other than show up there and act like an asshole, that's pretty much what I am best at. I am very stoked to see Carcass, they are like my favourite band ever.

With the new album about to drop, how was the process writing this without Flattus Maximus?

It was very strange without him, we had to blow the ancient Horn of Hate, which brought all of the Maximus' from across the universe to wage the Battle Maximus for the right to play guitar on our new album. It came out pretty good, Pustilus won by trial by combat, and he has laid down some smoking tracks. It took a little longer, you just can't match the sound of Flattus, so why even bother trying, so we went out of our way to try to NOT sound like any album we had ever done, and that is the goal anyway.

I think every single GWAR album sounds different anyway and this just falls in line with what we do. Somehow, over and over, musically we are able to reinvent ourselves, and this album at the same time, tells the next chapter of GWAR and honor our fallen brother.

It took longer than usual, GWAR fans have been very patient, and now the wait is over, September 17th, BATTLE MAXIMUS!

That's great, it's always horrible talking to the people of Canadada, looking forward to Noctis festival, get your butts down here for the GWAR-B-Q and remember September 17th, Battle Maximus will drop on your boney heads and we will see you on the road in October on the biggest GWAR tour ever.

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Absolute Underground's Ira Hunter chats with Glenn Danzig, in advance of his upcoming Canadian tour.

Absolute Underground: So 25 years of Danzig. What do you have planned for the 25th anniversary tour?

Glenn Danzig: Aside from bringing Doyle out at the end of the set, we've just been doing a lot of the older stuff, we've been doing a lot of stuff from Danzig 1... I think we only do two new songs, the first one isn't really so new, SkinCarver is from Circle of Snakes, which is almost ten years ago, so then we do Hammer of the Gods and then it's just all old stuff.

AU: That's wicked, I'd much rather hear your voice than the Jerry-Only Karaoke show.

GD: Haha, is there Danzig karaoke now? I didn't know there was.

AU: Yeah, it's bad. You originally changed your last name to Danzig, does it have a meaning?

GD: It's just a family name. Long history.

AU: You definitely have a different vocal style. What influenced that older, nostalgic sound?

GD: That's just my voice, I don't have a high screechy voice, I have a deeper voice, so the stuff that I listened to that I could sing along to better was stuff like Elvis, or Howlin' Wolf. Maybe that's why I like Sabbath so much. I don't do that high screeching metal thing, it ain't me.

AU: You're playing a lot of shows in Canada on this tour; what do you like best about Canada?

GD: I think the people really appreciate it when we come up to Canada. I think we've only been up a couple times. Of course we've always played Toronto and Montreal but we rarely get a chance to come up and do Calgary or Edmonton or Vancouver.

AU: I live in Victoria, which is rumoured to be the Satanic Capital of Canada... have you ever heard of the book "Michelle Remembers", or "The Ross Bay Cult"?

GD: I've heard of "Michelle Remembers", which is a load of shit, I'm sure. It's probably priest abuse, they're talking about people in robes, that sounds like priests to me. Might not be Satanic priests, might be Catholic priests, which we all know have a proclivity for little kids.

AU: Why have you never started a Black Metal band?

GD: Um, I do Danzig. That's why.

AU: When you were involved with that amazing episode of Aqua Teen Hunger Force, what was that like?

GD: Well they kept on trying to get me to do it, and at first I was like, "I don't know..."; and finally they were very persuasive, so I ended up doing it. We did it through the Hanna-Barbera studio.

AU: You'd be good on an episode of Metalocalypse, as well.

GD: Actually, Mark Brooks is director of the Danzig Legacy TV show.

AU: What's that all about?

GD: Like a year and a half ago, we did four legacy shows across the country, it started out with Danzig and then I'd run offstage and we'd come out and we did Samhain with Me, Steve, and London, and then Doyle came out and we'd do Misfits, and then we ended it with a couple Danzig songs. It was a two-hour plus show, called Danzig Legacy, with all the different bands.

AU: And they made a TV show about it too?

GD: So then we went into a studio and Mark had this idea to do it like the Elvis 68 comeback special, so we had the Danzig lights look like the Elvis lights except at the end they'd blow up and catch on fire. Then there's a sit-down thing like Elvis did with Scotty Moore for the 56 Songs, we did that with Doyle. Then we did a live set, we've just finishing up putting the audio on it now, and it's ready to go. Yeah, it's pretty wild. I mean it's all really good, but with Doyle and I just sitting down and playing stuff on the stage with a live audience, like in the round, it's pretty cool.

AU: What did you think of the new Wolverine movie?

GD: I haven't seen that, after I saw the first crappy

X-Men movie, I just tuned it out.

AU: Yeah, they really can't get some of the comic book movies right yet.

GD: I liked Sin City a lot, I thought it was a great movie, and I even liked Watchmen, the Rorschach stuff was crazy.

AU: Is it true when you were younger, your number one choice was to make comics over music?

GD: No, actually when I was a kid I wanted to be a brain surgeon or a pilot or a musician, and comics, you know I always wanted to draw comics, but eventually music just took the stage for me.

AU: But you did start your own comic company, Verotik, so how did that all come about?

GD: As a comic fan, I would go on the road and there were a lot of comic fans out there also who were buying indie comics. They were buying Faust and Howard Chaykin's Black Kiss, all the indie stuff, the black and white stuff, and I was like, "Man, why isn't there a great comic company that does all this cool stuff in colour?" For all the people who don't want to read Superman and Batman and Spider-Man, you know dorky people in Spandex running around the country. Eventually I just decided to start my own company, with the best writers, the best artists, all in colour.

AU: And you got to form a relationship with Frank Frazetta, creator of Death Dealer, and he created a character for you, is that correct?

GD: No, what happened is we came in and said, "Look, Death Dealer could probably be a big, big comic character, but you know, the old stories from the paperbacks were terrible, we want to do a cool Death Dealer who just goes around killing people, and he wants vengeance. So I wrote the story and Frank dug it, and we worked on it for a while. We were gonna do this other character but Ralph Bakshi owned the rights to his Darkwolf character, so we can't use that, let's just put like spots on this guy and I'll write a whole story for it. And that's Jaguar God.

AU: Is Verotik still publishing new material?

GD: Yeah, last year we put out a new Jaguar God art book, Simon Bisley of course mostly did the art, and then we just did a Satanika 18 Year Anniversary comic. Let's see, we've got a new Verotika coming out. So yeah, we're just continuing to expand everything.

AU: Do you have any movie deals in the works to do with your comic characters?

GD: Yeah, I have a bunch of meetings here in Hollywood when I get done with this tour. So hopefully something's going to happen, you know it is Hollywood, one day you have a deal and the next day you don't, so that's part of it.

AU: Will you be directing them?

GD: Yeah.

AU: What is a normal day in the life of Danzig?

GD: It's different every day. Especially if I'm on the road or I'm not on the road, you know? Gotta get to the show, do sound check, do interviews, sign stuff for everyone, do the show, make sure everybody's happy, keep your energy level up, stay healthy, get on a bus and go do it in another city.

AU: Are you aware of the multitude of Misfits cover bands out there, there's a female one, the Miss Fits, there's the Misfats...

GD: There's actually two female bands. I know some of them, I didn't know about the Misfats, that's probably like fat guys dressed up like the Misfits, right?

AU: Yeah, and they change the songs to be about food.

GD: Haha... yeah I remember when I was a kid there were cover bands of like, Led Zeppelin and KISS... so I guess it's an honour.

AU: What are some of your favourite horror movies?

GD: Oh man, I love so many different movies. Of course there's Jean Cocteau's Beauty and the Beast, I also like Black Sunday by Mario Bava, even crappy movies like Plan 9 From Outer Space, I was a Teenage Frankenstein or Teenage Werewolf, those kind of movies. But I like a couple more serious ones, too. So, it's across the board.

AU: What pisses you off these days?

GD: Politics, politicians getting away with murder.

AU: Any cool new bands you like?

GD: I know Doyle just started a new band, and I think he'll be going on the road with it soon... I just heard a band I like called Graveyard.

AU: Was it when Metallica covered some of the Misfits songs on the Garage Days Re-Visited E.P., that helped your career?

GD: No, I think they just really liked the songs and asked if they could do them. I mean, the Misfits was already a band that had come and gone by then, and right when they did that, Samhain was turning into Danzig, you know. It was just friends and fans that wanted to do the songs, I'm sure it helped, Cliff Burton having a big Misfits skull on his arm and wearing a skull every once in a while, or Kirk wearing a Samhain shirt, can't hurt. I remember Cliff calling me up late at night, obviously he wasn't... you know... he was a little on it, and he was like, "Fuck, dude I wanna do this, I wanna do that, can I get the lyrics for this, can I get the lyrics for that..." It was great, he was a cool guy.

AU: Do you have plans for a new album?

GD: Yeah, the Covers Record that I have done. I'm right in the middle of doing a new distribution deal, so whenever that's done, that's when the record will come out. I think I'm going to let another song out on the Danzig site, streaming, the one I did with Cherie Currie from the Runaways. It's a cover of Lee Hazlewood's and Nancy Sinatra's Some Velvet Morning, but of course I made it really punk-y and dark, and Cherie sang the Sinatra part. It came out really good, she's got a great voice. And then I've already been working on a new Danzig record with Tommy and Johnny so we'll see how that goes.

AU: And those are your current band-mates?

GD: Yeah, Johnny Kelly from Type O Negative is my drummer and Tommy Victor from Prong is the guitar player.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

GD: Looking forward to coming to Canada, so I hope I see everybody at the shows.

www.danzig-verotik.com



DevilDriver

DEZ FAFARA

We spoke with DevilDriver captain Dez Fafara, about the upcoming release of their sixth release in ten years, and a brand new record label, Napalm Records. Winter Kills will be released in North America on August 27th, 2013, followed by a co-headlining tour with Trivium.

Are you getting ready for Europe?

Yes, we are starting rehearsal this Sunday, which I am very excited about, get over to Europe for some festival time for about 17 days, then back to New York for press for five days, then home for maybe a week, then head out in the United States and Canada in this co-headlining tour with Trivium. We are exchanging headlining spots night to night, we traded off certain core cities, we took LA, they took NY and worked from there.

What can you tell us about your new label

Napalm Records? What are they bringing to the table?

I am very excited about them, having a label with passion is key. You don't want your art to be a commodity with business people who are just bean-counters. These

people have the passion, believe what they are working on and they aren't just bean counters. I have enjoyed working with them so far and looking forward to the future. They are based in Austria, and they really think outside the box and they listen to ideas. They wanted a flagship band in the united states and so far we are helping each other.

I notice your pre-order packages with different types of merchandise. Is that Napalm or is that you guys?

That is me and my manager. If you are gonna pre-order a record and you are a fan, I know the types of things I would like, I designed the jacket, I love that jacket. So to give something special to fans, a shirt a jacket, and the record, our band is all about that. We have always been like that, we listen to our fans, and now on social media, we have taken suggestions and made it for them.

What are some of your early musical influences growing up?

Lots of punk rock, Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Germs, Dead Kennedy's, then into metal, Metallica, Motorhead, Black Sabbath and Ozzy. My parents record collection had lots of hippy stuff, Steppenwolf, Three Dog Night, the Doors, CCR, I am pretty well rounded, I listen to it all, blues to black metal.

I have recently been getting into vinyl, my kids asked me to buy a record player, and I did a month ago, and now I am grabbing all of these records, re-buying all my old tapes, stuff my parents had, stuff I used to have. I found an original Black Sabbath record, unopened in Europe, still in the plastic, I freaked out! Going back to that mode of buying vinyl in a store is a trip.

Metal fans are a different breed, they don't mind paying big bucks for those old records they already have on tape or CD.

Well, 180 vinyl, the warmth of that sounds so different compared to something you download and listen to on your phone. Its an unreal thing, if you are into music, you understand the warmth and vinyl just does that.

What can you tell us about the new record, Winter Kills?

We wanted to make the new record as a unit, I think of records like Back in Black and you just let it play and keep hitting repeat. That was part of the goal with this one was to create the songs as a unit.

All the vocals were done in your new home studio How was recording at home?

Most of the record are first takes. The music was recorded elsewhere, but we would play on the floor at my place, recording only the vocals. Moving through each song, if we didn't hit them the first time we wouldn't sweat it and try again the next day. Because I was at home, it wasn't a race against the clock

Is that the new formula moving forward?

I won't record anywhere else again dude! We want to be relaxed and we want to be focused and we can achieve this in our home atmosphere.

Watch for the new album on Aug. 27, see you in the pit, we appreciate the support!

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SHRED SESSION



Isaac Walker

Interview by Matt Gordon

Isaac isn't old enough to drink, but he skates like a beast. Watch this kid: he actually lands tricks and he keeps it real, a rare combo.

Absolute Underground: Hey man, you have sponsors right?

Isaac: Yup. Currently riding for Blind (through Dwindle Distribution) and Lyrics Skate Shop (150-174 Wilson St. Victoria, B.C.)

AU: Have you been skating much street lately?

Isaac: Yeah, I've been out street skating a lot lately; I definitely prefer to be out in the streets!

AU: Rad, it's good to treat Vic West Skatepark like a training facility. The skatepark is like the gym, street is the real deal.

Isaac: Exactly, Vic West is fun but it has its time and place.

AU: What's the best-feeling trick for you?

Isaac: I'd say SW Front Shuv is my favorite trick: looks sweet, and feels awesome!! But being in a perfect balanced manny has gotta be the best!

AU: What stokes you on skating?

Isaac: Basically everything! Mostly, I get hyped on watching other homies skating or learning.

AU: When was the last time you got heckled while skating? Haha.

Isaac: Actually last night, while I was out skating with Dan and Luke. This miserable couple (obviously not from Victoria) came up to us and said, "I really hope you hurt yourself..." We were all very shocked because usually people are interested and stoked on the scene!

AU: That's random, what did you guys say?

Isaac: Luke and I just looked at the two with disturbed faces while Dan began to tell them they were being extremely rude and to have a "great" vacation in Victoria.

AU: Haha, so you took the high road? Classy. I remember one time years ago getting kicked out of Illuminations. I ollied the stairs on the way out and the guy yelled, "Break your neck!" I thought it was a little overkill. Have you got to that point where you're fully desensitized to being kicked out of a place for skating yet?

Isaac: I always take the high road. Being ignorant never pays off. Don't ever let some random hecklers kill your vibe!

AU: I dig. What's a hard day's work for you?

Isaac: When I stress about skating is probably the hardest thing for me. It's a love/hate thing. More love than hate, though!

AU: Agreed. What's your favourite skatepark?

Isaac: Honestly, I don't have a favourite park. I love street skating with the homies more than anything/anywhere.

AU: Cool. How old are you and how many years

have you been skating?

Isaac: I don't know exactly, but a solid 7 years that I know of. My mom put me on a board as soon as I was old enough.

AU: That was a two-part question, how old are you? I want people to be impressed by how good you are at only... 17 right? Cool, we'll go with 17 then, haha.

Isaac: I'll be 18 next month, but 17's cool! Thanks for the interview. I'm hyped to be a part of this!!

Photos provided by: Lukeconnor.com & YouGotThat.ca



ARTIST PROFILE



Jesse Ladret

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

Jesse Ladret: I'm probably best known for my graphic design work here in Victoria. I've done hundreds of gig posters over the years, as well as T-shirt designs for bands, a roller derby team, festivals etc. Though the past couple of years I've become much more involved in creating my own stuff - painting, drawing and whatever else doesn't completely overlap with my day job. It's refreshing to do something for the sake of doing it without having to stamp a band name or logo onto it.

AU: What's the art scene like in Victoria?

JL: I'm not all that in tune with any "scene" in Victoria. I've briefly been associated with a couple of art collectives, but those were brief stints. It's hard to get an idea across to anyone who thinks that the highest artistic aspiration you should have is to have your work splattered onto a high top running shoe, other times you realize that an art studio can easily go from being a place of creative refuge and inspiration to just a big messy room to drink cheap beer and bring some post-bar tail to. Basically, it comes down to the Groucho Marx quote, "I don't care to belong to any club that would accept a person like me as member." As for artists themselves - there is an immense amount of talent in this city, but I see no reasoning or purpose to



gravitate towards one avenue or the other. I dig being a loner artist.

AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?

JL: I think my desire to get into art was when I was about thirteen and my brother Dallas, while packing to move out, gave me his copy of the Grey's Anatomy book. I've always had a huge fascination with anatomy, in all creatures, which for me lead to botany, entomology and all those sorts of things.

AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

JL: I certainly have a lot of influences, though it's infrequent that they're visual artists. Rod

Serling, Buster Keaton, David Lynch, P.T. Barnum, Farley Mowat, Ralph Steadman, Steven Jesse Bernstein, Captain Beefheart

AU: Tell us about some of the street stencilling you do.

JL: I was a street kid punk growing up. I got the boot from when I was sixteen, so having a space

to paint, stretch canvas, etc. was literally impossible, so as with many disenfranchised kids, the cityscape became the only viable medium to work with, and a can of spray paint and an exacto knife were dirt cheap and very portable. My friend William Rondow was probably the first guy to show me how it's done. He was really into doing stencils, urban exploration and other sort of oddball antics and with my being quite a bit younger than him, he was a pretty big influence. I generally gravitate towards anybody who can take a blase or commonplace situation and turn it on its head.

AU: What mediums do you work in?

JL: Whatever gets the job done fastest. Aerosol, acrylic and ink, predominantly. I think one of my biggest downfalls is that I've got an infantile impatience when it comes to painting and drawing. Watercolour and oil have an amazing quality that you cannot replicate. Unfortunately, I'm an impatient jackass and such supplies would likely end up being tossed out a window or thrown at a wall.

AU: Does most of your work tend to lean to the side of Good or Evil?

JL: I think my work lies more in the grey area of



curiosity rather than anything good or evil. I guess curiosity could certainly be misconstrued as representing good or bad depending on the observer. I don't believe in either. When I do lean towards more dark subject matter, that's more of a testament to my own sense of humour.

AU: You also do graphic design for gig posters etc... what are some of the bands you have worked with?

JL: The Evaporators, The Deadcats, Dick Dale, Chali 2na, Comeback Kid, The Dwarves,



SNFU, The Slackers, The Aggrolites, The Skatalites, The Sadies, Fishbone, The Pack AD, Neil Hamburger, Red Elvises, Wax Mannequin, Geoff Berner, Mikey Dread, The Toasters, etc, among many local acts.

AU: If you weren't an artist, what would you want to be?

JL: Evel Knievel

AU: Upcoming projects/artshows?


JL: Nothing really in the works right now. Recently got a bit of the travel bug, so I'm just working my way to New Orleans. I've had the good fortune of having my work fund trips in the past and really I can't think of a better way to go. I figure if you can earn your way in such a hedonistic manner, you might as well blow it the same way. Creatively and recklessly.

More information/pictures at:
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FATALITY

Interview by Erik Lindholm

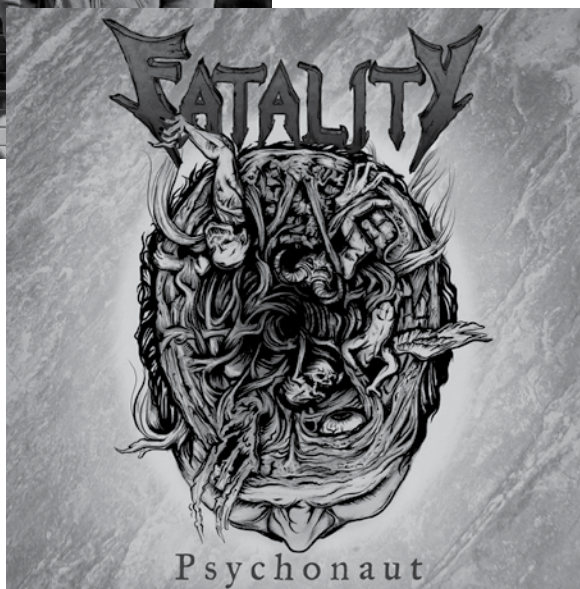
Absolute Underground: Greetings, gentlemen. Where are you now, and what is going on? Set the scene.

Spencer Le Von (Vocalist/Guitarist): Man oh man, if you could see me right now. I am currently being hurled across the southern States like draft beer at a frat party, as we ramble from town to town on a two-month heavy metal expedition. We are currently traveling from Houston to San Antonio, Texas. In our faithful tour van, we are joined by a red-hot thrash band from the Bay area called Zombie Holocaust. They are traveling in the same vehicle as us for three weeks. So to help paint a picture, we resemble a tuna can on wheels, full of morons. This tour has been too much fun; everywhere we go, we empty out of our van like it's a clown car because we are 10 people strong. What makes it even better is that all of our shows have been memorable and exciting. Everywhere we go, we are basically a

traveling party. Best way to spend a summer, that's for sure.

AU: You've been running hot in Toronto for a decade. What is your aim with the current record?

SLV: With this new record, our aim was to come out with an album that showcases what we are capable of, how we have grown as musicians, and even more so how we have grown as people. Psychonaut is not a concept album by any means, but there seems to be an underlying theme of introspection and psychedelic imagery. I am really ecstatic about the whole record and think that it has the power to go down as a classic



album. From start to finish, this album is an irreverent, snappy and powerful journey through the mind and other heady topics.

AU: There is a mix of humor and aggression in the music and lyrics. What stand-up comedians do you enjoy most?

SLV: Our lyrical content is not necessarily humorous, I don't think. At least not intentionally. But humor comes out at our live shows and in the energy of our recordings because every one of us loves nothing more than to have a good laugh. If you catch us live you can expect to have a few chuckles, because we use humor as a tool to keep everyone relaxed and engaged, like you were hanging out in your friend's garage. We

spend most of our free time falling all over the place, giggling our asses off like a pack of wild boobs. On long drives we are always listening to comedy records, and when we have a night off in a big city, we love going down to the comedy club and see some good stand up. A couple weeks ago we had a Sunday night off in New York so we went to the Comedy Cellar and sat next to Cuba Gooding Jr. We ended up having one of the wildest nights on recent record. The comedians that get the most play in the tour van lately are probably George Carlin, Jim Norton, Dave Attell and Doug Stanhope.

TORONTO TRASH

AU: The video for Thoughts Collide features you getting tortured and some pretty gnarly laboratory experimentation. What was the inspiration for that? Biology class gone wrong?

SLV: The idea was pitched and developed by our director, Matthew Scott, from BleedingHeart Productions. He is an amazing videographer with the perfect mixture of talent, passion and vision. The basic video concept is that a mad scientist character has abducted me and, through conducting bizarre experiments, sends me into the void of my own mind and into killer performance segments. There is a really cool twist at the end of the video that I won't spoil for you, but please search it out on YouTube, because it is dark and thrilling.

AU: You guys are known for partying and playing hard. What is your favorite liquor shot?

SLV: Hands down, our favorite shot is called the "Pickleback", which is a shot of whiskey followed by a shot of pickle brine. Sounds nasty, but it is absolutely wonderful. The flavors balance each other out beautifully, and leave you with the sensation that you just ate a delectable reuben sandwich covered in booze. The only place we have been able to find them so far is in Brooklyn and Tampa, but I'm sure it will catch on, because it is so awesome.

AU: Last words to the Canadians thrash fans!

SLV: Check out our new record, Psychonaut, and crank it up nice and loud. Check our tour dates to see if we are playing in a town near you. We release a ton of media from the road, including blogs, (fatalitythrash.blogspot.com), podcasts (fatality.podbean.com or search for "Fatality's Backseat LeVoncast" on iTunes) and consistent Flickr posts from our photographer and tour companion Sean DeCory. It's pretty easy to check in on us and see what kind of mischief we are getting into at any time.

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Sanktuary

Interview by Catastrophe C

Absolute Underground's Catastrophe C chats with Cole Hume, bassist for Sanktuary:

Absolute Underground: Tell me about the band! How did it all come about? How long have you been at it?

Cole Hume: The band evolved out of the rank depths of Anders' folks' basement during high school. Out of necessity, Cole was brought in to learn bass which he now, to this day, has begun to play at a moderately tolerable level. Glen was in attendance during the band's first show and was so utterly disgusted that he had no choice but to join us in mere sympathy. The rest, you might say, is shitty history!

AU: How does a band originally from the Yukon wind up on a label based in Halifax?

CH: A lot of miles, a lot of beer and a lot of dumb luck. After we decided to lay tracks out of Whitehorse we were forced with the question of where to? Obviously one of the sprawling metropolises of the Ontario plain was the first thought. However, just before departure, a family-owned farm outside of Halifax opened up and we thought, what the hell. After a couple years of cutting our teeth through the Maritimes living on nothing but lobster and Screech we eventually masqueraded our way onto the Spread The Metal roster.

AU: What are your thoughts on the cross-

country moving experience? Are you stoked on life in Halifax? What do you miss most/least about living in the Yukon?

CH: We've done the trip more times than any human should be subjected to. One hell of a way to see the country, though. Halifax is an awesome city with great people and an amazing metal scene. We are fortunate enough to have had the people of the city adopt a crew of hosers, such as ourselves. Definitely missing the mountains and the immense expanse of the Yukon wilderness though, free from the molestation of man. -50 degree weather is not missed in the least.

AU: What do you guys listen to? What influences your sound?

CH: Oh, a little of this, little of that. We generally don't snub much. If it's good music, it's good music, and will be listened to repeatedly until we are so utterly sick of it that we will eventually begin to dislike it and never listen to it again. Our sound is pretty much influenced by the type, quality and amount of liquor we are ingesting at that particular moment.

AU: Any artists or genres that make you want to gouge your eyeballs out?

CH: Heavy metal. Just an absolute terrible brand of music. Guitars are too fast. Drums have too much double-kick. The vocals are comparable to the sound a chimp makes while being castrated. People who listen to metal are nothing but weed-smoking Satanists.

AU: Yeah you've certainly described me in a nutshell there, hahah. So congrats are in order on your new album, Something Fierce! Tell the people what it's like; would you say it has a theme? How does it compare to your previous releases?

CH:

Cheers! Contrary to the previous statement issued, it is our rendition of what we believe to be all that is heavy metal. There's no real theme to it, so to speak, other than just simply being a heavy metal album. It touches on a variety of styles, as with our previous work, but I would say this is by far the most refined and matured offering we have to date.

AU: And it looks like you guys are doing some touring with the new album... Where are you going? And what's the best / worst thing about being on tour?

CH: Yes, we will be embarking on a liquor crusade through eastern Canada in late August, early September. We will have dates posted shortly throughout the interwebs. Best thing about being on tour is the freedom offered through constant travel. Being able to leave a trail of destruction and not having to deal with it is basically living the dream we all aspire to. The worst thing about it would probably have to be the smell.

AU: What's on your bucket list as a band? Any artists you'd love to share a bill with or places you're dying to play?

CH: Well, but of course! We'd love to play with every artist imaginable and travel to the far corners of the earth. Is that reasonable? Probably not. A more realistic dream of ours might be to hit every liquor store and McDonalds in Canada. I'd say we've got a pretty good head start on that one...

AU: Any final thoughts you'd like to leave the people with?

CH: Change your underwear. Daily. Inside out doesn't count. Peace out!

More information and tour dates available online at <https://www.facebook.com/sanktuarymetal> or <https://myspace.com/sanktuaryslays>

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The Resignators

Interview by Michael Luis

Melbourne, Australia's The Resignators just made their way through North America, blasting crowds, large and small, away with

their hectic blend of ska, reggae, punk and hardcore. Absolute Underground's Michael Luis caught up with frontman Francis Harrison before their show at The 14th Annual Victoria Ska Festival.

Absolute Underground: You guys just got back from touring the US with Suburban Legends, and now both of you are coming up and doing Canada. How has it been?

Francis Harrison: I've been looking forward to Victoria Skafest the whole time, so I'm really stoked to be in Canada again. We've done the US; it's only our second trip across the US. [It's] hard work, to say the

least. But my heart on tour is to get to Canada and to hit the Canadian scene. Obviously, Skafest is one of one of my absolute favourite shows. I come here even when we're not playing it.

AU: Well you've been quoted as saying it's "the best festival in the world." Defend this claim.

FH: It's not too big, to the point where the audience can't interact with the bands. Any member of the audience can come up, say hello, get to know the artists. But it's big enough to where you've got a really good vibe, a really good crowd, and you've got Ship's



TOXIC TOAST

you can put the record out for us." And he went, "Sure, man. We can put the record out." Ever since, they've been good enough to put our records out [and] book our shows. I'm sure we don't make them a lot of money or anything like that, but they're such good people and they're just getting bigger and better.

AU: Also, on your tour you got a chance to play a very iconic venue: 924 Gilman St, which was the starting point for bands like Operation Ivy, The Offspring and Green Day. What was that like?

FH: Playing at Gilman St. – to myself particularly and to Sharpy, our drummer – was a huge deal because we know the history of that venue, because we bought Maximum Rock and Roll, because we followed everything that ever happened in that venue. Just to be able to go there, let alone play there, was like a religious experience for someone who's into ska-punk. It lived up to every expectation.

AU: I have to bring it up, because our magazine covers lots of metal, but one of your members was a founding member of GWAR. Does he ever whip out the old heavy metal riffs at band practice?

FH: Yeah, he's been known to whip out a metal riff. In fact, we incorporate a bit of the metal in our music.

AU: That kind of "ska-core" sound?

FH: I like to think of it more as "ska-punk" than "ska-core," but it's definitely there. But Steve's the original Balsac the Jaws of Death. He played guitar for the band I think on the first couple records, and he loves it when people come up and talk to him about his GWAR days in Richmond, Virginia.

@MichaelACLuis

Facebook.com/theresignators

Point where there are really cool bands playing outdoors, a lot of free shows, there are some seminars happening, some education. Hats off to the people who run it. I love it to death.

AU: It's a Canadian festival, and you guys have a Canadian connection in that you're signed to Montreal's Stomp Records. How did that connection come about, and what's it been like working with them?

FH: I've known Matt from the Planet Smashers [who founded Stomp] for a few years. We got offered to play South by Southwest in 2009, so I rang Matt up and said, "Listen, is there any way



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Mad Caddies

Interview by Michael Luis

Solvang, California's Mad Caddies have been producing genre-warping punk rock since the mid-nineties, releasing five influential records along the way. Absolute Underground's Michael Luis sat down with singer/guitarist Chuck Robertson before their performance at the 14th Annual Victoria Ska Festival.

AU: You guys are currently recording a new album back home in California. How's it coming along and what can we expect?

Chuck Robertson: It's coming along great, man. The hard work is finally paying off. We took a year or two off there, and now for the last year and a half we've been just consistently demo-ing, demo-ing, demo-ing, writing new songs. We've cycled through, gosh, almost 100 songs now, and we've got them down to 20 that we really like and half of them are recorded already. We go to Europe in August, so we're gonna go home for a few weeks and finish up a few more tunes, then have all of September to finish it and it will be done in September and hopefully out late November.

AU: Cool, and sound-wise are we talking old stuff, new stuff? Stylistically, what's it going to sound like?

CR: It's going to sound like a Mad Caddies record, just new and different. [We're] exploring some new styles, some new sounds, different rhythms. Yeah, we're happy. It's definitely original and it sounds like the Mad Caddies.

AU: You guys are also recording this album in a barn, which I think is super cool. How does that vibe compare to recording in some big, swanky studio in downtown LA or something?

CR: It's so much better. We're at home. The band started in my parents' barn and Todd's [Rosenberg, the drummer] parents' barn. We're back where we started, which is great, after almost 20 years, coming full circle. It's an actual functioning studio on the inside now. The animals aren't in there anymore [laughs]. It was just a little goat and pig barn, but Todd slowly, over the years, turned it into a functioning recording studio. At one time it was a full-swing studio. While he wasn't in the band, he was professionally recording bands there, and now half of it is turned into his apartment. We're all close to home and people can come and go. You're not stuck in LA or



San Francisco for three weeks or something. The vibe is really relaxed.

AU: What I find so remarkable about you guys is the way you mix so many genres: ska, reggae, punk, hardcore, swing - it's all there. But what I think is so cool is the Dixieland stuff. Where did that influence come from? 'Cause I don't know a lot of kids who just grew up listening to Dixieland.

CR: That's 100% from Sascha [Lazor, guitarist and founding member]. I guess that would've been after our first record, so in '97 he just fell in love with Dixieland music. He started listening to lots of New Orleans Dixieland jazz. Then we all loved it and we were like "Dude, this would mix really well with punk rock."

AU: It's got the speed and the energy.

CR: It's got the speed and the energy and the melody - it mixes great with ska and punk, y'know? It just happened organically and he learned to play the banjo in the Dixieland fashion. A lot of people in the beginning would see him pull out the banjo and go, "Hey, you're not supposed to play chords on a banjo. You're supposed to pluck it." Well, there [are] actually lots of ways to play the banjo. Anyways, it's always been a staple and we're always going to have a couple of Dixieland songs on each record.

AU: Exactly, and as a band with horns, I mean, a trumpet player's gotta be licking his chops to play some Dixie tunes.

CR: Oh yeah.

AU: You guys are on Fat Wreck Chords, and have been for a very long time. What's it been like working with Fat Mike and his crew for so long? Has the relationship continued to flourish and grow?

CR: It's always been great. Mike is a good friend and a really great guy. He really cares about music and his friends and his label. I'll have to admit, the last couple of years [were] rocky. We were like, "I don't know; is it a real label anymore?" They kept downsizing and downsizing. He and his wife split up a couple of years ago. She's half of the label, so it was kind of uncertain. Now everything's back. They have restored their friendship. They're with both of their significant others and they can hang out now. They want to fully get back to the label. They're opening up offices in Canada and Europe.

AU: They have a store as well, right?

CR: Yeah, they have a store in San Francisco which is open every other Friday in which they give away free beer for four hours. But yeah, we're happy in there. They're willing to work with us and the needs of a band in the fucking 21st century with media and all the different outlets. The CD is going to be gone soon, so the label had to change and evolve. We think they're going to pull through. No matter what, we love them.

AU: Anything else?

CR: Thanks for all your support. We're super happy to be [at Skafest] and look out for the new record. The Mad Caddies have no plans on slowing down.

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The Killswitch has Been Engaged

By Cam D'Andrade

American heavy metal has been revived with an iron-fisted frenzy by the infamous band Killswitch Engage. With their sixth studio album well underway, these God-like figures have had a decade long run, and they haven't reached the finish line yet. I got the opportunity to chat with lead guitarist Adam Dutkiewicz about the upcoming album, Disarm the Descent, which is scheduled to be released April 2nd, 2013

Absolute Underground: So, what are we to expect from this new album of yours?

Adam Dutkiewicz: It's a little more aggressive

than the last one, it's a little riffer. Uhhm, I think, myself, when we started putting the songs together, I kinda wanted to write, y'know, material that was a little edgier, a little more metal, than the last record. We actually got a good flow to it, so yeah, just wanted to make an exciting record this time.

AU: How did you guys prepare for this album?

AD: What we normally do is we'll all write ideas separately and then maybe one of us will finish an entire song and we'll bring it to the table and then everyone together will say yes or no, we like it, we don't like it. If we don't like it, we kinda work on it together, and then finish it up. But if we like it, it's all set in stone and we give it to the vocalist and he does his thing and then once the record production starts me and Jesse [Leach - vocals] will kinda beat up the lyrics a bit and get them down.

AU: How do you think the fan base will take the new album?

AD: Hopefully... Good? Haha. Yeah, you always hope to make something that the fans gravitate to and like. But hey, we'll see! Only time will tell.

AU: Were the songs written before or after the return of Jesse?

AD: Actually, yeah, we wrote all the lyrics and the material before Howard and the band split ways. So, it was originally written for Howard to sing over, and then once Jesse was hired, we showed him the material, and he was excited, so yeah.

AU: Speaking of Jesse, what's it

AU: Jesse was singing a different vocal style in Seemless; has that influenced the music vocally in any way?

AD: Well, I think he brings his own style to a lot of Howard's material, but yeah I think Jesse's identity definitely comes out on this record, which is a good thing. So, yeah so it's a bit different than records of the past but you know, of course you always want the singer's identity to come out 'cause that what makes the singer a singer, you know?

AU: Have you taken influence from any other bands that you personally have toured with/ helped produce?

AD: Well we never do it on purpose really. Everything kinda influences you when you're a songwriter. Like things you hear on the radio, songs you like, it pretty much comes through no matter what. That's just how songwriters work, you know?

AU: What made you guys choose "In Due Time" as the single of the album?

AD: Well, we and the label thought that song was a good representation of the band's sound and the end of the record. We felt like it would cover all of the bases and be the one that was more attainable to the fans right away.

AU: How excited are you for the release of the new album?

AD: Well, it would be good to get out there and play some new songs, that's for sure. I'm hoping the fans really like it, that's all we were going for.

AU: What is ONE THING you want to tell your fans about the new album?

AD: Ahhh.. It's riffy? Hahaha! Yeah, it's got a little more aggression in it, bunch of guitar solos, whole bunch of screaming and yelling, and a bunch of "lalala"s, and hopefully people will like it!



like having him back behind the mic?

AD: Oh, it's great! Jesse's been a one of my good friends for years and years, so it's like a comfy old shoe.

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Sleez In The City

commitment to someone, how could we truly understand the merits of "sticking it out"?

So what should you do if you suspect your partner of being unfaithful?

Liars and Deniers

By CJ Sleez

Infidelity has been an unfortunate part of human behaviour since the beginning of recorded history. Despite it being discouraged by being socially unacceptable on a global scale and in some countries detested to the extreme of being unlawful and punishable by death, this deceptive behavior has endured for centuries.



Considering the secretive nature of adultery, hard facts and exact figures are difficult to obtain or establish, but one thing the majority of modern studies seem to confirm is that it is becoming much more common. One reason for this is the abundance of technology (like internet chat rooms or on-line dating companies, such as Ashley Madison), that make the opportunity to cheat so much easier than it was in decades past.

Another cause for this increase of infidelity that self-proclaimed experts on the subject suggest is that while men are still more likely to cheat than women, the gender gap is quickly closing. According to research released in Sept. 2012 by The Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 57% of men admitted to cheating during a past relationship while 54% of women confessed to doing the same. With more women in the workforce, ladies are better able to cope financially with the potential consequences of an affair. They also have more emotional independence than ever before and due to increasingly busy work schedules, they are spending much less time with their partners. This lack of intimate, quality time together can result in one or both partners feeling lonely or romantically disconnected, so they may begin to look for affection elsewhere. Simply put, as problems begin to emerge in a relationship, people become more likely to cheat.

Yet another possible reason that instances of infidelity have become more common is the amount of adults who were raised by divorced parents. Whether the divorce was caused by an affair or not, they have unfortunately been exposed to the tragic side of failed love where "forever" translates into "for now". As children, we learn by the examples set by our elders. Without the ability to observe the benefits of a lifelong

I believe it depends on the reason that you've become suspicious.

If it's simply a conclusion you've jumped to because it's happened to you in the past, or because you're emotionally insecure, forget it. Get a grip and stop being so paranoid!

If you suspect infidelity because of a sudden or unexplained change in their behavior, begin by casually asking them about the other aspects of their daily life. Express concern for their well-being and offer support, not accusations. Be open-minded and understanding. It could be something as simple as stress or it could be nothing at all.

If, however, you've actually caught them in a seriously incriminating lie or have come across solid physical proof, first you need to decide how much this relationship means to you. Are you invested enough to accept the betrayal and move past it? If so, you'll need to discuss their deception in a constructive way and avoid making them defensive. Approach this as a conversation rather than a confrontation. Most cheaters will either lie and/or deny when confronted with the truth so do your best to keep things calm, rational and non-judgmental. Let them know that you're willing to move forward as long as they are willing to be honest. Remember this has been happening for centuries. Your partner is neither the first nor the only person to stray from a relationship and you are not the first couple to have to deal with the aftermath of an affair. Make up your mind from the start to either forgive them or not and approach the problem from that frame of mind.

If their indiscretion is something that you know you're simply incapable of moving past, what does it matter if they deny it? Their lies will no longer be your concern and you need to focus on healing and helping yourself rather than dealing with their dishonesty. There's no need to suffer through a long, messy discussion if you intend to sever your ties anyway. Either pack up their stuff and leave it by the front door or pack up your own belongings and make a clean exit. If they're guilty of the offense then they'll know exactly why, without you having to explain.

For more information about CJ Sleez check out her band website @ www.cjsleez.com.



Heaven and Hell Festival

By Dan B. and Aileen G.

Have you wanted to go to Wacken but tickets were sold out? Try the Hell and Heaven Festival in Guadalajara, Mexico. This year's was held on the weekend of May 18th and 19th.

The Mexican people are very passionate about their metal music and they put on an excellent show. This was the third year that H&H ran so, as with any festival, it had its glitches. The one we were not prepared for was the wait to get in. The first band started at 11:00 so we arrived at 10:30, and finally got in at 12:30. We didn't bring any water as you are not allowed to take any food or drinks in. Standing in line on the asphalt for 1 1/2 hours in 30 degrees was not a lot of fun. The locals were used to it, but we damn near died.

The festival is set up in a field that has little shade, so a hat and sunscreen are advisable as it is even hotter during the afternoon! If you get a VIP pass, there are a lot of advantages: a shaded tent area being one and as the price is only a few dollars more, well worth it!

There are three stages set up and they run like clockwork. There is always a band playing, and

the stages are close enough together that you can walk between even the furthest away within a song. We spent a lot of time listening to the Mexican bands. They played up-to-date metal and this was possibly our only chance to see them, as they are not likely to tour Canada. They not only play extremely well but they put on great stage shows. They are competing against each other for the shot at going to Wacken. The band Rain Shatter was that winner last year and headlined the Mexican bands. We can see why they won!

A lot of the bands at H&H also played Wacken, so it will give you a flavour of what Wacken is like on a smaller scale. The list of who played H&H:

Anthrax, Testament, Epica, Sucidal Tendencies, Moonspell, Dokken, Butcher Babies, Transmetal, Draksen, Thantra, Morbid Angel, Sodom, Ill Nino, Cattle Decapitation, Vital Remains, Dia De Los Muertos, Origin, Cemican, Nightbreed, Wrecker, Attackhead, Terraseria, Warbringer, Rain Shatter, Intoxicated, Avatar, Ira, Sabacthani, Noctambulism, Pentagram, Urtikaria Anal, Psicovomitosis, Hacavitz, Fausto, Cthulhu, Archetype, Zamak, Profanator, Serpentum, and Moloch all played on Saturday. Sunday's lineup was: Motorhead, In Flames, Exodus, Six Feet Under, Haggard, Pinhead,



Heathen, Godless Procession, Municipal Waste, Gilby Clarke, Resorte, Here Comes the Kraken, The Hell Barrio, Black Oil, Morphium, Julian's Fire, Sachiel, Lecumberri, As Blood Runs Black, Koltdown, Split Heaven, Pro-Fe-Cia, Lava, Subhuman, Agony Lords, Black Overdrive, Into Sickness, Arcadia Libre, Muluc Pax, T.D.H., Los Billy's, Rinderpest, Mortoss, Mexxika, Ines Chavez, After the Nightfall and El Brujo.

The people at the festival were great, both the people working and the other attendees. Not a lot of English is spoken and our Spanish is really bad, but we were able to manage, as everyone tried to patiently communicate. Besides, communication

between metalheads needs few words, so the most common finish was to throw up your horns and take a picture and have a beer.



There are a lot of advantages going to Mexico, cost being a major one. Getting there and staying is relatively inexpensive. The food is delicious and do we even have to mention the tequila?

All in all, yes, we are most certainly going again. We are preparing, and taking Spanish lessons now as we were sold on

the whole package: people, festival, cost, tequila. See you in Mexico, it is a "Hell" of a good time!

<http://www.hellandheavenfest.com/2013/>
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Armstrong MetalFest

By Willow Gamberg

Photo Credit: Sara Power

Ah, the Okanagan. A sunshine-filled paradise of clear lakes, fresh fruit, grassy meadows... and unbridled, filthy, gut-ripping heavy metal.

For one weekend a year, the idyllic town of Armstrong, BC becomes a haven for metalheads from all over Canada, the US, even internationally, as they gather for the annual Armstrong Metal Festival, now in its fifth year.

After a long, sweaty van ride from Vancouver, we arrived in Armstrong early on Friday morning. Already, tents were springing up like mushrooms and RVs were pulling into the grounds. After setting up near the meagre shade of the only two trees in the festival camping grounds, we set out to explore the festival. Though it used to be an Open Air event, Armstrong Festival is now held indoors, in the town's ice arena (though unfortunately without the ice).

The rest of the festival grounds were kept simple: an open field, band camping, two food vendors and a parking lot. Nothing spectacular, which left us free to focus on the music. Friday started out at noon with Gomorrah, and continued, alternating between sides of the split stage, with bands like The New Arcadia, Finishhymn, Trollband, Cast Into

Ashes, groups from all around BC and Alberta, including Vernon's Xul, Slagduster from Grand Forks, Victoria's Scimitar, and Edmonton's Death Toll Rising, along with Vancouver groups Expain,



Over the Coals, Terrifier, Tyrants Blood, Nylithia and Bison B.C., the latter two being the headliners for the night. They took the now-full-size stage after the 100-Man Shotgun event in the parking lot outside.

A killer night, with even more time spent in the

venue than expected, as it was actually the only semi-cool and shady place to be.

Did I mention it was hot? Right, three days of solid, unrelenting sun, 30+ degrees and no lake in sight. Heatstroke and hangovers were rampant by Saturday morning. Luckily there was free water and several taps available for drinking, water balloons, squirt guns and the like.

Saturday morning dawned early and hot, forcing us out of our tents by 7 am as they slowly became personal ovens. Luckily, this had us awake in time for the farmers' market (a quaint mingling of elderly shoppers and hungover, greasy metalheads eating cherries), as well as for early start of the music, which kicked off with Prince George's Deveined and Dissimilis of Edmonton, who were my favourite accidental discovery of the festival. Nice and tech, but still melodic, I will definitely be checking them out again if I get a chance. After them came Drop Dead Fred, Dead Asylum,

Scythia, Auroch, Atrous Leviathan, Meatcutter, Kyoktys (another pleasant surprise), West of Hell with a full show of pyrotechnics, snow, smoke and much more, followed by Mortillery, Unleash the Archers, Divinity, Striker and Holy Grail. Then followed a break, during which we were treated to Thrash Wrestling, which involved two fighters, no rules, a ladder, a chair and, for some reason, a crutch wrapped in barbed wire.

After a rousing fight, the full stage was prepared and Vancouver's Archspire took the floor to tumultuous approval from the suddenly-packed crowd, and played a lightning strike of a set, featuring plenty of material from their upcoming sophomore album. Finally Suffocation finished off the night, inciting the crowd even further, orchestrating circle pits and crowd-surfing and everything else a good death metal show should be. High-energy and sweat-soaked, they played a full two hours, and anyone who managed to party afterwards is a better party animal than me, as I barely made it through the final set before crawling back to my tent.

The next morning, heatstroke and hangovers raging, we packed up for home... fully satiated and exhausted, but nevertheless already getting stoked for next year. Though this year was certainly fantastic, I can't wait to see what Armstrong has to offer us next season.

Absolute Album Reviews

Agent Side Grinder- Hardware Artofact Records

Agent Side Grinder's latest release, a double-album titled *Hardware*, has all the vibe from the late 70s being deconstructed. The echoes, beats and resonance just want to get the body moving once those headphones are plugged in. And for old-timers like me who hail from a different era, this is one album that I can really get into.

The titular track, *Wolf Hour*, (featuring Henric de la Cour) is perhaps my favourite. The images that form in my mind are like that of an escapist fleeing down a metal forest. All anyone can hear is the resonance. The mechanical drumbeats suggest that there may well be robotic beasts stalking me, and I can hear them pacing.

Singer-songwriter Kristoffer Grip provides melodies that are very accessible to listeners who enjoy a broad spectrum of musical themes—from electronic to soul—and to hear *Rip Me* is very reminiscent of something I could hear on my old Commodore 64. Yeah, I'm that old, but when the album cover features a computer from the mid 70s and a monitor that's just as ancient (showing a sine wave, no less), I can not help but think of some of those old video games I enjoyed playing. Remember Pong?

Retro gaming is a go-go, and I enjoyed this hobby while the punk rock movement was coming of age. The track *Die to Live* is an excellent song dedicated to counter culture. Listeners just have to very slowly absorb the words that Grip is singing. I can listen to Agent Side Grinder and early Blondie at the same time. But the 80s were just as significant to influencing the sounds found in this album. Depeche Mode is definitely an influence in a few of the tracks, especially with the song *Look Within*. But with certain albums, the music has to be absorbed into the body and soul in order to be appreciated. This album certainly does just that. This 23-track album contains 13 original songs and 10 remixes, and is available for purchase at your usual online music outlets.

-Ed Sum

Suicidal Tendencies- 13 Suicidal

The illustration on the album cover of a skull wearing a blue bandana smashing through a brick wall says it all: Suicidal's back! The bringers of airheaded, feel-good rage have put all the pieces that make them great back in place once again. Hard music's most loveable psychos tear it up as planned with punk's answer to Eddie Van Halen wailing away over G-force-inducing speeds.

As you would expect from such legendary veterans of the crossover genre, there is plenty of that good ol' fashion relentless energy. The ST

attitude is still in check too.... they take all the heavy stuff and turn it inside out, bringing nothing but a fun listening experience for a whole family of spiky-headed skaters. In fact, over the course of thirteen albums, you could easily say this band is the musical personification of that old pick-me-up, "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade".

Never dull enough to keep things entirely retro for long, *Smash It* comes charging out with some updated thrash licks that can turn any wimpy metalcore pit into a total frenzy. *Till My Last Breath* sees them up the skill level and bounce through an addictive punk/funk mash-up that is reminiscent of a young RHCP in their prime. Overall, it's good to hear this trailblazing band is still sticking to their roots and continues to back up its idea of rebellion with true conviction.

-Dan Potter

Larry and His Flask- By the Lamplight

Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club

If Mumford and Sons actually grew some fucking balls, played dive bars in exchange for 40s of cheap whiskey, and crowd-surfed with a stand-up bass, you'd get Larry and His Flask.

Formed 10 years ago as a beers-and-cheers punk band, punk rock remains the root of LAHF's sound, but with tinkling mandolins, twangy banjos, vocal harmonies, and occasional brassy horn-lines added to the mix, they provide a genre-warping experience that jumps through bluegrass, folk, jazz, gypsy and more.

The band's latest, *By the Lamplight*, features a handful of solid tracks. The opener, *Pandemonium*, is a foot-stomper, featuring stellar horns and sweet harmonies, and the down-tempo *Log, Hearth, and Ash* shows off one of their catchiest choruses ever. The two stand-outs of the album however are *The Battle for Clear Sight*, which includes some sultry female vocals, and *Gone From You*, a gorgeous acoustic ballad.

The album may not evoke immediate impact of their 2011 LP, *All That We Know* (one of my favourite albums of that year), or the eclectic curveballs of last year's *Hobo's Lament* EP, but *Lamplight* shows that Larry and His Flask is one of the most innovative bands in punk today.

-Michael Luis

The Aristocrats- Culture Clash Self-Released

In *The Aristocrats'* second original release, a more refined songwriting approach and a greater variety of dynamics has forcefully emerged. Despite the title of the record, these songs don't clash, but fit together piece by piece, like Voltron assembling itself out of individual

robots. Each musician has a distinct and checkered past, so the air of cooperation that is audibly present is really nothing short of miraculous; but with these guys miraculous is average.

The Dance of the Aristocrats is the amusing opener, powered by electro-funk bass lines that get the party started right. As the grooves pop and lock, Guthrie Govan's nimble picking adds taut phrasing as if guitar was his mother tongue. These guys clearly have a wry sense of humour, yet it's always kept in check with frightening displays of instrumental chops. And what an awesome selection of songs to rip on! *Louisville Stomp* is like a jazzy, cabaret-surf music number played at some oxygen bar in the 2050s, while *Ohhh Nooo* brings the hammer down with some foreboding metal to keep you truckin' on.

My personal favourite is *Living the Dream*, which blasts out some pulse-racing metal riffs complete with an utterly spine-tingling guitar solo, followed up by a moody, eastern-tinged bass interlude, all topped off with gong-crashing, altered-state madness. This disc has it all, and it's done by musicians that are obviously burning their candles at both ends, whilst pulling out all the stops! What results is some of the most interesting and fiery playing out there today!

-Dan Potter

Fact- Burundanga Good Fight

The sheer amount of layered pop and rock influences on this release makes for a fun listening experience. Heavily in debt to American pop/punk bands like Madina Lake or Blink 182, this Japanese six-piece offers the kind of caffeine rush the stimulant industry could only dream of.

Filled with addictive, radio-friendly 'woo-hoo' choruses and nicely hardened by some killer thrash drumming, the "Robin Hoods" of their rock scene steal from the best and, in many cases, make things better. Just when you think, "You're not really supposed to do that", the renegade nature of Japanese pop-culture takes things even further. On *Pink Rolex*, an auto-tune vocal intro and bouncy keyboards literally get smacked in the face by screamo-type guitar belligerence, full of math-rock complexity. This song even comes complete with its own disco back beat and the cotton candy-sweet chorus easily makes it the stand-out track.

For fans of nursery rhymes sung over top of super-sized, post-hardcore blitzkrieg attacks, this is no doubt an undiscovered gem of a record. Slip it in, crank it up and feel like you're 15 again!

-Dan Potter

Author & Punisher- Women & Children Seventh Rule

A one-man band, maker of dark metallic music, lover of sounds straight out of a metal shop; Author & Punisher is really intriguing in the way that he conjures up dissonant and abrasive other-worlds by using various homemade instruments and bizarre microphone techniques. Calling to mind the pagan savagery of early Ministry, the sonisphere is dominated by machine-made noises that grind and swell as if you're listening to Terminator X's backup band.

A distorted bass drum keeps time as everything else is trapped in a continuous loop of musical chaos and disorder. Forlorn, highly processed vocals add a degree of human presence that is not unlike a weary street performer singing hymns to a burnt out and acidic post-city habitat. I love the duality present here, as I am not sure whether the moans and screaming are indicative of pain or ecstasy.

If you are sick of the kind of industrial music that is overly-sanitized and sonically neutered for the purpose of the dance floor, then this album will provide an energizing experience. It's great to hear from someone who's passionate about pushing common boundaries further into no-man's land. I hope this crawling, cybernetic torso of a musician speaks the prerequisite, "I'll be back", and puts out more ominous creations!

-Dan Potter

Born Broken- The Healing Powers of Hate Self-Released

You wouldn't be able to hear an anvil drop on to a steel floor at a Born Broken concert. My judgment is based on the bone-crushing guitar tone which opens the disc with *Can't Quiet the Riot*. These guys utilize all the tough-guy metal sounds, from the relentless fury of Jamey Jasta to the breakneck-speed chases heard on early Lamb Of God recordings.

A disciplined and brotherly effort is clearly their first intent, because there are few guitarist-centered moments that scream, "Hey, look at me!" These guys focus on the mission at hand: to pulverize the living hell out of the opponent until the final bell tolls. There's plenty of influence to go around, too! Some groovy BLS riffs really make the anger contagious, while some Slipknot mannerisms let it be known that these dudes are looking to forge their own path.

The title track really sums it up nicely; after dropping some gnarly Zakk Wylde grooves, the cool breeze of an acoustic interlude breaks on through. But as you might have guessed, this is to no avail because it all ends with a shout-out mantra that stays true to the album's name-sake, and proves there's nothing more healing than expressing that hate-fueled aggression.

-Dan Potter

Gorguts- Colored Sands Season of Mist

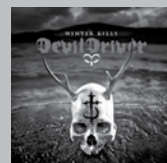
Well, well, well... look who's back! After a twelve year hiatus, Gorguts has unleashed a record that, in my opinion, is their most challenging release to date. This means a hell of a lot, coming from a group that pretty much kicked death metal in the balls and told it to grow up. This band is so above what it means to be influential, but thankfully, it hasn't gotten to them artistically. They aren't too high and mighty to include some of the modern innovations that have taken place during their long hibernation.

The quintessential style of bludgeoning riffs are wielded without mercy as the skins are hammered to a pulp with all manner of poly-rhythms that speed up and slow down as if grindcore said, "I do" to this dearly beloved death metal outfit. The lead guitar is different too, but that's because the guitarist is new; same mournful wails of unnerving tension, just spiced up to enhance the sensations.

Overall, I get the sense that a real cleansing has taken place through these highly-symbolic, ritualistic musical passages. I'm pleased to say that this metal Goliath is alive and well, and still bringing a sense of purpose to heavy music.

-Dan Potter

Upcoming Releases



AUG 27, 2013

DEVILDRIVER - Winter Kills, Napalm Records

The sixth studio release from the California groove machine and first release on Napalm Records. Full of thrashing beats and chunky riffs. Unique cover of AWOLNATION's 'Sail' (Blame it on my A-D-D baby).



AUG 30, 2013

VISTA CHINO - PEACE, Napalm Records

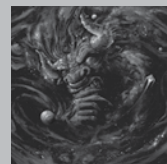
The first release and name change from Kyuss Lives. All the same stoner rock fans of Kyuss expect with a bit more street cred.



SEPT 17, 2013

GWAR - BATTLE MAXIMUS, Metal Blade Records

Latest chapter in the GWAR saga and first with new guitarist Pustilus Maximus. A different sounding GWAR, with all the same shock rock you come to expect. GWAR reinvents themselves once again without losing a step.



OCT 18, 2013

MONSTER MAGNET - Last Patrol, Napalm Records

Another long standing 'stoner rock' poster band, Dave Wyndorf recounts a week in his life back in February of this year and the result is another volume in the story of Monster Magnet.



LATE OCT, 2013

TOXIC HOLOCAUST - Winter Kills, Relapse Records

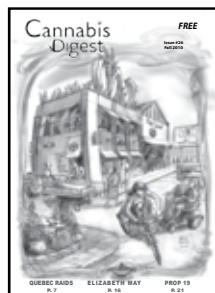
Thrash punks attack again with another release from Relapse records. Think a zombie Lemmy on speed... well more speed than Lemmy is usually on.

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Absolute Live Reviews

Fear Factory

I have been wanting to see Fear Factory for about six years. I finally saw them in Victoria at Club 919 (but I call it Club 911 because of the shootings). I was first introduced to the band on a snowboard-titled mix on my iPod; I always loved the set as it made me ride harder and the beat seemed to correspond to the natural rhythm of gravity and mountain terrain on my body as I hurl myself off cliffs and jumps in an attempt to free myself from the bonds of this earth. The crushing drums are what sold me and kept me coming back for more. I don't know if it was just me or what, but the crowd was totally pumped and the mosh pit was super fun. I found the singer's voice flattened out over time, but his metallic growl was just like I remember from my old iPod. I found myself transported through time and space back to Whistler. The moshers were nothing more than moguls in my way and stage dives were me hucking through the air. All in all, I loved the band and still support them to this day. Their latest album is gonna get rocked hard this winter. If you get the chance to see Fear Factory live, go! They don't disappoint.

-Brydon Parker

World Ski & Snowboard Festival in Whistler, BC

This year's event was un-freaking-believable.

My plan was to write a story, get some actors and enter the World Ski and Snowboard Festival's 72-hour Filmmaker Show Down. Sounded like a good idea.

So my buddy Ira and I headed to Mt. Washington to do a little riding. Our friends Tonow and Bradon had rented a condo and asked if we wanted to pitch in 300 bucks each to share it with them, which we did. During this time, we hatched a storyline called Snow Battle, and cast it using our friends. Five days in Whistler with free food and a place to stay was a good deal. Everything was going well; people were really starting to own their parts. As the producer, I was stoked as well. Then it happened- My friend Dave called me up and said that our mutual friend, also named Dave, had been badly burned by a camp stove and was in intensive care in the burns unit at Vancouver General Hospital. I didn't know what to do. I put out the call to my friends in Whistler for help in lodging my crew and I, and my friend Teresa came through. She got us a room at the Glacier Creek Lodge. Then my friend Dave got out of the hospital and got us hooked up his mom, who was very helpful. We partied a little too hard and missed the movie sign-in, but luckily the TSSF girls kept it open for me. This was my 13th entry in the 72-Hour Film Fest, and I really didn't have high hopes of getting into the top finalists. The competition is really good and some very talented people enter. I have always described the camaraderie between the film makers as the most excellent part of the whole festival. Also, the Film Fest event is at the beginning of the festival, so you get to keep on crossing paths with fellow filmmakers. I had a few crew changes and other slight technical problems, easily handled once again by the TSSF girls. We borrowed cameras from Olympus, which was so much easier than trucking around our big production cameras. Our editor, Jai Orton, was amazing at turning my convoluted Snow Battle idea into an actual entry. The judges agreed and picked it to show not once, but twice, to a live audience. That cost me 400 bucks in the bar, celebrating, but this is the pinnacle of my filmmaking career. The hangover was of a grand scale

but well-deserved. The boys, now free of my tyrannical rule, ran amok as promised. Jai and myself, working for the WSSF as cameramen were spared the 24-hour party and kept it to a 20-hour party. We had a job to do! The next leg of our adventure was to get as much footage as possible. Filming the events and checking out the music, Hobnobbing and living the life of rock stars. Tough to take, which brings me to the conclusion of this story.

We've written our story for our entry to next year's 2014 72-Hour Film Fest. Stay tuned for the Legend of Yellow Snow on absoluteunderground.tv and our magazine article on all the craziness we can handle. Looking forward to the big show. Thanks to all the World Ski and Snowboard Festival girls and all the sponsors who make this event my favourite event of the snow season.

-Brydon Parker

Black XIII

With Malice

Fight to Swill

July 20th at The Brixx

It isn't often enough that some of Edmonton's best acts from the lamentably segregated punk and metal scenes come together to share the stage at a crossover show. But when it does happen, it's an explosive experience to endure. The July 20th show at the Brixx was no exception.

Kicking off the night was one of the most fervent up-and-coming punk bands in the city, Fight to Swill. Avid show attendees would recognize front-man Jimmy Punkured formally of the Swamp Monsters and Punkured. By the time Fight to Swill even hit the stage, the whole venue was shrouded in a haze of sweat, booze-breath and second-hand moisture from the rain that poured down outside. It was pretty foul, to say the least, but totally worth it. The audience was propelled into punk rock pandemonium with addictive tunes like Did You Ever Drink About it? and title track Fight to Swill. It's not surprising to see these guys playing a variety of venues almost every weekend in Edmonton. This was actually one of two shows that they jumped on the bill for this particular weekend. And despite the fact that they were opening for two fairly esteemed Edmonton-based metal bands, they nailed it. I'm pretty sure it was their promotion of beer-guzzling good times that encouraged me to get as hammered as I did. But hey, it was all in good fun!

Second to storm the stage was death/thrash metal outfit With Malice. I have to make note of the fact that this was new vocalist Jesse Leduc's first show with them. The guy has an animated stage persona that I just could not get enough of, and his vicious pipes penetrated the eardrums of everyone in the crowd. It was truly a sight to behold. The guys brought forth a metal maelstrom with tracks like Vengeful Maniacs, Ingesting Decay and Wasteland. Judging by the precision and conviction that these guys play with, it can be said that they draw inspiration from some of the best, most quintessential bands ever to grace the metal culture. Check them out on ReverbNation and you'll surely agree.

Headlining the show was death metal band Black XIII (featured in the ShrEdmonton section of this issue). This is one of the most unique bands to infiltrate Edmonton's metal scene in quite some time. A distinct three-piece that draws heavy influence from the underside of pop-culture e.g. alternative cinema, comics and Stephen King's Dark Tower series, they're a refreshing change from the gore-soaked lyrical conventions that saturate the genre. Hell, their songs will likely encourage you to go read

a book or watch a movie (you know, stimulate your think tank!) A unique

twist on the standardized metal ensemble, Black XIII is led by Dan Corpsegrinder, a quasi-Jack-of-all-trades with his uncanny ability to melt faces with his vocals, all the while hammering away on drums (double-kick pedals and all). It was a great surprise to hear the guys debut some of their newest songs alongside some of their outstanding original tracks like Detta Walker and Eight Devils. Have a listen on SoundCloud.

-Lacey Paige

The Strugglefucks

Banshee

The Archaics

April 12, 2013

DV8 Tavern, Edmonton

Nolan Bossert from The Strugglefucks is one of my favourite people in town to book shows with.

Not only is he a cool dude and a great musician, he also has a knack for bringing in great new bands that are not on my radar. The Archaics were new to DV8, but they were already known to the other bands and a lot of the crowd from playing house parties and a few venues I have heard of, but haven't had the time to check out. At first glance, I took these fluffy-haired young rockers for a 60s/70s-inspired garage band (and was hoping I was right). They did not disappoint; there were no tambourines or swirling organs, but they did play a solid set of punchy, old-school rock n' roll that put The Archaics in my good books from hereon in.

Banshee was up next and, to my surprise, had changed the lineup a bit - Banshee has always been a three-piece band with two cool girls and a guy in the line-up, and the new guitar player I know from one of my personal favourite local bands, N.N. Dr. Drones, reminds me a lot of Gregg Ginn if you have ever seen any footage of Black Flag (or are old enough and lucky enough to have seen them live), meaning he is pretty fun to watch - almost entering a rabid trance of some sort when he picks up the guitar and starts lashing out the chords. Banshee was cool to begin with, but I can see a lot of progression and confidence in the band now which comes with keeping busy and making the stage your own... why be shy when your band can hop on any bill and captivate the audience?

The Strugglefucks are great great and great in my books... Nolan and Dustin started the Strugglefucks when

their former band, The Party Martyrs, lost their bass player to the city of Vancouver and acquired Jeremy Townsend of Micelli to start a new project - what started as a similar band has now branched out into a completely different animal, recently adding Max from Action News Team on lead guitar to compliment Nolan Bossert's killer riff-writing skills.

These four guys are members of a bunch of my favourite local bands, including Good Friday Brawl and The Chokeouts,

as well. The night was great, the turnout was decent and it was a great party with this crowd, as always.

-Rod Rookers

The Brass Action

Class Action

Whiskey Wagon

April 13, 2013

DV8 Tavern, Edmonton

Dylan Cadaver booked this show with me and, being a fan of ska, I was excited to check out Vancouver's Brass Action, who I had not seen before. The order of the bands got shuffled around

a bit before the show resulting in Whiskey Wagon

kicking things off, Brass Action in the center spot and Class Action headlining the show. Whiskey Wagon started years ago as a three-piece band and has now turned into sort of a collective, if you will, with a number of musicians stepping in and out depending on who is around. Frontman Landon Barrowman (who runs Dead City Radio and Dead City records) is always entertaining and can put down more Jack Daniels than someone his age should be able to. He doesn't mind playing earlier on a bill because he knows that going toe-to-toe with whiskey on the rocks for hours on end can bite you in the ass when you have to get up and play. The two steadiest members of Whiskey Wagon, drummer Keegan and Dave, the dashing lawyer by day, mandolin and harmonica player by night, put on a great show, though this time around they were missing Christie, who plays the accordion and washboard. They brought in a horn player for this show, so as always, the element of surprise was with them. Whiskey Wagon is always fun and though they have been at it for years, they have never developed any big egos or anything... they started for fun and they are still here for fun, so they always have a place in my heart, even when they are headlining shows and stewed to the gills.

The Brass Action were a very slick ska band, and it was nice meeting them. As a sound guy, ska bands can be a bit tricky to get rolling at first, but once everything is levelled out, a well-executed ska set is still one of the greatest live music experiences you can have.

When I lived in Boston, I was lucky enough to see Toots and The Maytals, The Skatalites, The Slackers and a few other big names in the early 2000s, and these guys would do fine on a bill with any of them. Brass Action is as good as anything on the Stomp! label and as a promoter it's nice to get a band of this calibre without all the bullshit label booking agents can put you through when you are simply trying to help a good band get an audience and a few bucks for the road. Brass Action had a good mix of laid-back ska tunes and some hyper-speed ass kickers that had the crowd high-stepping and skanking it up on the dance floor... they liked DV8 and we liked them, so I will showcase this band any time they can make it to Edmonton.

Things got off to a bit of a crunchy start with Calgary's Class Action during setup, trying to figure out which cords were which and having to dig up even more cords to run four vocal mics and three horns at once, which is slightly more confusing than the average punk or metal band, but I did get them sorted out

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and they sounded pretty good. I had offered to drive Dave from Whiskey Wagon home to Sherwood Park earlier, so once the sound was evened out and nothing was feeding back, I got Dave home and got totally lost on the way back, rolling in at close to 2am, just in time to say goodbye to everybody. That is what makes me love our stellar bar staff, though - long-time employee and Blame It's bassist / singer

Tye Hayes had everybody paid out and everything in order when I rolled in... what a guy! That night was also my four-year anniversary, so it was nice to have a chill night... until a few friends (Kris from Utopian Skank, his friend Andy From England and Slippery Rooker) came a knockin' and the party moved back to my place till everyone had cabbed out or passed out... good times.

-Rod Rookers.

KISS and Shinedown

Save on Foods Memorial Centre, Victoria, BC

July 5th, 2013

Victoria Rock City... young and old fans alike came together to witness

the most practiced and elaborate stage show in rock 'n roll. Fan worship is unparalleled for this band, as illustrated by impersonators in costumes, varying in accuracy from afflicted teenage immortal cover bands to the lost sixth member of KISS from 1982.

The openers, Shinedown, played stadium man-rock with *Simple Man* as an extended acoustic jam. Their biggest hit was a cover of Skynyrd. Enough said.

Sitting next to two drunk moms from Sidney whose husbands couldn't make it, I find the appeal of KISS is so obvious. The stage show is undeniably entertaining with fireworks, confetti, lasers, flying band members and blood-spitting. They are the template for stage banter ("Victoria... are you ready to rock?") and massive sing-a-long hits.

KISS is old as balls, but they still have it. You cannot go wrong. Sold out, with generations of fans at one show... rocking all night is a family affair, from Grandpa to the young blood.

-Erik "Destroyer" Lindholm

"Bringing Metal To The Masses"



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Absolute Film Reviews

4 Sci-Fi Movie Marathon

Shout! Factory

Tuesday the 9th of July saw the release of Shout Factory's newest movie mash-up 4 Sci-Fi Movie Marathon. This DVD contains four 80s cheesy, low budget, sci-fi classics on two disks with zero supplements. But for \$10, how could you not buy it? The films included are: America 3000 (1986) directed by David Engelbach, Arena (1989) & Eliminators (1986) both directed by Peter Manoogian, and finally The Time Guardian (1987) directed by Brian Hannant.

I will review each film in the order I watched them:

The Time Guardian

This 1986 Australian film doesn't know if it wants to be Terminator or Buck Rogers, but it is really fun to watch. The majority of the cast consists of no-name Aussie actors, but it does include two "stars" that most genre fans should recognize: Carrie Fisher from Star Wars and Dean Stockwell from Quantum Leap. Aside from the small roles of these two budding screen names, the acting isn't anything to write home about. The special effects aren't too bad and the creature makeup is outstanding, but let's not forget that this is a lost classic from the 80s for a reason: it stinks! I will say that the film is a pile of catnip for any hardcore sci-fi nut out there, but for the casual film watcher this movie will disappoint. The story goes: in the far, far flung future, humans are all but extinct and live in a time-traveling city protected by an energy dome. These humans have to constantly battle against crazy cyborg creatures that live underground. But the cyborgs are getting close to winning the war, so the humans travel back in time to 1986 to regroup and try and defeat their enemy once and for all. But just before they teleport away the cyborgs mess up the landing pad trapping the city in the time stream. The humans send forth the top military mind to infiltrate earth 1986 and make a temporary landing strut so the city doesn't come apart as it re-enters the planet. Time travel, Carrie Fisher, Cyborgs! This film has it all! Except for a plot; that kind of falls apart by the end of the movie. There are some unanswered questions that I was left with, making it seem like this was part of a bigger story line that just never got developed.

Arena

Sometime in the future, humans and aliens are living together on a space station millions of light years from earth. The hero of the film, Steve Armstrong, is a line cook who dreams of making it big in the Arena, a boxing style event that puts fighters of different species against each other. Steve, along with his four-armed buddy, Shorty, steal some cash from a gangster and get caught. The gangster tells Steve he needs to pay him back in 12 hours or Shorty dies. Steve signs up for a fight in the Arena to pay the bad dude back and ends up making a name

for himself in the fighting circuit. After winning a few fights Steve becomes the next big contender and eventually has to fight the champ, Horn, to try and win the title. Steve is the first human to ever go this far in the Arena in the last 50 years, and a lot of other humans are excited to see an earthling win the championship. Arena reminds me of Rocky, mainly because that's what it is, Rocky in space. And like Rocky, it's not a very good film. Arena feels like a made-for-TV movie with no big actors or any kind of production value. But it makes up for the crappy quality with outstanding creature effects! I think the majority of the budget went into making the costumes and aliens, so they look amazing, but other than that the film kind of falls flat. I wouldn't recommend this film to anyone who isn't looking to waste 90 minutes, but if you like crazy-looking aliens punching the hell out of each other, then maybe give it a try.

Eliminators

This is the best film in the collection by far. Eliminators has everything a rabid 80s action fan is looking for: boat chases, laser gun battles, robots fighting robots and a great ensemble of characters. I can also see where Steve Kostanski got a lot of his inspiration for making Manborg from. The film is about a half man, half droid who escapes from an evil scientist and joins up with a ragtag group of adventurers to put an end to the scientist's evil vision, which is to go back to the past, take over Roman times and become ruler of the world. Mandroid finds an inventor who ends up leading him on a quest through the jungles of Mexico and back to the very place he made his escape. The Mandroid has an arsenal of weapons as well as a mobile tank unit that he hooks into and drives around in. There are tons of explosions and crazy kung-fu fighting throughout the film, and the acting and production value are leagues ahead of the previous film, Arena. In addition, the inventor that Mandroid meets up with is played by Denise Crosby from Pet Cemetery. This film is still very low-budget and extremely cheesy, but if you're a fan of Jason Eisner or Astron-6 you should really dig it. The only downfall is that it's presented in full screen, but it kind of plays into the whole VHS vibe at the same time, so it's really not that bad.

America 3000

The earth has been transformed into a post-apocalyptic wasteland after the last nuclear war. The surviving humans were all irradiated and, for generations, produced sick offspring. Finally, a child was born who wasn't contaminated by the radiation and brought forth a new age of healthy humans. These humans split into two factions: the first faction, a group of Amazonian woman who keep men as slaves and playthings, the second faction, the men who refuse to live their lives in slavery.

These men escape the woman and flee to the outskirts of the wasteland where they have to scavenge whatever they can find to survive. The tribes of woman gather for a funeral to pay respects to the fallen leader and pass the rights of leadership onto the eldest daughter. The second daughter doesn't like the decision and, with the help of a few of the other tribe members, starts a war with the men. The leader of the men stumbles upon an old bomb shelter and discovers some weapons that allow the men to hold their own against the women's tribes. The two leaders try to make peace and bring the warring factions together at the same time as the big battle is taking place. This film is a riot! It definitely can hold up to some of the classic 80s action comedies I've seen. The film has a diverse set of characters and some interesting plot points even though the budget doesn't seem very big. But sometimes the lower the budget the more creative the filmmakers have to become in order to get their ideas across. America 3000 is a nice trip down memory lane to when the mom and pop video store was booming and kids of all ages would rush out to get their grubby little hands on the newest release. I'd say this film alone is worth the ten dollar price tag, but I'm positive most sci-fi fans will find something of interest in at least one of the movies included in this set.

-Cody No Teeth

Creeper

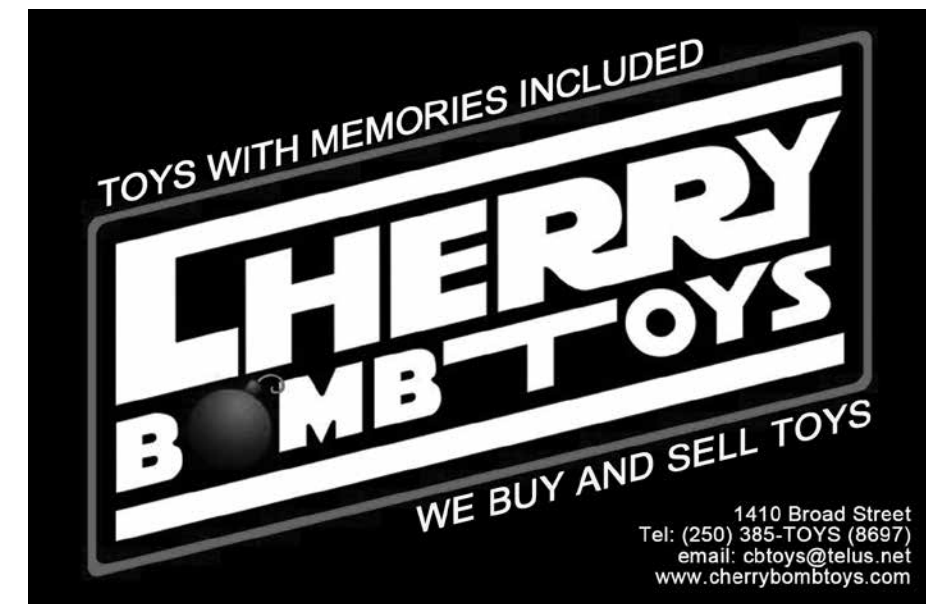
Matthew Gunnoe

When four snooty gals declare independence from men because of all the wrongs they've done to them, perhaps the big question they should ask themselves is what do they have to gain by targeting a less-than-bright fellow on a social media site called ConnectMeNet? In the movie Creeper, a film that mixes in grindhouse, exploitation and survival horror into one product, the big question is, who is stalking and preying on whom?

Writer/Director/Cinematographer Matthew Gunnoe does a very good job in writing a story about the dangers of social media/dating websites designed for supposedly 'consenting' adults. It's not a topic often explored. Although this made-for-video product will require a repeated viewing to get that message, the hints are very subtle. He also takes a poke at all the sinful joys of watching reality television programs.

The viewers will grow to hate the ladies (Rohnja Morrow, Brittany Cardella and Amber Sym), for their pompous behaviour. One of the greatest challenges any director has is to explain what he envisions for each character, and having written the script, he has an imitate knowledge of what the performer has to do. Everyone understood him and he captured that feeling of desolation quite well.

The stand-out performance from Jerry (Darryl Baldwin), the mute



individual who went online hoping to find some friends, is to be commended. To get him to play two different characters, an innocent buffoon and an angry baboon, takes considerable acting talent. Baldwin becomes very menacing in a silent but angry way. There are moments where he perfectly mimics Michael Meyers' omnipresence. And because he has the build of a WWE wrestler, that's easy to pull off. When he beefed up some more and donned his military fatigues, he could have easily stepped on the mat to challenge Brock Lesnar. But after what the girls have done to him, what he wants to do is more in the vein of MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch; even much of the dialogue has the feel of belonging to this Claymation product.

The latter half of the film is much more interesting than the first. It's like watching a Predator marching through the bayou. In this case, the backdrop is the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Even a few of the trick decapitations look smart, like showing a human head in a box. Some of the digital splatter effects, however, were rather campy. If they were more realistic, the film would have possessed a darker element. But when considering the allusion to Deathmatch, perhaps that was the intent Gunnoe was going for. He is showing just how far people will go to create a whole lot of pain in the name of revenge, and that in itself is scary.

This movie will soon be available through mgcinema.com. The DVD/Blu-Ray will be set for a wider release in October.

-By Ed Sum

The Purge

Blumhouse Productions

Director/Writer: James DeMonaco.

Cast: Ethan Hawke, Lena Headey, Max Burkholder, Adelaide Kane, Edwin Hodge, and Rhys Wakefield.

The Purge has a great premise. In the future, unemployment and poverty are solved through murder. Each year, for 12 hours, American citizens are allowed to murder, rob, rape

and pillage their neighbours to their heart's content. Yet, director and writer James DeMonaco's script and film never utilize the full potential of his premise. Instead, The Purge is like your ordinary indie horror title: predictable and underdeveloped.

To expand, The Purge focuses on the Sandin family: James (Ethan Hawke), Mary (Lena Headey), Charlie and Zoey. Each year, the Sandins settle into their fortified abode, to wait out the yearly purging or murdering of American citizens. This year they are not as lucky as previous ones. A homeless man finds shelter in their spacious residence and a local group of maniacs come searching for him. The Sandins are faced with a moral dilemma; should they give up the homeless man and save themselves, or protect him against the mob outside? What would you do?

The film's premise is a good one. The future is bleak and The Purge allows the poor and downtrodden to be eliminated from society. This is a picture about class warfare. But, the distinction between the rich and the

poor is not really explored in any depth. Also, the homeless man, who represents poverty, is only given a few lines and a few scenes. As well, the chaos that would be taking place country wide is only alluded to in a few early and grainy video images.

The limits of production seem to have hampered the development of the film's story. The budget of \$3 million did not allow for elaborate sets, or even for exterior shooting. Almost all of the film relies on one setting,

the Sandin home. Also, there are few characters here. The central characters are Mary and James, though a few minor characters make their way into the film by the mid-point. There are a few violent scenes and The Purge is over before you know it. This film, with a lack of exterior shooting and few characters, plays out much like a mediocre indie horror title. It could have gone so much further, with the right budget, or will.

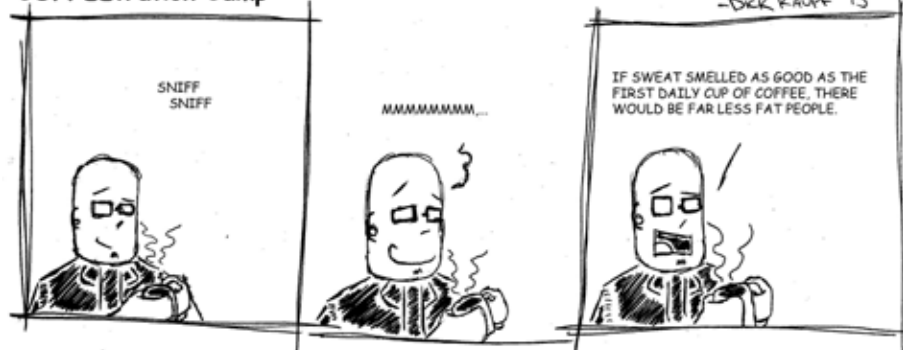
The Purge has already been released in theatres to large turnouts. The film has also made a considerable profit, but this thriller comes across as average or above average, at best. The premise is only partially explored and it never reaches the levels of chaos and mayhem that the story demands. Perhaps a sequel is needed to fully flesh out the story from DeMonaco. The one here has been reduced to such a point that it loses any sense of grandness.

-Michael Allen



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