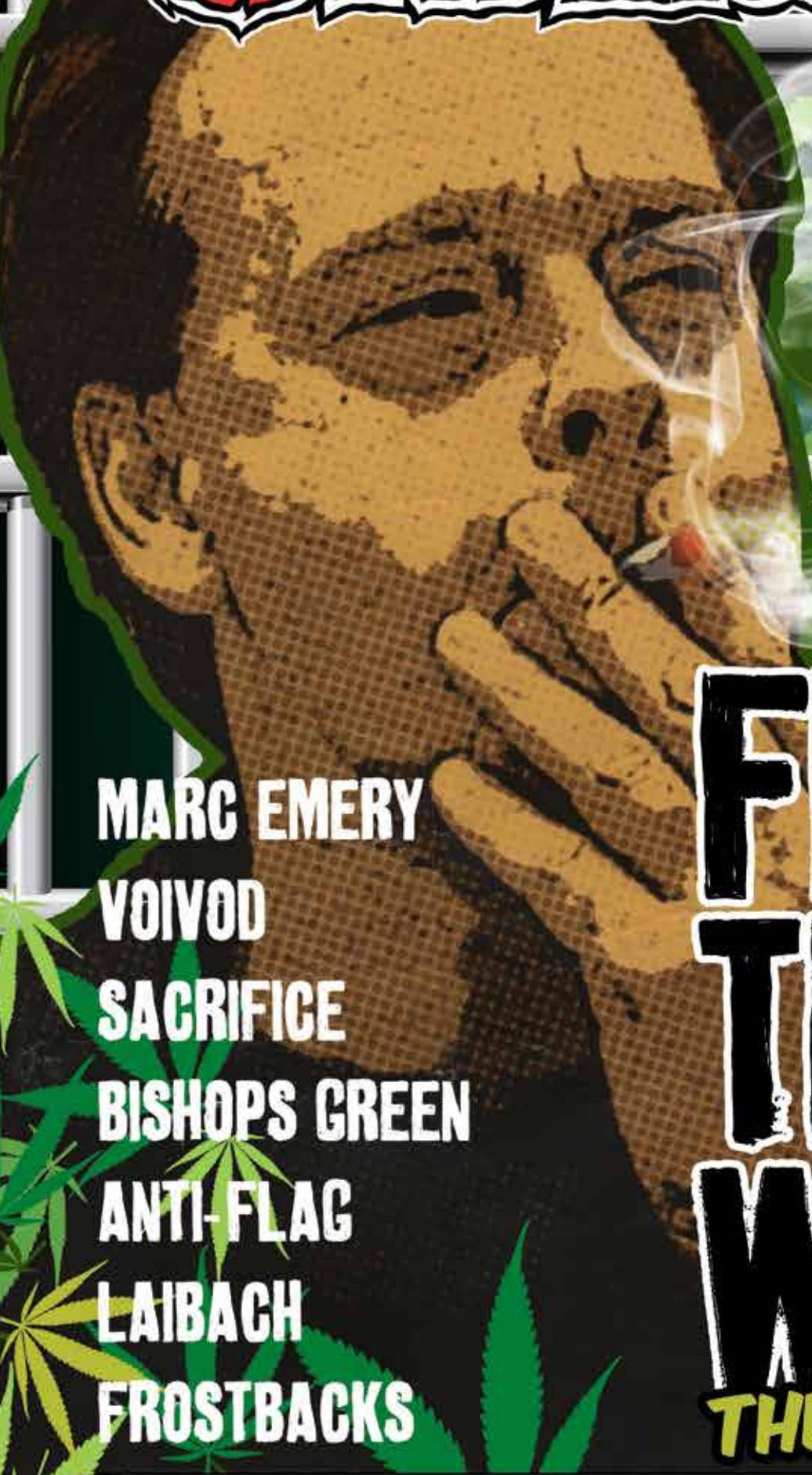


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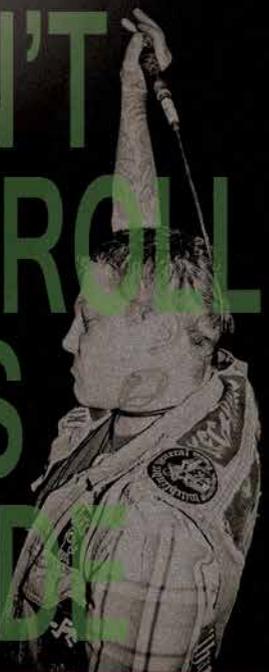
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Deadly Culture The FALL



Meridius

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

Meridius: Peter and Kieran from Meridius. I guess you could say we're infamous for playing loud, raunchy heavy metal and getting drunk and losing our fuckin' minds on and off stage.

AU: How would you describe your band's sound, for those unfamiliar?

Meridius: Our sound is kind of an eclectic mix of a bunch of different genres. Tons of groove, lots of speed and plenty of melody.

AU: You just released a self-titled EP this March, tell us about it! Where was it recorded, and with whom? Can we find it in physical copy somewhere?

Meridius: The EP has three songs that we chose from our set list. We decided these three would be a good representation of what we've come up with so far. We recorded it at Greenhouse Studios in East Van with our pal Matt Roach. He engineered the whole record and Troy Glessner mastered it. Physical copies are available on March 20th.

AU: What's the story behind your name? Does it have to do with the Latin for "centre"?

Meridius: We all really dug that movie *Gladiator*, ya know, Russell fuckin' Crowe? The character's last name in the film is Meridius. We searched it up to see what it meant and loved the idea of being the centre of attention!

AU: Any influences, musical or otherwise, that might surprise us?

Meridius: We all have hugely diverse musical tastes, and I think you can hear it in a lot of our music. I mean, I personally am a huge classical music guy. "Anything good" is our motto!

AU: What's the best show you've played so far? Any coming up that you're particularly looking forward to?

Meridius: The best show so far had to be when

we co-headlined with Lethal Halo. Don't get me wrong, they're all a fuckin' blast, but this one just had that extra hint of energy, ya know? Chicks flying all over the place in their bras, dudes throwin' chairs, the whole band going a million miles an hour! What a riot! We hit up the old Van Island for a couple shows on March 27th and 28th, both with Vancouver's Over The Coals.

AU: Do you have a full-length album or a tour in the works?

Meridius: Tunes are constantly being written and the full-length is definitely a work in progress. No tours yet, always on the lookout and we'll hopefully work something out soon.

AU: What are your hopes or goals for the future of Meridius?

Meridius: To continue to write music that keeps us interested and happy. We really just want to play for as many people in as many places as we can. Europe and South America are big goals for our future, and a full-length album ASAP!

AU: Any final words for Absolute Underground readers?

Meridius: Get out there and support all those hard-working local bands! It's the fans that keep the scene alive.

<https://meridius.bandcamp.com/>

PHOTO CREDIT: Hailey Statler



AU: You guys are pretty new on the Vancouver scene, is that right? Have you all been in bands previously?

Meridius: Kieran and Eric were both in separate bands, Howler and Equestrian Lord, respectively.

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

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NINJAS WITH SYRINGES

Matt Danger Of Ninjas With Syringes

Interview by Mr. Plow

Absolute Underground: Where did you come up with the name "Ninjas with Syringes"?

Matt Danger: I made it up in my childhood bedroom when I was 17, and held out until the time was right.

AU: Who are the other ninjas in the band, and who writes the material? Is it a joint effort?

MD: The other band members of Ninjas With Syringes are Richie Petrillo on bass and Steve Simmons on drums. I have historically been the chief executive producer of the majority of the band's content since founding the band, but many members have contributed along the way, which I am grateful for.

Currently, I write the majority of the groundwork, but wait to fully flesh out the ideas with the guys.

Richie and Steve also play together in The Brass, who we're going on tour with in March, so they get a lot of time in together working on chops and always keep a leveraged perspective on things. They're natural professionals and the best guys I have ever played with.

AU: You just released a new CD on the label

that you run, No Pants Records. Are you a true believer in the DIY style?

MD: We just spent a year in the practice room, booked some studio time, and banged the record out. We took our time mixing it down to get everything just right. I never considered myself much of a DIY guy back in the day- mostly because it was being thrown around so much I think I got it confused with wearing a spiky belt or something- but as a businessman I found it to be a useful tool for cutting out the middle man whenever possible.

AU: What other bands are on the roster of No Pants Records?

MD: Mr. Plow (You should check him out), Smothers Fuckers, Ninjas With Syringes, Wild Bill, The Brass, Rendered Useless, Northwest Sounds, Heather Ashley, who is recording her album right now, and Drawback.

AU: You are a man of many talents, what other bands do you play in, and what instruments do you play?

MD: I play in many of the bands that founded the label and used our releases as guinea pigs (or astronaut monkeys). Drawback was the first official release in 2007 with the full length *Bear Market* that I played drums on, and they let me sing a little bit on it. I am a member of the punk rock group Rendered Useless, as the drummer and background vocalist. I play and sing backups in Wild Bill currently, which includes several members from Rendered Useless. I play acoustic



shows whenever possible, and piano. I enjoy filling in on drums in bands like the hip-hop group Raise The Bridges, and the thrash rock Portland band Vultures when the opportunity presents itself, but at the moment I am trying to focus on a few things at once so I don't overextend myself.

I really want to learn the accordion and violin because I use them frequently in the studio, emulating them through expensive keyboards, but that doesn't get as much soulful humanity as I would like: the perfect imperfections that robots are still trying to decode but will never get right until they develop serious drinking problems.

AU: You also recently had a book published. How did that come about?

MD: I have always written a lot in private. I was attending classes at PSU to pursue my literary science degree and had even more time to write, so I indulged myself in creative writing, and unknowingly prepared myself to write a book. I got divorced at the time and came to live with my best friend's dad, Wild Bill (for whom the band I drum for, Wild Bill, is affectionately named after).

We were legally squatting in this house that I previously lived in when I was in Drawback...

During that time, Bill and I got the place looking really good, fully stocked and converted the downstairs bar back into a work room for music, business, and socializing, including the successful and shortly lived Matt Danger Vodka run. The room had a grand piano built in Italy in 1908 that we used to record the critically-spurned Ninjas With Syringes record *Pornographer* in 2012, with Robert Rios' Irican Productions, who brought their studio over to capture it. This was Ninjas With Syringes and Rendered Useless' headquarters in 2012. It was literally the best of times and the worst of times rolled into one.

As far as the book goes, when we got evicted, it was with two weeks' notice so Bill (who was a millionaire in the 90s from his advertising business) hired me to sell all of his old stuff. It was during this time that I started writing very strange Craigslist ads to move things as a result of our hardships and urgency to have them

PLOW'S PICK

gone within a few days. It was a perfect storm of circumstances that muddled together and caught the attention of a friend of a friend of a publisher. Since I primarily used my Facebook and social media presence for humour and selling my music- I was able to streamline my appeal into a consistent voice that eventually was reciprocated by an online audience. I spent another year and

a half writing and editing the book while finishing my degree at PSU. I think I finally found all of the typos.

AU: Shamelessly promote whatever you want to promote here....

MD: I spent a lot of time on the new Ninjas album, *Jetsetter*. Please get that first to satiate my insane, tender ego. If you don't care for my music but enjoy my acerbic humour, please pick up a copy of *Extremely Successful Book* through my publisher, Word Branch. If you do not like either of those, please spend that money buying fruits and vegetables and eat those because

you need to take care of you first. After I am done getting some record label business squared away and finish this short tour, I want to record an acoustic record, get this new Wild Bill record out the door, cut another Ninjas record, and spend some more time shooting sketch videos to get a regular web series going. The coolest part is I get to do whatever I want. Keep reaching for



your dreams and don't listen to anyone except sometimes Matt Danger. Thanks for all your time-peace in the streets.

ninjaswithsyringes.bandcamp.com/

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The Dead Cold

Interview by Lacey Paige

The winter of 2009 was a particularly relentless one in Alberta (as most winters here are), but with the cold, desolate decay of the frostbitten climate came the spawning of one of Edmonton's most boisterously brutal death/gore-grind metal outfits. The first flakes of the blizzard that became The Dead Cold formed when drummer Bryan Newbury (Into Eternity, Death Toll Rising) was introduced to guitarist Andrew Henwood by ex-vocalist/guitarist of Begrime Exemious, Brad Symic. Symic encouraged Newbury to get a project going with Henwood, as the two shared similar influences and an affinity for the brutalist most breakneck metal.

"Little did I know we would have such electric chemistry when it came to writing catchy death metal anthems," Newbury reminisces. "Within a short space of time we had quite a few tunes and several song ideas on the go. Granted, we are very influenced by many musicians, so there are always those tell-tale riffs that show our blatant worship of said bands, haha."

As the band evolved, a full lineup formed, consisting of Henwood on rhythm guitar, Rene Alexander on lead guitar, Newbury on drums, Tyler Sullivan on bass and Ryan Otto doing vocals. At the turn of the decade, The Dead Cold had become a mainstay in the Alberta metal scene, shredding stages and annihilating audiences throughout Edmonton and across the putrid Canadian prairies. Furthermore, they recorded a four-song demo and subsequent six-track EP, fittingly titled *Wintercourse*, which was recently unleashed upon the masses via YouTube. During

this inaugural era, The Dead Cold's aural aesthetic heavily reflected the subterranean down-tuning, gnarly guttural growls and grotesque gore-themed lyrics of bands like Mortician, Decapitated, Grave and Obituary.

"Historically, we were a band that was serious about making well-written heavy music, but entirely not serious when it came to our lyrical content and message," Newbury reveals. "With songs like 'Tomb Raper' and 'Anal on the First Date,' we were essentially a porn-grind band."

As the perpetual promise of Old Man Winter goes, all things must wither and die in order to grow back bigger, stronger and wiser than what once was, and the inaugural entity of The Dead Cold was no exception to that ageless aphorism. As time went on, scheduling conflicts, health issues and personal trauma swept away TDC's mutual motivation to push forward, and they made a crucial decision to indefinitely discontinue the joint pursuit of their musical endeavours.

"The hiatus gave Andrew and I time to grow, learn and become better people most of all," Newbury reflects. "Our ability as musicians and songwriters also grew stronger, refined and more mature."

Determined to revive The Dead Cold, Henwood and Newbury joined forces again in 2014 with a new, much more refined and socially conscious vision for the band.

"Our focus since our last release is to [write] music that [is] more mature in sound and in message," Newbury divulges.

"The new record will feature themes regarding social issues, empowerment and a positive message for the listeners, but make no mistake; we are still heavy as fuck and ready to crush."

Not only are they taking a much more sophisticated approach to songwriting, and promoting a more consciousness output of lyrical themes, Henwood and Newbury have also welcomed several new additions to The Dead Cold's lineup. The TDC member roster now includes Cyn Mercredi of Kriticos on vocals, Helge Lipphardt on lead guitar and Wendy Maxwell on keyboard.

"Gaining new members with more influences and experience has given us a chance to diversify our sound and make music that is more unique," Newbury says. "Our current writing process usually begins with Andrew and I coming up with a general theme or direction, and our bandmates filling in the blanks, adding their flavour to the mix. These days, we try to build more layers into the music, making it more interesting for the

listener. It also gives us an opportunity to broaden our fanbase, [reaching] new listeners as well."

The Dead Cold played their official reunion show at Edmonton's Rendezvous Pub on Saturday, March 21 as an opening act for Eastern Canadian metal brethren, Exes for Eyes. They are also slated to shred the stage of Western Canada's most prominent outdoor metal festival, Farmageddon, this June. As if a new member dynamic and steadily growing show schedule wasn't enough to keep The Dead Cold busy as hell, they're also currently labouring away at Studios 13 on their debut full-length album.

www.facebook.com/pages/The-DEAD-COLD/

PHOTO CREDIT: Penny Vanderheyden



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MONTREAL MASSACRE



**Absolute Underground:
Who's in the band?**

Guttrot: Phil on lead guitar, Sabe on rhythm guitar, Myles on bass, Annick on vocals, and Jimbones on drums.

AU: How did the band start?

Guttrot: Phil, Bones and Myles wanted to bring back some old punk tunes they had written years ago. Once the ball got rolling, we decided to take the project a step further, add a few friends and Guttrot was born.

AU: How did you come up with the name of the band?

Guttrot: Well, "12-Testicle-Mess" and "Impotent Hawk & The Malicious Shockwave" just weren't cutting it. So after months

of frustration, Myles said "Guttrot," and it stuck!

AU: What inspires your music?

Guttrot: The will to bring back some good punk rock. The feeling we had when we were young, drunk and in the pit. Also beer, weed, and greasy food!

AU: How would you describe your music?

Guttrot: A hurricane of stale beer, weed, and dildos smashing against a wall of punk rock! (A good mix of punk rock and metal).

AU: Is there a theme to your songs?

Guttrot: Everything from parties and masturbation to rainbows and unicorns.

AU: What can we expect to see at a show?

Guttrot: A bunch of drunks, barflies, boozehounds, stoners, potheads and burnouts having a good time playing music.

AU: Do you have a demo or an album coming out?

Guttrot: We just released our *Hate The Public* EP, and our full-length album will be out this summer. There are five songs on the EP and about ten to fifteen for the album.

AU: What is the mood during the recording



sessions?

Guttrot: With Tony and Big Al, the vibe at Rude Beats was chill and productive. We crushed over 200 beers in a weekend and threw down some killer tracks.

AU: Do you have a lot of other songs currently in development?

Guttrot: Yeah, we've got three-quarters of an album done and a bunch of songs in the works.

AU: Do you have plans to tour in and out of the province?

Guttrot: Absolutely. Canada and the States.

AU: Do you guys play in other bands?

Guttrot: Yeah, Bones and Phil are in the progressive metal band Murtenscythe (currently working on an album) and Guttrot also does double duty as a Bryan Adams backing band!

www.facebook.com/GUTTROT

PHOTO CREDIT: Andre Laniel

Guttrot

Interview by Andre Laniel

Last February, I went to a nice little bar downtown Montreal called Crobar. There was a great line up of homebrewed bands and one of them was Guttrot, a bunch of friends with great songs. The music was aggressive and fun. The singer, Annick, was mixing up French and English with her colleagues, and was singing in the middle of the moshpit. The band clearly put all their energy in that show and it was very entertaining. You have to see Guttrot live to really appreciate their music. They display a lot of experience on stage, and they also have their first album in the works. Here's a short interview with the band, hopefully you will see them soon in a bar near you.



Voivod

Interview with Dan "Chewy" Mongrain (guitar), of Voivod from Jonquière, Quebec
By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Set the scene for us. Where are you now, and what are you up to?

Dan Mongrain: Hello, just coming back from a fantastic tour, *Through Space and Grind*, [we were] co-headlining with Napalm Death in North

America. Taking a few days off before getting back at writing new material and jamming with the band. We actually recorded a bunch of ideas in the back of the bus during the tour, and it's exciting to be in creative mode again.

AU: How was the *Through Space and Grind* tour?

DM: It was a complete success! Lots of sold-out

shows and packed venues, great crowds of open-minded and very responsive people. It is always a challenge and a thrill to go on the road and deliver every single night, especially with a long run like five weeks with only two days off! The lineup of the tour was good too, I mean, I always like when there is a variety of styles between bands. Even though there was common ground, we all sounded very different and that's refreshing for everyone. We all got along very quickly, and had a great time, for sure!

AU: The song "Kluskap O' Kom" on the latest

record, *Target Earth*, has a unique lead video, using throat singing in the introduction. It describes a Micmac tribe story about Kluskap, a giant. Can you tell us where the song came from and how you got introduced to the story?

DM: The throat singing is actually from the Inuit community, First Nations from the Arctic. It was a game that women would play while the men went fishing or hunting. It is like a contest, two women would face each other and sing a precise pattern and the first one who stops loses the game. I went to a city called Kuujuaq in 2013, and actually met women who could do it, and it's very impressive; it seems impossible to do with a voice. It sounds very unique and beautiful, but it has nothing to do with the Micmacs. The title and lyrics are based on a Micmac legend, [that I heard from] a friend of mine, Kat Hannah, whose ancestors are Micmac. She wrote a poem about it and it gave me the idea to write about the subject. It is a text about the legend of Kluskap O'Kom, an entity, a spirit of the forest. It also talks about the fragility of the First Nations of any part of the world, and the loss of their identity and beautiful culture over a few hundred years, through war and colonization.

AU: What has been the response to the band in France, in the last few years?

DM: Well, we mainly played Hellfest the last couple times we played France, and it was great! I hope we could play a few shows around the country next time, for sure! The last few years were a little bit slow for touring, but we're now ready to hit the road again!

AU: Are there side projects currently planned outside of Voivod, in other music styles?

DM: Yes, actually. Away [Michel Langevin] recorded the drum tracks on a project called Tau Cross with Amebix vocalist/bassist Rob "The Baron" Miller, Misery guitarist Jon Misery, and War//Plague guitarist Andy Lefton. We actually had a few listens in the bus during the tour, and it sounds fucking great!

AU: What song is stuck in your head today

and why? What albums do you have on high rotation?

DM: Right now I have three parts of songs in my head, overlapping. One is a Japanese shampoo publicity song, the other is some new riff that I'm actually working on, and the third one is an earworm... a chorus of a pop song from an



annoying Montreal singer that sticks through our heads every time we come back from a tour, at the airport in Montreal.

I don't have any album on high rotation, I prefer to listen to a lot of different stuff very quickly, but I may have played a few Hank William III records and some Cardiacs (UK) records a lot in the past few days.

AU: What is next for the band in 2015? Where do you want to take Voivod?

DM: Writing, recording, touring.

AU: Much thanks and last words to disciples across Canada and in outer space:

DM: See you all soon! Thanks for your support!
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2015 Spring/Summer Metal Festival Guide

Preview: Farmageddon

Ryley, Alberta – June 11th - 14th

By Willow Gamberg

Festival season approaches, and with it comes the return of Western Canada's largest open air metal festival, Farmageddon, taking place June 11th - 14th. Currently in its third year of operation, Farmageddon will draw people from all over Canada and beyond to their festival grounds near Ryley, Alberta, about 80km east of Edmonton.

Each Canadian metal festival has its own distinct characteristics and flavour; Farmageddon is already becoming known for its artist-centric structure, and the eclectic lineup that blends larger, touring bands with smaller, lesser-known Canadian acts.

For founder Tyson Travnik, this combination is essential to the Farmageddon philosophy. He recalls the involuntary intimacy of the 70 000 Tons of Metal Cruise, with bands mingling with fans, organizers, etc, as a really special experience, and one that he aims to recreate with the rural, three-day festival.

"What I wanted do is to create a festival that kinda offered the open air experience in Alberta, which was definitely lacking at the time, and then to kinda combine that with the ultimate goal of having a really intimate setting similar to 70 000 Tons... where you can't really escape backstage," he says.

This year's headliners include Incantation, Grim Reaper, Aggression and Pallbearer, along with a host of other bands, both Canadian and otherwise. Travnik explains that the festival's aim is to be the most exclusive, or "jewel-encrusted" festival around, while at the same time, granting stage time to smaller acts that work hard at self-promoting.

"At its pinnacle, I'd like to see Farmageddon [bringing in larger bands] with whatever our number ends up being... I'm not shooting to be the largest festival, I'm shooting to be the most prestigious, and the most exclusive," he explains, though he adds the caveat that being big doesn't necessarily guarantee a band a spot. It's the attitude that's more important.

"Just because you're the highest-drawing band doesn't mean that you're playing the festival... There are some larger bands... that are really surprised when we turn them down," he says. "Even though their music's popular, if I haven't seen anything out of them, or they're asking too much money for what I think they're really giving... Having bands that don't have any elitism, they're bands that we like to see, even those bands that we potentially book as our headliners, they

have to want to come hang out with everyone else."

Travnik adds that, ideally, these humble headliners would provide the draw for the festival's real focus: providing a spotlight on hardworking, self-promoting bands.

"Having the exclusiveness of it, having the larger bands coming out and playing, that kind of a draw should hopefully bring out people to see those bands that are up-and-coming, because that's really our focus," he explains. "The most promising bands for the future, that's the real big one for us... We're not looking for bands that necessarily draw the highest, or have been around the longest, or anything like that. We're looking for bands that are really trying to push themselves as far as things like self-promotion, like we can really see that they put as much work as possible into pushing themselves as hard as they can."

Travnik also explains that the festival is based on a not-for-profit company, and that its aim is to be completely self-sufficient.

"The goal of this festival is not to make money," he explains. "If we get to the point where we can pay each band five grand, hell yes! We're not at that point right now though, being an open air, the overhead is extremely high." Currently, Farmageddon features one large stage, which Travnik doesn't see changing anytime soon. They prefer to focus on the best production possible, trying to outdo themselves with every consecutive year.

This year will see more food trucks with more options for vegans and vegetarians, along with more activities, contests and tournaments which, this year, are set to include a Magic Card Tournament, an N64 Tournament, a Metal Trivia Dunk Tank contest, and the usual Farmageddon marketplace.

This year also features a festival kickoff show that will take place simultaneously in three different cities on Thursday June 11th: Calgary at Dicken's Pub, Edmonton at The Starlite Room, and Red Deer at The Vat.

Full lineups for each kickoff event, as well as for the festival itself, are listed on the Farmageddon website.

Farmageddon 2015 will be an all ages event – tickets are available in advance from The Rendezvous Pub, Blackbyrd Music, Revolver Records in Edmonton, The Soundhouse Guitar & Record Shop in Red

Deer, and Lord Nelson's Bar and Grill in Calgary, as well as online from the festival website.

www.farmageddon.ca

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5 SUNDAY CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM ALWAYS FREE		6 MONDAY STEVE BARRIE'S OPEN MIC 9PM // FREE		7 TUESDAY GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9PM // FREE		8 BRING YOUR OWN SOUL // R&B RECORD NIGHT WITH DJ RICHIE RICH 8PM - MIDNIGHT FREE	
9 HEAVY CHAINS (Vancouver - Members of NO SOCIAL & WHITE LIES) ANIMAL LOVER (MINNEAPOLIS, USA) HURTIN FOUNTAIN 9PM // \$10		10 BA JOHNSTON (Hamilton, Ontario) PINNER DUMMY POPS 9PM // \$10		11 SUGAR SHAKERS Burlesque Revue Presents SPRING BEAVER BURLESQUE \$15 ADVANCE \$20 at the Door		12 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM ALWAYS FREE	
13 STEVE BARRIE'S OPEN MIC 9PM // FREE		14 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9PM // FREE		15 BRING YOUR OWN PUNK//GARAGE RECORD NIGHT WITH DJ NUMERO ZERO 8PM - MIDNIGHT FREE		16 	
17 DEAD SOFT MOSFETT (From Vancouver BC) PINNER THE MANDLEBAUMS 9PM // \$10		18 HIVE ATLAS COLLAPSES AS ASH FELL CRYPTIC ENSLAVEMENT 9PM // \$10		19 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM ALWAYS FREE		20 STEVE BARRIE'S OPEN MIC 9PM // FREE	
21 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9PM // FREE		22 BRING YOUR OWN METAL RECORD NIGHT 8PM - MIDNIGHT FREE		23 ETERNAL TAPESTRY (Portland, Or) GOLDEN HAND DEAD MALLS 9PM		24 TORRID NIGHT 9PM	
25 ROLLER DERBY AFTER PARTY WITH THE GRAND OLD COUNTRY BAND 9PM		26 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4PM - 8PM ALWAYS FREE		27 STEVE BARRIE'S OPEN MIC 9PM // FREE		28 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9PM // FREE	
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Published by Ira Hunter

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VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY



Frostbacks

Interview by Michael Carnage

Frostbacks have been playing a wicked brand of Canadian punk rock since they learned to play, about six years now. It's heavy on the "Canadian," with a good pile of history and inside jokes. They do a fair number of shows and have a new album coming out soon. I got a hold of Willy Jak to ask a few questions.

Absolute Underground: I'm sure most of our readers are familiar with you, but how about a quick introduction?

Willy Jak: We are Frostbacks from Victoria, British Columbia. We have been active for about six years now. We just have released our second album, entitled *The Battle of Stoney Creek*. We sing primarily about Canadiana and all things Canadian.

AU: How has that translated with shows and/or fans south of the border?

WJ: The Americans have embraced us with open arms. We have always had really great time playing down there, and we look forward to doing more shows. I'm sure that some of our content goes over their heads, but everybody knows good music when they hear it

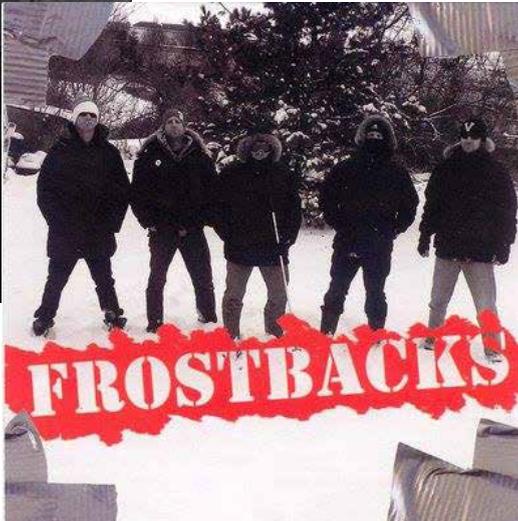
AU: What has been your favourite memory of playing live in Victoria?

WJ: We've got some crazy shows here in our hometown. Our singer, Harley, jumped off the stage to punch out a guy that was heckling his hockey team, The Leafs. Another time, Harley fell backwards and landed on a seal gaff and punctured his leg and almost bled to death. Not necessarily my favourite memory, but a crazy one nonetheless. Playing with the business and playing with teenage head, those are real great memories.

AU: How good is Blind Marc at seal hunting?

WJ: It's hard for him, for obvious reasons, but if he gets his hands on one, look out!

AU: With the new album on the way, here's your chance for some self-promotion:



WJ: Yes... We worked really hard on [*The Battle of Stoney Creek*], and I think it's our best work. We also tried to include a lot more content for the Frenchies. A good friend of mine that I've known since the third grade worked really hard on all the artwork, and we couldn't be happier. Scott Henderson from the Show Business Giants did a really good job on the recording

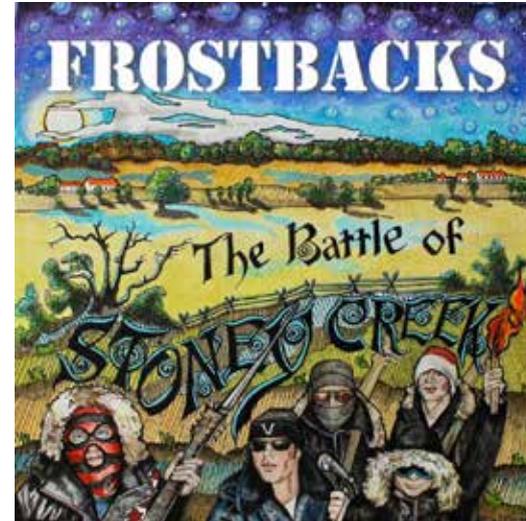
AU: What's been your favourite band to play with so far?

WJ: We like to play with The Tubuloids up here in Canada, we also do [gigs] in Las Vegas at Punk Rock Bowling with 13 Scars, they're good friends of ours. Lucky Boys from Seattle sometimes

get on that, too. When we play a lot up here in Canada, it's with D.O.A. or The Golers, amongst other bands.

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

WJ: We're going to do some shows south of



the border in July, and we plan on writing and recording more records and just to keep cranking the songs out.

AU: What's one thing you would change about punk rock today?

WJ: I like the more rock'n roll sort of funtime stuff. I'm not huge on being told what to do or being preached [at], or any kind of PC bullshit like that. I like songs that make me have a good time and get the girls up and dancing, and you know, stuff like that. So I guess I would just like punk rock to take the hockey stick out of its ass.

www.myspace.com/frostbacks

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2015 Spring/Summer
Festival Guide

CALGARY CARNAGE

Preview: Calgary MetalFest IV

By Lacey Paige

Amidst the heavy metal maelstrom of music festivals set to obliterate the prairies this coming summer season is Big Nate Productions' Calgary MetalFest. Now that the festival is embarking on its fourth consecutive year, festival founder and head honcho Nate Reno has made a few minor modifications to the organization of Calgary's most carnage-fueled metal fest since the infamous Noctis Valkyries Metal Festival.

"There are some ways [in which] it has evolved; like we added the Ship [& Anchor] show, which is a free show," Reno says. "I put like not super black/death metal there. This year it's Electric Revival, Bloated Pig, The Outer and WoodHawk. They're kind of a little more on the 'rocky' side, some of [those bands]. And in past years, like at [Calgary MetalFest] II, [it was at] Broken City. You could walk there, but it was kind of far away. So now we're just having it at Lord Nelson's to try and tighten it up. That's kind of the only thing that has evolved, is the venues and where they're situated. Just so it's the best for the concertgoers, so they don't have to be running to see the shows."

2015 marks the year that Calgary MetalFest IV has really upped the ante in terms of offering an all-encompassing weekend of gamut-defying Canadian metal. Each day of the fest—beginning on Wednesday, June 3 and running through Saturday, June 6—boasts an eclectic bill of bands based on which subgenres they fall near or within.

"We have double stages, this year it's at Dickens and Lord Nelson's, right across the parking lot," Reno says. "So if you get sick of one kind of metal, you can go and see another kind of metal. I kind of tried to do that, like separate the genres a little bit, more than past years, where I just tried to mix them all up to screw with people's heads. That's kind of the fun of it, you know? To keep it where if you want to just go somewhere else, you can go somewhere else."

Reno foresees the Calgary MetalFest crowd exceeding extreme levels of savagery on the Saturday night. Between the return of Calgary MetalFest caustics Caveat and the typhoon force of Saskatoon-based death thrashers Untimely Demise, Saturday is sure to promulgate the pandemonium in radical proportions.

"You would think that the Saturday night at Dickens would be the biggest one," Reno predicts. "It's hard to say, though. Saturday at Lord Nelson's is Lavagoat, Kataplexis, Chieftain, Doberman, Numenorean, Triton and Okazaki Fragments. So, if there's a bunch of doom fans, they'll probably all be over there."

Reno emphasizes that his sole aim with the Calgary MetalFest is to keep the spirit of extreme

DIY music festivals alive in Alberta.

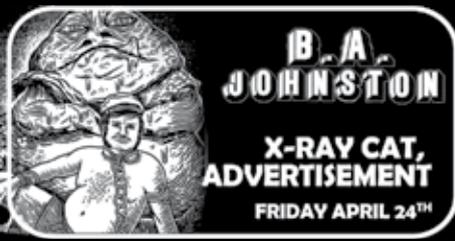
"It's a DIY festival; there's no big backers or huge money," he stresses. "It's mostly the best that the local world has to offer and hopefully some bigger headliners sometimes. I just wanted to make a big show for local—and when I say local, I mean like Canadian-

wide—talent. Last year, we had a band from Nova Scotia. They got a hold of me and they knew I was doing the fest, so they asked me if they could play it. I said, 'Yeah, if you're going to be here on tour, sure. I'm not going to fly you out, but if you're doing the whole country... sure!' So that's kind of what I'm trying to make it, is a stop that everybody knows is going to happen every year, and to attract some of the bigger tours."

For the full show lineup and to purchase tickets, visit calgarymetalfest.com or facebook.com/calgarymetalfest.

Tickets are also available at Dickens Pub, 1000 - 9th Ave SW; Lord Nelson's, 1020 - 8th Ave SW; Vern's, 622 - 8th Ave SW; The Ship & Anchor, 534 - 17th Ave SW, and through members of participating bands.

calgarymetalfest.com



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- TUESDAY APRIL 7TH -
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- FRIDAY APRIL 10TH -
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- SATURDAY APRIL 11TH -
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SHRED SESSION



Andy Galloway

Interview by Matt Gordon

I chose to interview Andy Galloway for this Shred Session because he's a humble dude who has his shit together. He's well on his way to being a high school teacher, married, and he's a sick skater, to boot.

Absolute Underground: When did you start skating?

Andy Galloway: I think around [age] 9 or 10, so about 16 years ago.

AU: Nice! What made you want to start skating?

AG: I know it sounds corny, but the first time I

rode a board, it felt awesome. I also had a few friends who were getting into skating. My cousin actually left an old-school set up at my grandma's house, and one night she was picking me up from baseball practice and she brought it out and asked if I wanted to try it. I knew after trying it once that it was something I would enjoy.

AU: That's not corny at all. I remember the first time I rolled on a skateboard. It gave me butterflies, kinda felt like a magic carpet. I was hooked at that moment, too...

Vic West Skatepark, great skatepark? Or the GREATEST skatepark?

AG: That's a tough one! I have only skated it like ten times or fewer, but it's definitely one of the nicest parks I have skated. It has a great variety of

stuff to skate.

AU: I'll put you down for greatest skatepark. Next question. What's your favourite thing about skating?

AG: Hmm, hard to pinpoint just one thing, but I think the fact that skateboarding has a huge sense of community and you can meet someone from another city or country and pretty much be friends right away because you have skating in common. And yes, the feeling of learning a new trick or, more often in my case, re-learning an old trick, haha.

AU: What's the name of your next skate video?

AG: Well, it's the seventh *Damn You* video, but we might call it something else... still to be determined.

AU: When does that come out?

AG: I'm really hoping the summer. I actually wanted to put one out in April because that would be one year after we put out the last one, but most people were not satisfied with their footage at that point. There are a few people who I want to have full parts, but a couple of them live in different cities, for example, you, Dan, Cort, Dan Kelly... so obviously, I need to make more skate/filming trips soon.

AU: Yeah, we do! Any shout outs?

AG: Shout out to Island Riders Skateshop, Russ Morland at Electric Umbrella Gallery, Russ at CR clothing, my wife Lindsay, and all the homies I skate and film with. And you for the interview!



Sacred Herb

Absolute Underground: What was the genesis of Sacred Herb?

Sacred Herb Guy: The Sacred Herb was made from Ian Hunter's desire to start a hemp activism centre here on Vancouver Island.

AU: Who was involved at the beginning?

SHG: Ian Hunter, Sarah Hannah and Ken Gordon were the original employees.

AU: Did you guys ever have situations with the

law?

SHG: Ian believed that God, or as it was called, the "supreme being," was the ultimate decider of our lives and our destiny over the Queen, as it's written in our constitution. Ian grew a marijuana plant in the window of the store with the hope of being arrested and proving his belief in court. You can read the outcome in the case Regina vs. The Supreme Being.

AU: What makes Sacred Herb unique?

SHG: Since the first day we opened, we have always sought to buy [from] and support as many local businesses and suppliers [as possible] with every dollar we spend. Here on Vancouver Island, we are lucky enough to have the best concentration of glass pipe artists in all of Canada. We have over 20 different glass artists that we purchase from, the majority of which live here on Vancouver Island, or surrounding islands.

AU: What do you think is the ultimate solution to the medical marijuana situation?

SHG: Across-the-board legalization for all!

AU: What does Sacred Herb have planned to celebrate its 20th Anniversary?

SHG: Because it's our 20th anniversary year, we will be having various celebrations and promotions to say thanks to the community that has shopped with and supported us for what has been an amazing 20-year ride.

AU: What do you think is the secret to your store's longevity?

SHG: Our family-friendly approach, and willingness to make sure our customers are 100% satisfied when

they come to make a purchase or inquire about one of our products.

AU: What are the latest greatest breakthroughs in the industry?

SHG: Today in 2015, vaporizers have come so far compared to the crude and rudimentary technology for vaporizing that was available 20 years ago. One of the biggest factors for vapes being far superior today is that battery technology has now advanced to the point we can have a vape that works effectively and fits in the palm of your hand - no wires attached.

AU: How do we get rid of Harper? Will that solve all the current problems?

SHG: Provided he does not fraudulently steal the election, I think his time is over. It won't solve all the problems. Canada being the smaller economy of our two countries forces us to maintain legal concurrence with the United States to prevent economic damage. In today's economy, where supply chains have to maintain very tight timelines, a small delay of even a few hours due to extra scrutiny can cost our economy hundred of millions of dollars a day.

AU: Is it refreshing to see some of the legalization movement in the U.S.?

SHG: For myself personally, having grown up in the 1980s with Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign and all that bullshit in between my *GI Joe* and *Transformer* cartoons on Saturday mornings, it is astounding to see any jurisdiction, at any level, lightening up on penalties and criminality of cannabis. For the reasons mentioned previously,

can only bode well for us here in Canada.

AU: Is there hope for mankind?

SHG: Yes, the people have had enough prohibitionist propaganda and have declared war on the war against drugs. The majority of North Americans overwhelmingly support full legalization of cannabis, whether they smoke it or not. That's a far cry from the opinions of 20 years ago.

www.sacredherb.com/



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Marc Emery

Interview by Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Marc Emery, the Prince of Pot!

Marc Emery: Yes.

AU: Have you become the King of Pot yet?

ME: That only happens when I get marijuana legalized worldwide, so probably not in my lifetime. I might be posthumously dubbed "The King of Cannabis," perhaps.

AU: Well we're getting closer every day, it almost seems like America's doing more than Canada. It's kind of strange that we got Harper and they got Obama.

ME: Well, they have the mechanisms for change, we don't. They can have referendums, those are all initiatives by the people, dictating to the politicians what they wanted to have in regard to marijuana. And so you've got five states in the district who've legalized cannabis recreation, those are all done by plebiscites, and you've got 25 places where some level of medical marijuana is available, those were mostly by plebiscites, a few legislatures have done very conservative versions. The politicians are still about ten years behind the people, but they're catching up, at least in the United States. In Canada, we have Justin Trudeau's promise, which, following on the Liberal Party's adoption of legalizing marijuana as a party, it's really great for us and gives us something to aim for in the next federal election.

AU: How do we get rid of Harper and get a

chance at that?

ME: Well first people, both the cannabis culture and young people, don't tend to vote. And they've got a lot of rationalizations and justifications for it, and some are based in truth. I mean, we've been lied to before, from Pierre Trudeau saying he'd decriminalize it, Joe Clark as Prime Minister said he'd do it in '79, and so on it goes. Jack Layton said he'd advocate for legalization and Chretien promised... the senate said we'd legalize it. So we've had these conflicting signals, politicians agreeing prohibition's a failure, but they won't do what's obviously necessary, up 'til now, to legalize pot. But that's why I think it's really important that we actually do show up to vote this time. I'll be doing a 30-city tour from August to October, to get people out to vote for the Liberal Party so we can make that happen, as well as get rid of Stephen Harper.

AU: Why don't you just run for Prime Minister?

ME: Well you need a party for that, you need to be electable, and none of those things are remotely possible. I mean, I'm not sure I could even get a Green Party hand in the street, let alone be Prime Minister of some party. So the fact is, leadership is demonstrated on many different levels, and I can show leadership in lots of ways, by getting young people to vote, by getting our culture to vote, and that's the kind of leadership that's practical in realizable. I can probably influence several thousands, maybe tens of thousands, hopefully even more, to get out and vote, and maybe we can make this a Liberal majority or a Liberal minority government next time.

AU: Yeah, it was better when at least the

Conservatives were a minority and they couldn't really do much, but then all of a sudden with the majority, they just started raping and pillaging.

ME: Well, that's the fractious nature of the Westminster system, when it's first past the post, you don't really need the majority of the country's voters to support you in order to be the government.

AU: What do you have planned for 420 this year?

ME: Well, 420's going to be on a huge scale, there's over 100 booths that have been paid for, all selling weed, and there'll probably be another 100 vendors, so 200 vendors in the main city plaza selling pot for 12 hours or so, from early morning right through to nighttime. It's a fairly significant cultural event for Vancouver, certainly we established 420. Vancouver was the first place to have a 420 day, April 20th, and now it's all over the world, Prague, Vienna, Barcelona, various places in Europe and South America, all across America and Canada, there will be 420 celebrations and it all started here in Vancouver. So that's kind of a great thing, along with the other contributions we've made to the cannabis culture.

AU: So you really took a stand and, instead of selling out your friends, you did some time and all that. How did that experience of jail or any of that stuff change you?

ME: Oh it didn't change me at all, actually. I'd like to say I went in and came out the exact same way I went in. My personality was very suitable to prison, I got along with everybody, I rarely heard an unkind word, I didn't ever have guards aggravated towards me, inmates were generally very pleasant to deal with and polite to me. I was in six different kinds of prison, from a maximum-security detention centre to a cheap, low-rent, privately-owned immigrant prison, to a federal bureau prison, medium facility, to a dirtbag county jail in Louisiana, to the hub of all the prisons were Con-Air takes you all the time in Oklahoma, to a massive warehouse holdover prison facility in Nevada, so I saw all kinds of prisons in America. If I had any epiphanies from prison, it was in the Canadian prisons I was in, before I went to America, where I spent three months in Saskatoon Correctional for passing one joint. I got the emotional experiences in prison out of the way first in Canada, so by the time I went to America, I was really quite focused on doing my time reading books, magazines, learning bass guitar and being in a rock and roll band in the prison, writing blogs, doing a lot of really cool intellectual activities I have not done since because I have to earn a living and kind of do all the mainstream stuff, right? I haven't written a single blog since I got out seven months ago.

AU: Well we're glad to have you back, that's great. All of Canada was rejoicing, I'm sure. Were you able to get any weed in jail?

ME: Oh yeah, that was readily available, but the punishments were so severe that I never even got near those guys that had the weed. I wrote a lot about marijuana but I didn't necessarily need to smoke it. Fortunately, my being in a rock and roll band and practicing bass every day gave me a really wonderful outlet that was extremely satisfying, and at times, a lot like being high. I ended up learning about 150 songs, played 14 concerts. I was in a band for three years, so that was a tremendous experience, with people who are immensely more talented than I am, who've had 15 - 30 years' experience, so I fell in with the musicians and it turned out to be a really good experience for me.

AU: What's the best thing about living in BC?

ME: Well there is no one single great thing, but I would have to say, the great thing about living in Vancouver is that it's the most weed-tolerant city, genuinely by nature, in all of North America. I think this is just a real weed city, a real cannabis culture here, so all of us feel really welcome, and the city council's been really great in that regard, and to some degree, so has the Vancouver Police Department. So kudos to them, for making Vancouver the really cool, hipster, wonderful modern metropolis that it is, and that's what I

enjoy most. You know, I'd normally like to say mountains, lakes and ocean, but I don't spend a lot of time there. I spend a lot of time with my people in the city, and I love this city, and I love my people, so I'm grateful to have a community that welcomes them, that makes them feel at home.

AU: Yeah if the police are going to turn their backs on all the hard drug usage, they'd better turn their backs on a little bit of weed, right?

ME: I think they had to come to that philosophical conclusion years ago, yeah.

AU: How close was the Sensible BC thing to happening?

ME: Well, if it was in Colorado, they only need 87 000 signatures to make an amendment to the state constitution there, so that's what they need to make marijuana legal, and Washington State only needed 250 000 signatures, and both those places have larger populations than British Columbia, and we need 400 000 signatures here. They got 220 000 signatures in 90 days which, to me, is a magnificent achievement that's almost not duplicable, but I mean, things like the HST, yeah they've got people whipped up over the money. It's like, people won't vote for the transit tax, they don't want the government to have their money. The problem is, that they're short of ways of keeping their money from the government, the government usually gets it, one way or another.

AU: What was the genesis of first starting up the shop in Vancouver, CCHQ, was that to do with the magazine, a store, did you have a store out east already?

ME: We started here as Hemp BC back in April 1994, so it's like 21 years later, the current manifestation is Cannabis Culture, which we took the name from our magazine. We always loved that name, so we just branded everything, from the website to the store, as Cannabis Culture.

That's just a name we love, and we applied it to everything over time.

AU: So if someone comes to visit you there, there's a volcano lounge, a vaporizer lounge?

ME: Yeah, there's two floors of lounge, but I'll get you high if you come into my store!

AU: Yeah, my friend Chad was just there doing some butter tokes or some shatter tokes with you, haha!

ME: Yep that's right! Shatter tokes for the people!

AU: What is the secret to your store's longevity?

ME: Well, who knows? For the longest time, we didn't have that much competition, now we've got 65 dispensaries all selling bong, pipes and other paraphernalia that we sell, and we've got all this cheap Chinese glass in all these convenience stores that have sprouted walls of bong, so now we have 150 competitors, whereas then we only had ten. So it's going to be a tough struggle, but we'll get through, we're opening a new location at Davie and Bidwell, actually, that opens in a couple of weeks.

AU: Right on. What are some of the latest, greatest breakthroughs in the industry?

ME: In the past 15 years, the three great breakthroughs have been in heavy glass, like the quality of blown glass, in vaporizers, and then in the development of extracts, shatters, waxes, and what-have-you.

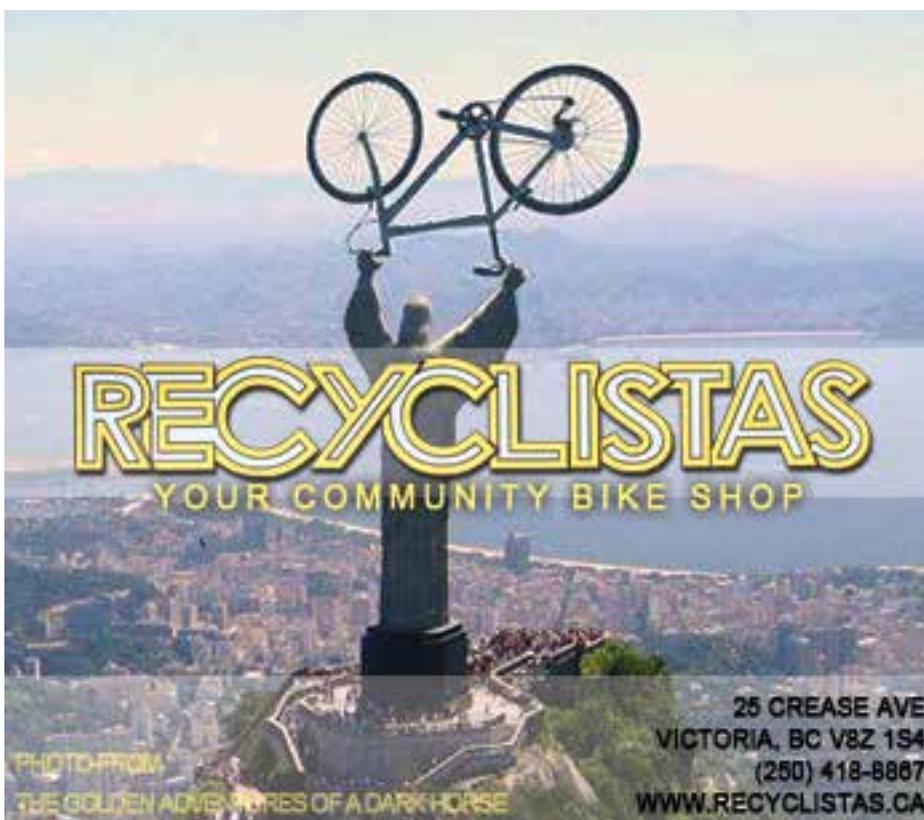
AU: Final words of wisdom?

ME: I would say that people should still be growing lots of marijuana, because the prices are still high, and no-one gets busted in Vancouver, people are getting busted a lot less in the lower mainland, especially for small growers, so I think people can feel pretty comfortable, especially in Vancouver, but certainly throughout BC and the lower mainland, if you have ten or fifteen plants, you're in pretty good shape.

www.cannabisculture.com/

www.facebook.com/princeofpot

www.420vancouver.com/





Nerdlesque: The Geek World Explodes with a New Kind of Burlesque

By Ed Sum

The Geekenders is a diverse group of talented performers based out of Vancouver, who have done a lot to bring nerd culture to the forefront in new and enterprising ways. Some members come from formal theatrical training, while others are simply folks who want to have fun. Together, they are part of a new form of entertainment known as nerdlesque, that does more than simply scintillate.

"The term was invented by a lot of different people," revealed Fairlith Harvey, co-founder of this group. "I came up with it, but so did Jo Jo Stiletto and Miss Indigo Blue. Plus, it's very important for us to find entertaining products that everybody knows and loves so we can parody it in a loving fashion."

I got a chance to sit down with Harvey and most of the cast after they performed a hilarious, over-the-top parody titled *Star Wars, A Nude Hope*, during Gottacon, an annual show that happens on the last weekend of February. This event celebrates the world of the geek by offering the best in board games, card games, electronic games and tournaments.

Absolute Underground: So, how did you get this gig? I recall there was a general nerdy burlesque show last year.

Harvey (Princess Leia): Tesla Coil of Electric Ginger Productions used to organize their burlesque shows, and she is pregnant right now. They heard about our stuff and she sent them my contact info. I was immensely flattered, and so here we are.

AU: So how did you get the idea to form such a diverse group of entertainers, that does more than just burlesque, including cabaret and vaudeville?

Harvey: I noticed that there was a lot of theatre that didn't appeal to young people in Vancouver, and I started devising a way to make it more accessible. Also, I have a hard time making friends,

and so I invited people to be in the shows to trick them to being my pals. That made me realize that nerds needs shows to go to, so they can make new friends in a similar way. So this is what I do.

Alisha Leveque (R2D2): I got into it because Fairlith was frequently attending the restaurant I worked at and appearing in fabulous outfits while leaving glitter everywhere. Understandably, I got

excited about it and I asked how one gets into burlesque, and she said nepotism.

Patrice Bowler (Pinecone the Stormtrooper): [Fairlith] and I worked in Barkerville several years ago, and that was my first time during burlesque. She asked if I wanted to be a co-choreographer for a *Star Wars* show she's developing and I responded, "Yes, obviously!" A year and a half later, I'm still doing choreography for the company and it's great.

AU: With some of you having proper training in film or theatre, were there any difficulties in becoming part of the team?

Leveque: I've heard of other troupes that offer a mentorship program. You have to do schooling with them before they'll let you get on stage, whereas Geekenders are simply about searching for awesome people and giving them a chance.

AU: And what about the roles men play and gender-swapping (i.e. how did the queerlesque performer Draco Muff-Boi get to play Luke Skywalker)?

Harvey: We do blind casting. We just cast who we think is best of the role regardless of their gender identity [or orientation], which I think is really fun.

Leveque: I think that the nerd communities really tend to encourage different people to just be who they want to be and I think that it also encourages non-normal stereotypes. To have a lot of diversity is perfect for what we're doing, because we have all sorts of types of people performing with us.

The big deal about our shows is that we have a large amount of male talent. Davin Reid plays Obi Wan, Stephen Blakely plays Han Solo and Rael Linford plays Grand Moff Tarken (and Boba Fett). I think it's enormously brave to get on stage and not take yourself so seriously [even with roles that are meant for another gender].

AU: What made you decide to parody *Star Wars* Episode IV?

Harvey: When I write these plays, I find that a good parody is based on something that you're very familiar with so you can pick out what needs to be made fun of. I'm making fun of not just *Star Wars* but also musical theatre.

Star Wars is a very *Alice in Wonderland*-style story. It's very much a series of vignettes about this character, Luke Skywalker, going on an adventure.

It totally lends itself to be turned into a musical. Plus, *A New Hope* is a movie that stands on its own the most. Our versions, *The Empire Strips Back* and *Reveal of the Jedi*, are a great show - we had a great time doing it - but it's set in the middle and end of a story. We want people to be included in what we are doing.

Kimberly McCarthy (Vader): We get a lot of audience participation in every performance. The reason why we do this show is because the first movie is super familiar to everyone. There is an element people can relate to and because they can, they want to be involved. We get a lot of people yelling out lines. Sometimes what they say is completely legit and we throw it right back at them.

AU: And the sexual references?

(Group): With lines like, "You came in that thing? You're braver than I thought," or "I thought they smelled bad on the outside," there's plenty of innuendo that can be poked fun of.

AU: What are the group's plans for the future?

Harvey: We're hoping to do a totally gender-swapped production of *The Princess Bride*. I think



that will be really challenging for audiences to deal with Rael; he'll be Prince Buttercup.

We're doing *Portal 2: The Unauthorized Musical* the next night while here at Gottacon, and at Northwest Fan Convention (May 29-31, Anvil Center, New Westminster). We very like much like to travel to other conventions because it's that type of audience, the nerds and geeks, that we want to reach out to.

www.facebook.com/Geekenders



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Bishops Green

Interview by Billy Hopeless

Absolute Underground: First off, what's in a name? Why did you choose the moniker Bishops Green?

Bishops Green: A while ago, we made a pact amongst ourselves that whenever we were asked that question we would make up a new answer, so let's see...

Bishops Green is the name of a WWII Air Force base located in England. We picked that name because Scott was stationed there during the war. Or... Bishops Green is a gated community out in White Rock that caters to aging punk rockers... We picked the name because we are all old and we will likely end up there. Could be that Bishops Green is a reference to a secret society of dope-smoking Catholic bishops that meet regularly in Dubai. A few years ago, we got in a punch-up with an Irish contingent of the society at Heathrow Airport. During the scuffle, we managed to get

ahold of one of the Bishops' secret insignias. The name was a keeper.

Or... *Bishops Green*

is the name of a recently discovered unpublished short story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Adam is a Sherlock Holmes fanatic and demanded that we use it as a band name. You can pick!

AU: I've known all of you mugs from different alliances through the years, and I think you've finally found a magic combination. Give us a brief history of how you reached this solid unit:

BG: We have known you for a very long time. The magic combination – Bishops Green is Greg Huff on vocals, Scott Farquarson on guitar and backup vocals, Adam Payne on bass, and Orville Lancaster on drums and backup vocals. In terms of history, the band was formed back in 2011, it started originally as a three-piece, a magic blend of Alternate Action and the Lancasters: Greg Huff, Tobias Chobotuck and Orville Lancaster. The band

addition of Scott Farquarson on guitar and Bryan McCallum on bass. This lineup produced the self-titled EP that was released back in 2013. Both Tobias and Bryan ended up moving to Vancouver Island, so we solicited Adam Mitchell and Sean Spear. This lineup recorded the LP *Pressure*, which was released in early 2014. Bishops Green has gone through a few iterations to get to where we are today. We have been really lucky to have played music with some really talented people.

AU: Almost any moron can forge a third-rate ripoff punk anthem and get deaf acceptance from friends, but you guys actually have songs that, I think, stand on their own greatness. Be honest, do you guys care about quality and craft your songs accordingly, or is it just a rare natural occurrence?

BG: It is likely a bit of both. Certainly, we care about the quality, but that said... We write songs in a very organic manner. We write music collaboratively, we write about things that we see and observe. We're conscientious people, we read, we follow the media. We know there's a world out there that we'd love to live in, but it's not quite there yet, so we comment on stuff. We have fun doing it and we trust each other. It starts with a melody that's linked to the cadence of the vocals... the cadence of the vocals sets out the rhythm that is refined by the drums and bass. The guitar adds to the rhythm and provides the textures. It's a real group process. All of us get a sense of the song and what it's about.

AU: You guys have been getting huge responses that have lead to crowds while touring in Europe, as well as praise from people like Lars Fredrickson of Rancid fame in the US... To date, what's the most unbelievable moment that has made you say, "Fook yeah, Billy Hopeless is right, this band is fooking brilliant?"

BG: Well, first off, we don't give a fuck what people think, especially Billy Hopeless... and who is this Lars guy anyway? Ha! Just kidding.

In March of 2014 we went to Europe... We played

HARDCORE ALLEY

all over; Germany, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, France, the Netherlands. The response that we received was overwhelming - we couldn't have anticipated the reception we received. Our friend Master Brille, who runs Pogorausch-Concerts organized the tour. We played with amazing bands and met really wonderful people. Brille's festival, The Pogorausch Festival that was held in Munich, was definitely a highlight... a humbling experience.

AU: So will we be hearing the same solid, street oi anthems on the upcoming album, or are you growing in brave new experimental directions... Bishops Green, *Shades of Blues*?

BG: Wow! You guessed the title, you shit! Fuck you!

The upcoming record, it's coming. We are definitely refining our sound, and building off the last two releases. Dark vintage streetpunk with a twist of lemon. Don't know about the experimental directions, but we are definitely getting the hang of this music thing.

AU: Lastly, let's get down to business here, where can anyone interested find your music / live dates / pin-up pictures? Oh, and since the majority of cheapos out there don't buy music, what's the coolest merch item you sell besides the Bishops Green flattening iron and yoga pants?

BG: When in Canada, you can visit our website and find all the fixings. For European updates, check out www.mad-tourbooking.de.

We also try to keep the local record stores stocked up... Audiophile on Commercial, Nepton and Red Cat Records on Main Street, or come to one of our local shows. Coolest merch item... in addition to scarves, toques, hoodies and T-shirts, we are also now carrying a wide selection of edible adult novelty items.

www.bishopsgreen.ca

Holy Shit. We did it.

20 Years!

From Ian's imagination, to Sarah Hannah's setup, through Paul's perserverance and Dan's dedication (as well as many helpful hempsters along the way)..here we are. The Sacred Herb has been serving Victoria's hempy and heady needs since before some of our clients were born. And we have you to thank. SO THANK YOU VICTORIA! for being there for us, so we can continue to be here for you. HUGE LOVE!

SH

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Anti-Flag

Interview with guitarist Chris No. 2

By Mal Content

Absolute Underground: What do you have to say about Canada?

Chris 2: Canada is a place where there's lots of hockey on TV, there is Canadian Tire, which is a kind of a one-stop shop for all of your home needs.

AU: How did everything get so switched around? You guys got Obama and we got Harper.

Chris: Haha, that's true! I don't know how things got switched around, but one could argue that's very Coke and Pepsi, the difference between the policies of the two. But I believe that things in politics seem to have a way of levelling out, and when people try to push back against progression, people like Harper, people like Obama, with the influx of more and more drone strikes, you find that the progressives always have a way of being smarter and continuing to push for new and better strategies to deal with the world's problems.



AU: I watched a few speeches from Obama and he's like, "Yeah, we're getting out of Iraq!" But at the very end of the speech, he's like, "We're pulling out, but we need 30 000 more troops for Afghanistan." He just threw that in there! And then Harper's like, "Build more prisons!" And you guys have legalized marijuana before Canada, we're pretty embarrassed!

Chris: Well, I think it's six-and-one, because if you look at the progression of universal health care, if you look at the progression of universal studies over here, you're leaps and bounds ahead of us over in the States. It's frustrating when you see, just 60 miles south one way or 60 miles north one way, a fight that's moving forward and you want to be a part of that.

AU: Where are we right now and how did you come here?

Chris: We're in Whistler, we just played the afterparty for the Showcase Showdown, which is a snowboarding event that's going to happen tomorrow, and it was a really interesting experience, we had no knowledge of it prior, and we got the invite to come and play a show last night in Vancouver, and play here tonight, and it worked out splendidly for us.

AU: So this is 20 years since you've been to Whistler, things have changed... you used to have songs to sing against George Bush, but now you've got Obama. I don't hear many any anti-Obama songs lately.

Chris: Actually, there's a tremendous amount of anti-Obama messages that we're singing, we're very upset with the way he's handled Guantanamo Bay, we're very upset with the way he's handled gay rights, which should have been a no-brainer for Obama. We're very upset with the prison industrial complex that's been happening in America, the way Barack Obama, as the first African-American president, has handled the events of Ferguson, Missouri. There's a tremendous amount, and we have a new record, all singing about it, that comes out in May. Like I said, ramped-up drone strikes, more troops in the Middle East, and this new battle with ISIS, where they'll probably use that as an excuse to bring more troops into the Middle East and protect their investments. Like I said, whether it's Bush, Obama, Harper, it really has become Coke and Pepsi politics in our governments, and that's something we need to be wary of when we're voting.

AU: We were snowboarding in France, and then all that shit went down, but like you say, they pissed so many people off, they just brought

this new enemy upon themselves. If they just left everyone alone, no-one would be mad at the States, no one would be mad at Canada. We jump in bed with the States, so everyone's mad at us, but now we have to worry about them putting through a new Anti-Terror Bill.

Chris: Yeah there's people marching in Vancouver today for that C-51 Bill.

AU: Thanks for coming to Whistler! Final words for Canadian fans of punk rock?

Chris: Yeah, the show was great! Hopefully it won't take nearly as long for us to come back to this town, and we have a new record, we're excited about it and we're going to be playing a lot of shows this year and hopefully Whistler's one of them.

AU: What's the new album called, and who have we been talking to?

Chris: It's called *American Spring*, and my name's Chris 2 and I play in Anti-Flag.

AU: Number 2, and you've got a Pittsburgh Penguins hockey thing on your guitar pick, are you a hockey fan?

Chris: Yeah, for sure!

AU: Well, see you in the playoffs, I'm a Montreal Canadiens fan.

Chris: Okay, hahaha!

Photo by Megan Thompson
www.anti-flag.com



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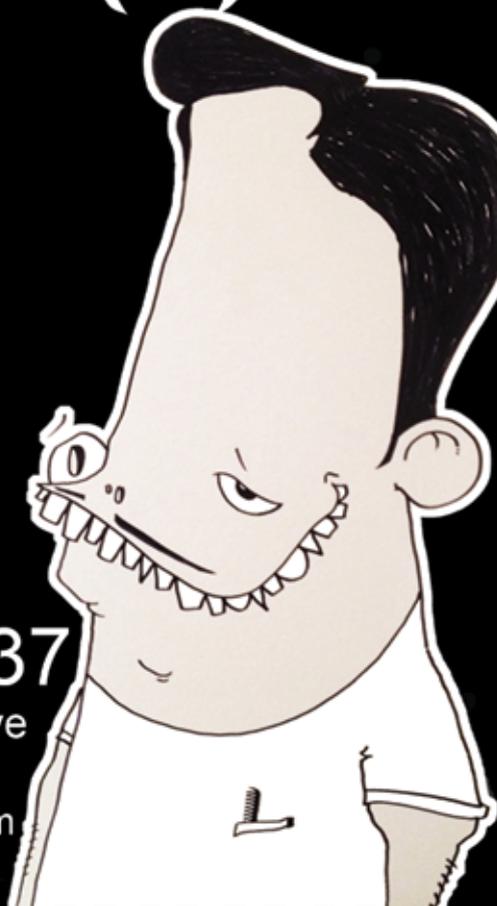
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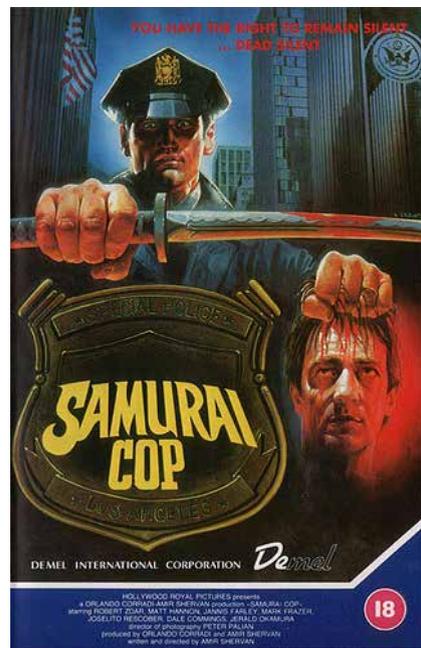
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Absolute Film Reviews



The Guest
HanWay Films / Snoot Entertainment
It Follows
Animal Kingdom / Northern Lights Films / Two Flints

It Follows director David Robert Mitchell takes the otherwise-stale teen horror genre, flips it, and actually makes it scary. *It Follows* is the story of Jay, played by Maika Monroe (*The Guest*), who sleeps with her boyfriend one night and gets infected with a "ghost." This sexually-transmitted haunting proceeds to make Jay's life a living hell by essentially following her everywhere she goes until she passes it on to the next unsuspecting victim. If the ghost catches Jay, it will rip her apart and then default back to its previous owner. The ghost can look like anyone at any time, and is always walking after Jay. One thing that makes this situation really creepy is that Jay and her now ex-boyfriend are the only two people who can see the creature as it stalks after its prey. This also makes it seem like Jay is a ranting lunatic, and she has to painstakingly convince her friends that it's all real. Jay and her skeptical friends exhaust all options trying to exorcise the apparition without having Jay sleep with someone else, until there's simply nothing else they can do. The premise of this film is very unique, playing off the already unnerving aspect of possibly catching something from a sexual partner, along with the added fright of a ghost story. The cinematography by Mike Gioulakis (*John Dies at the End*) is unbelievable; he uses long tracking shots and steady cam work that makes the audience feel like they are right there with the actors. Plus, the amazing soundtrack from Disasterpeace really gives you a sense of dread while watching Jay try to escape this impending doom slowly walking behind her. The almost-unknown cast of teens all play very believable roles in this tense and atmospheric horror flick. The best part of the film is the use of tension to build up the scares without a lot of gimmicky



Samurai Cop
Cinema Epoch

In 1991, director Amir Shervan made a wacky action cop film and then hid the print away, hoping that it would never be seen again. 24 years later, Cinema Epoch has found the lost film and released it in high definition for the public's viewing pleasure. After watching *Samurai Cop* with some friends, I can see why Amir would want it hidden away. It's just awful, but in a good way. If you go in knowing that this is a "so bad it's good" film, you should enjoy it. The movie has your typical 90s action plot, where a local gang is causing trouble and the police are helpless against them. Enter Samurai Cop, played by Matt Hannon; a long-haired, tough-guy cop who plays by his own rules and has no time for drug-pushing gangsters. When Samurai Cop isn't killing or maiming the bad dudes, he can usually be found out womanizing. There are a few agonizingly long love-making scenes that are more funny than sexy, and one awkward beach scene where Samurai Cop and his lady friend make out on a

jump scare tactics we see more often than not in new-age horror. This creates a very uncomfortable sense of danger that, with the help of the score and camera work, puts the audience on the edge of their seats. I like it when a relatively unknown group of filmmakers can come together and create an exciting genre film that hopefully everyone who loves horror can enjoy. I, myself, cannot wait until this little gem of a film gets a home video release so I can watch it again and again.

- Cody No Teeth

large, uncomfortable-looking rock. Robert Z'Dar (*Maniac Cop*) is the gang leader's enforcer, and he's tasked with taking out Samurai Cop and his partner. Z'Dar will stop at nothing to end Samurai Cop's career, as well as his life. In a film titled *Samurai Cop*, you'd probably expect a lot of swordplay and martial arts, but there isn't really any at all. And when there is finally a sword fight, it lasts for around 30 seconds, and it's laughable at best. Some of my favourite bits in the film are the scenes where Hannon is obviously wearing a wig to hide the fact that he cut his hair off halfway through shooting. There's one scene in particular where he's fighting with a goon and the wig is pulled off his head. Instead of cutting and reshooting the

scene they left it in for all to see. There is a great interview on the BluRay with Matt Hannon, in which he explains how the director did most shots in one take, sort of like Ed Wood. With the horrible acting, extremely low budget and bountiful babes, this film has "cult classic" written all over it. If you like *Miami Connection* or *Hard Ticket to Hawaii*, you need to pick this movie up. Sometimes the really bad films can become some of our favourites.

- Cody No Teeth

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MAY 15	Sepultura Destruction Arsis Rickshaw Theatre 6pm No minors
MAY 21	Cult Leader Red Gate 8pm All Ages
MAY 27	Laibach Rickshaw Theatre 8pm No minors
MAY 28	Aborted Fit For An Autopsy Rickshaw Theatre 7pm No minors
MAY 29	Girlschool Venue 6pm No minors
MAY 30	Heavy Metal Cruise! A.V. Abitibi 4pm No minors

Absolute Live Reviews

Whistler ShowCase Review
 I haven't photographed a Showcase Showdown in at least 14 years, since I lived in Whistler and started my career as a photographer. The first one was held on Blackcomb... back in those days, it was either Whistler or Blackcomb, and the afterparty was held in the store, which was off the hook. If you had an invite, you were someone. They papered up the windows, hired dancing girls, and had free-flowing booze. The levels of debauchery were as high as the mountain it was held on. The annual contest has gotten bigger every year. When I was

invited to cover this year's famous Big Air snowboard event, held on Blackcomb Mountain, I jumped at the chance to get back to Whistler and hone my photo skills. Ira jumped in when he heard Anti-Flag was playing a sold-out show at The Garibaldi Lift Company, a huge slopeside bar at the foot of Whistler Mountain, where the afterparty was held. We picked up our media lift passes and headed up the Whistler Gondola in a late-season wind and snow storm. It was awesome to ride in, but I dreaded pulling my camera out in the soup. We rode the mountain like pos-

sessed maniacs, doing insanely fast top-to-bottom runs. Around 1pm, we found ourselves at the Monster Drink booth looking for passes to the Anti-Flag show when we got news that the contest had been postponed until Saturday. Great news, not only did I not have to shoot in the soupy weather, but we would get another set of media passes to get us up the mountain to cover the event tomorrow. So we grabbed a couple Monster energy drinks and continued to blast runs all day. By the time the lifts closed, I was crippled in a pool of snowboard-induced pain. I had earned every bit of it, and could re-

live every slash, drop, wipe out, and landing every time I moved. I was in no condition to mosh all night. I did not make the Anti-Flag show, but Ira did, and the stories he told were of a legendary party and a great show. I woke the next day ready to rip, but Ira was gibbled beyond repair. He had great stories of an awesome show and a sold-out pumping crowd amped on big air, fat drinks and tons of good cheer. When I arrived at the Blackcomb Nintendo Terrain snow park Saturday afternoon, I saw my old friend Carter, who is the head judge at a lot of these big events. If you want to get good place to shoot from, you need to know someone, and I know Carter; he told me who to shoot and when. \$22 000 in cash prizes attracts

great riders who, in turn, attract a large, rowdy crowd to cheer on their favourite. The overcast day was not ideal to shoot in, but who cares? Not me, not the athletes and not the audience. Here's how it worked: riders got three jumps off the 50-foot table, with judges looking for a style run, one technical run, and a mulligan. The men where ruled by Tyler Nickelson, who took \$10K with a switch-back 1260, and a front corked 360; his third kick at the can was a mulligan. Whistler local Darcy Sharpe took second, with a \$4000 payday, and Ryan Manning took third with \$2000 in his pocket. Darcy and Tyler are buddies, and ride together. They are constantly one-upping each other and pushing the progression

of the sport, which is why I started filming snowboarding in the first place. Documenting a single jump is easy, but photographing a feeling of camaraderie is my mission. These two are the living embodiment of that exact feeling. The women were ruled by Brook Voight, who carved out \$2500, followed by Alex Duckworth, who grabbed \$1500, and Brooklyn Thompson snatched a juicy 500 bucks. All these fine athletes are Canadian, and make me proud to be one, too. I can't wait 'til next year. Brydo out!
 -Brydon Parker

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British Columbia

June 5 - 7

Levitation Vancouver - Vancouver

Headliners/Highlights: Psych Rock Fest featuring The Black Angels, Black Lips, Black Mountain
www.facebook.com/LevitationVancouver

June 11 - June 14

Covenant Festival - Vancouver

Headliners/Highlights: Black/Death Metal Fest featuring Christian Mistress, Spell, Funeral Circle, Rites of Thy Degringolade
www.facebook.com/events/1400435530259849/

July 11 - 12

Fastcore Fest - Squamish

Headliners/Highlights: Grind and Fastcore fest featuring Acid Feast, Honduran, Violent Gorge, Shit Brains
www.facebook.com/events/722097654551655/

July 17 - 18

Armstrong MetalFest - Armstrong

Headliners/Highlights: Western metal festival featuring Cattle Decapitation, and lots of Canadian talent.
<https://armstrongmetalfest.ca/>

August 14 - 15

Metallion - Vanderhoof

Headliners/Highlights: Western Canadian metal festival featuring Over the Coals, Zuckuss, Endast, Cocaine Moustache and lots more Canadian talent.

www.facebook.com/events/1415756375332177/

Alberta

June 4 - 6

Calgary MetalFest - Calgary

Headliners/Highlights: Western metal festival featuring Into Eternity, Kobra and the Lotus, Villainizer, Mortillery, Without Mercy, and lots more Canadian talent
www.calgarymetalfest.com/

June 11 - 14

Farmageddon - Ryley

Headliners/Highlights: Western open-air metal festival featuring Incantation, Pallbearer, Grim Reaper, Archspire, Into Eternity
www.farmageddon.ca/

June 24 - 28

Sled Island - Calgary

Headliners/Highlights: Multi-genre festival featuring Pentagram and Fu Manchu
www.sledisland.com/

July 31 - Aug 3

Loud As Hell - Drumheller

Headliners/Highlights: Western metal festival featuring West Of Hell, Cocaine Moustache, Tyrants Blood, Death Toll Rising, and lots more Canadian talent
www.loudashell.com/

Manitoba



April 17 - 18

Manitoba MetalFest - Winnipeg

Headliners/Highlights: Metal festival featuring Into Eternity, Sacrifice, Razor and lots more Canadian talent.
www.facebook.com/events/620286668076814/

Ontario

May 1 - 2

Chaos Fest - Hamilton, ON

Headliners/Highlights: Ontario metalfest featuring Liferuiner, Blackguard, Erimha, Crimson Shadows.
www.facebook.com/chaospromotionsfest

Quebec

June 18 - 21

Amnesia Rockfest - Montebello

Headliners/Highlights: Canada's largest rock festival, featuring Cro-Mags, Carcass, Bolt Thrower, Melvins, Bad Religion, Slayer and many more.
www.amnesiarockfest.com/

August 9 - 10

Heavy MTL - Montreal

Headliners/Highlights: Slipknot, Korn, Faith No More, Lamb of God, Mastodon, Meshuggah, Gojira, Testament, Arch Enemy and many more.
<http://heavymontreal.com/>

August 20 - 23

Obscene Extreme - Montreal

Headliners/Highlights: First time in Canada, extreme music festival, featuring M.O.D., Psycho, Fuck The Facts, Inhumate, and many more.
<http://obscene-extreme.com/>

Sept 11 - 12

Wings of Metal - Montreal

Headliners/Highlights: Underground metal festival featuring Blood Ceremony, The Skull, Funeral Circle, Dream Death, Bat, Holocaust, and many more.
www.wingsofmetal.com/

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Overview: Wacken Metal Battle Canada 2015

By Lacey Paige

Europe's most prestigious annual outdoor heavy metal festival, Wacken Open Air—this year taking place from July 30 to August 1—invites bands from over 40 countries to compete for a spot on the massive band roster. The Wacken Metal Battle as a whole has now entered its 11th year, and 2013 marks Canada's third year as a participant. This year's inclusion of several new competing Canadian cities reflects just how rapidly the battle has grown in the Great Brutal North.



J.J. Tartaglia, organizer and key correspondent for Wacken Metal Battle Canada, spearheaded the involvement of Canada back in 2011 during a trip to Finland for a conference on heavy metal.

"I met with the guy out there who handles the Metal Battle and kind of administers everything from the German side," Tartaglia summarizes. "So we started talking about bringing it to Canada, and that was in 2011. So it took about two years for it to finally happen."

This year's Canadian edition of the battle invites several new cities to the competition, including Ottawa, Quebec City, Victoria, Winnipeg and Saskatoon. Furthermore, due to the underwhelming amount of prairie-based metal bands that have expressed interest in competing, Tartaglia and organizers have amalgamated Manitoba and Saskatchewan into a single entity, meaning that one finalist will be chosen from out of the two provinces to participate in the final as opposed to the standard, one finalist per province.

"We've had to tailor things depending on which provinces we've been adding," Tartaglia explains. "Normally we'd like to have one winning band to represent each province and then come to the final. But we didn't get that many submissions for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, understandably because [the population is smaller] so there are less bands. So what we did was kind of do a prairie final, so we had Manitoba and Saskatchewan go head-to-head in Regina, on neutral ground, and then have one band come out of that."

This year's Wacken Metal Battle Canada also boasts the inclusion of Annihilator founder and guitarist Jeff Waters on the judging panel. Not only has Waters been attending Wacken Metal Battle shows across Canada as a special guest judge, he is also helming a documentary on the Battle, featuring interviews with participating bands from across the nation.

"Jeff was really interested in doing the judging and we started talking about getting him to judge a series of shows across Canada," Tartaglia says. "So we came up with the idea that we would do kind of like a cross-Canada Jeff Waters thing and we would do a little mini-documentary about it and interview some bands, and you know, just kind of make it a cool thing like that. We got some financial backing from some guys out in Germany. The Wacken guys were really into it, too. He's a really legendary Canadian metal musician. He's been doing it for over 20 years, so it's really great to have him aboard."

Cities that are competing in Wacken Metal Battle Canada include: Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec City, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria. With the assistance and administration of some of Canada's most esteemed metal promoters, the Wacken warfare is ensuing at various venues across Canada and is now entering its final few rounds.

The following bands have been confirmed as of March 30 to move on to semi-finals or finals in their respective cities/provinces:

Vancouver/Victoria

Final to be held on Friday, April 10 at the Rickshaw Theatre, 254 East Hastings

Bushwhacker

Unbeheld

Resurgence

Medevil

Torrefy

Calgary

Final held on Friday, March 6 at Dicken's Pub, 1000 9th Ave SW

Dethgod

AfterEarth

Edmonton

Final to be held on Thursday, April 2 at The Pawn Shop, 10551 82 Ave NW

Elnora

Arrival of Autumn

Bleed

Black XIII

**Alberta final to be held on Saturday, April 18 at The Pawn Shop

Winnipeg/Saskatchewan

Final held on Friday, February 20 at The Exchange

Finalist: Endless Chaos

Toronto Semi-Final #1

To be held on Saturday, April 18, 2015 at Rivoli, 334 Queen St. W

Caym

Midnight Malice

Phantom

TBA

TBA

Toronto/Ottawa Semi-Final #2

To be held on Saturday, April 25, 2015 at Hard Luck, 772 Dundas St. W

Hallows Die

Vesperia

Droid

A Scar for the Wicked (Ottawa finalist)

TBA

Montreal

Final to be held on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at Katcombes, 1635 Boulevard Saint-Laurent

Sanguine Glacialis

Mad Parish

Decadawn

TBA

Quebec City

Final to be held on Wednesday, April 4, 2015 at L'Agitee, 251 Rue Dorchester

Nordheim

Kaotik

La Corriveau

Sudden Flames

Epiphany From the Abyss

The Wacken Metal Battle Canada National Final will be held in Toronto on Monday, June 6 at the Opera House, 735 Queen St. E. The victor will be awarded with an once-in-a-lifetime chance to shred the stage at Wacken Open Air 2015, and disseminate their unique brand of metal upon Wackeners from across the globe.

www.metalbattle.ca/

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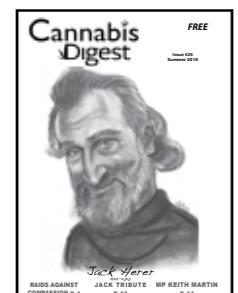
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Laibach

By Ashley Frerichs

Had Laibach formed in the USA or Germany, they might have achieved more success. Instead, hailing from their small town of Trbovlje in Slovenia, the industrial band would never reach mass commercial success, though they would, nonetheless, influence and shape more than just music. In 1980, with communism still prevalent in Eastern Europe, the band was banned even before they played their first show, because they pasted flyers and posters all over the clean communist streets where advertising was prohibited. The battlegrounds were drawn. Perhaps this may have been their plan all along. What better way to stand out and break the mold than by breaking the rules? Some may even be bold enough to suggest that this was one of the catalysts that led to the ultimate demise of communism in Yugoslavia. It caused people like the theorist Slavoj Zizek, who were looking for a rallying cry, to leverage the ban and use it as fodder for debates around freedom of expression in art, leading to increasingly more alternative movements in the early 80s.

Laibach, meanwhile, continued to push boundaries, appearing in their military outfits and iconic patch (at that time military service

was mandatory and all band members had to serve. One of the original Laibach members was able to get his hands on a few Yugoslav military uniforms after his discharge). They covered not only popular songs, but entire albums by "untouchable" artists such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, doing so in their own unique style. After projecting brutalized pornographic images on top of "Happy Yugoslavia" propaganda during their second performance ever at the YURM Festival in Zagreb, Croatia in 1982, the band was dragged off stage and officially prohibited from playing in Yugoslavia. A year later, TV Tednik (TV Weekly) televised a heavily slanted interview with the band, framing them as enemies of the people in an attempt to "rid the world of this dangerous band." This only propagated the revolution and caused public debates to ensue for years after the broadcast.

The band toured Europe in 1983, ending with a particularly anarchic show in London, which got them their first record deal with Cherry Red Records. They promptly released their first two albums – their debut album, *Laibach*, and its successor, *Nova Akropola*. They then decided it was time to head to the US and continue to spread their message. Curiosity-seekers came to the shows to witness at first hand the purportedly "scariest band in the world."

By the end of the 1980s, Laibach had strong cult following. Many activists and artists wanted to work with them. Since they were forbidden to perform in Yugoslavia between 1983 and 1987, a collective called NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst, or "New Slovenian Art") was established for artists to come together under a rudderless nation, even going as far as issuing passports to "citizens" of the NSK. Dozens of art, theatre, design



and music groups came together and produced projects under the NSK, much to the chagrin of political leaders. The collective still runs to this day.

Laibach, aware that they needed to sign to one of the major labels in order to get heard on a global scale, signed with Mute Records and recorded *Opus Dei*, which continued to solidify its reputation in the alternative scene all across Europe.

In 1990, Laibach finally played a show in their hometown of Trbovlje on the very night Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia. While the declaration was not directly linked to the Laibach concert, the band had always been considered an emblem for independence and many attribute the sovereignty of their nation to them.

Over the next 20 years, Laibach continued to tour

globally and release new material through various lineup changes during social and economic unrest, though they never really tipped the scales over to the mainstream like their German spawns, Rammstein, and American offspring Morbid Angel and Type O Negative. An "avant-garde" group that started out clumsily in the early 80s and set out to be the voice of a nation, Laibach wound up being the voice of underground independence worldwide. Eight original studio albums and three cover albums later, they return to Vancouver to play the historic Rickshaw Theatre on May 27th. Their latest release, *Spectre*, is said to be their most "accessible" album yet, drawing inspiration from everything from Gregorian Chants to Buster Keaton to modern day pop. A "soundtrack to life" is how Laibach's Ivo Saliger described it, in an interview with Noisey from *Vice* last year.

Laibach will be performing live at The Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver, BC on May 27th, 2015. Doors open at 8pm, ticket information is available at www.rickshawtheatre.com

www.laibach.org/

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Illustration by: Ehren Salazar

Sacrifice

Sacrifice

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Greetings, Sacrifice! Where are you now, and what are you up to? Set the scene for us

Rob Urbinati: I am in Toronto, Gus [Pynn] lives here as well. Joe [Rico] lives out in Detroit and Scott [Watts] is in Vancouver. It makes playing live a bit difficult sometimes, but we still love doing it. We all work, and live pretty normal lives other than the band.

AU: You're playing soon in several locations across Canada – Winnipeg for Manitoba Metalfest, and Vancouver for local promoter Nothing Is Heavy's anniversary show. Both shows are alongside an litter of awesome metal bands. Where is your head at, going into these shows?

RU: We're pretty excited. We reunited in 2006, and every show we've played since has been on a great bill... these two shows are pretty killer. We haven't played with Razor in over 20 years, so Winnipeg will be special as we both have been holding the flag for Canadian thrash for so long. Vancouver as well, we haven't played [there] for over 20 years, despite Scott living there. We play live so infrequently that when a show comes up, the anticipation is crazy and we arrive ready to destroy.

AU: As one of the longest-running active bands in the Canadian thrash scene, what advice do you give to bands that are getting started? What mistakes do you see new bands making

time and time again?

RU: Things are so different now, it is hard to give advice. All I can say is get out, play live as much as you can and get noticed. If you have something people want to see and hear, things will fall into place. Just be honest, and if you aren't enjoying

it, stop. The main mistake I see bands making is recording like everyone else. If you use the same drum sound, edit the human element out of your performance, you will sound sterile, like 99% of all the other metal bands now. Practice your songs, put some mics up on your instruments and resist the temptation to fix all the mistakes. Get the band tight so you don't have to edit.

AU: The tale of the band leads to Brazil. Can you tell us how the connection was made with Marquee Records?

RU: Sacrifice was looking to re-release our back catalogue, and Marquee had great ideas with packaging and bonus tracks. At that time, too many bands did disappointing re-releases and we didn't want that to be us. Not one Sacrifice fan was upset when they ordered these discs.

AU: The latest record, *The Ones I Condemn*, garnered critical and fan acclaim. Can you tell us what's next for the band in the studio? What do you have planned to follow up?

RU: We don't have any concrete plans for a follow-up, but we have discussed doing an EP in the future.

AU: From this new writing, what lyrical themes are you aiming to cover?

RU: One theme that is coming up is conspiracy. Sacrifice lyrics are usually pretty doom and dark, that won't change.

AU: Is there a new metal release you've heard lately which has made you excited?

RU: We all love The Skull album, I'd be lying if I said we didn't act like we were 18-year-olds when they were added to the Vancouver show. I'm looking

forward to hearing the new Ancients stuff. Toronto band Abyss just released some damn good vinyl.

AU: What is the most memorable show you ever played with Sacrifice?

RU: We've had a lot of really memorable ones, but I will never forget getting back on stage with the original band in Toronto, in 2006. After being broken up for so long, getting a second chance to play with this band again was incredible for all of us.

AU: Who wins the Stanley Cup this year? Predictions, please!

RU: I'm a massive Leafs fan; this is the worst team they have iced in my lifetime, and I have seen

some bad ones... I'll always bleed blue, though. I'm not sure they have what it takes to go all the way, but I will be cheering for the Flames in the playoffs. Flames Of Armageddon. Play it in the Saddledome.

AU: Last message to thrashers across the nation:

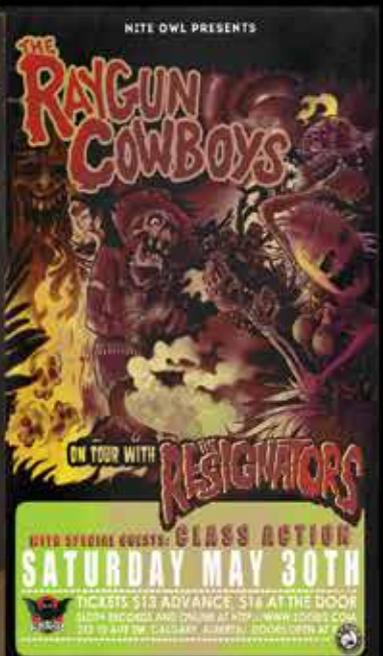
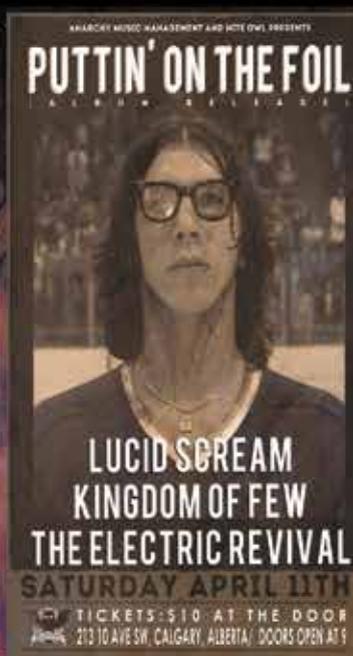
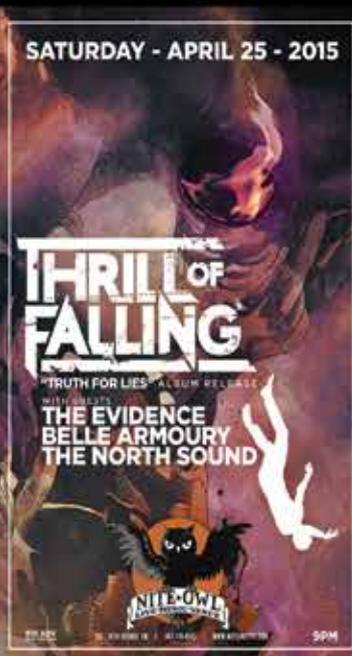
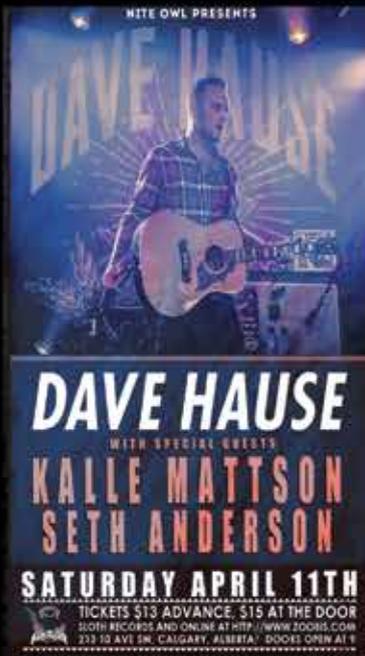
RU: To everyone that has been there from the beginning, and to those who just discovered us, thanks for your support that continues to fuel us. Cheers to all.

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Friday April 3rd - (Upstairs) Bass Turtle

Productions Event \$10/ 9PM
(Downstairs) The Fuzz Kings, Forbidden
Dimension, Cripple Creek Fairies \$10/ 9PM

Saturday April 4th - (Upstairs) Outlets,

Perception of Pain and Mudd \$10 adv/
\$15 door 9PM (Downstairs) Colours, Chalks,
DeadDeer and Androway 9PM/ \$5

Thursday April 9th - (Downstairs)

Tekhnotron, Negative Earth, Kold, guests
\$10/ 9PM

Friday April 10th -

(Upstairs) Skymir, Eye of Horus, TCDR,
Ruthless 9PM/ \$10adv, \$15 door
(Downstairs) Revenge Of The Trees,
Windigo, Funkenheist 9PM/ \$8

Saturday April 11th - (Upstairs)

Puttin' On The Foil's Album Release,
Lucid Scream + guests 9PM/ \$10
(Downstairs) DAVE HAUSE (The Loved Ones),
Kalle Matteson, Seth Anderson 9PM \$13/ \$15

Thursday April 16th - TBA

Friday April 17th - (Upstairs) Robotica -

Robot Themed Bass Show 9PM/ \$20
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Saturday April 18th -

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Thursday April 23rd - Blind Roots

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Friday April 24th - (Upstairs)

No Problem (Edmtn) Empty Heads, Old Wives
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(Downstairs) Girls On Decks Event 9PM

Saturday April 25th - Thrill Of Falling

Album Release, The Evidence, Bell
Armoury, The North Sound 9PM,
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The Razors + guests 9PM/ \$12

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Stefan Nevatie - In Memoriam

By Daniel Whitmore

On March 6th, 2015, the southern BC metal and hardcore punk scene lost a titan, and will certainly never be the same. Stefan "The Professor" Nevatie passed away suddenly.

The coroner's official conclusion was that he died of ketosis, a long-running complication with Type 1 diabetes.

Stefan was a hugely talented guitar player and a relentlessly prolific songwriter. The scope and range of his life's work puts him in the upper echelon of local creative juggernauts such as Murray Acton (Dayglo Abortions) and Devin Townsend (Strapping Young Lad). Stefan was a true innovator, writing for many different subgenres of metal and punk, and playing in diverse bands including, but not limited to, Fatal Vision, Ninth Hour, Ultra Vires, Disaster Area, Nyarlathotep, Anal Detonator, LAZER, Mishits (Misfits), Descendentsage, Business Associates, Myopia, Cryptic Rot, Gristle Chewer, Invictus, Cum Soc, Self Regime, Still Above Snakes, and Saints In Hell (Judas Priest).

Having endured his boot camp of riffs to become the second guitar player in Self Regime - a balls out thrash/speedmetal band with Stefan, Jay Mosdell (Golars), Jay Gavin (Speeddealer), and Stu Block (Iced Earth), I can personally testify that his writing style was complex and unconventional, incorporating blindingly fast picking patterns, non-repeating linear sequences, sweep picking, harmonized riffs and solos, and changing and irregular key signatures. His tinkering with, and expanding on, existing styles of riffing and harmonizing earned him the nickname "The Professor." Many of his riffs and songs were both physically demanding and mentally challenging to master, and the dexterity and fluidity of his playing was the envy of his peers.



As a person, Stefan was one of the most down-to-earth and good-natured people I have ever met. I played in bands with him for 14 years and was his roommate for two years, and in that time I can't recall a single instance in which he uttered a racist, sexist, or homophobic remark. He never talked shit about people behind their backs, nor felt the need to embellish the truth or lie to impress anyone. He was completely egalitarian, seeing everyone as equals who all need each other to survive - for no one is an island. His belief that people should care for one another was reflected in his career as a Foodsafe-certified caregiver at a nursing home.

While fairly uncompromising in his personal style, with his many rock shirts and iconic metal vest, he never passed judgement on anyone else's personal style, and was willing to engage all types of people, be they punks, metalheads, hippies, or douchebags. He also enjoyed puns and wordplay, to the extent that one of us might finally groan and say, "Shut up, Stefan." A childhood illness had left him with Type 1 diabetes, but he never was resentful about his lot in life, nor about the restrictions his illness placed on his lifestyle.

Though Stefan was a life-long Christian (and a fan of Stryper), he never felt that others should espouse his religious beliefs, and never questioned those of others, preferring instead to keep spirituality in the private domain. With his long blond hair, sensitive nature, and infectious smile, he consistently aimed out of his league with the ladies... and scored much of the time. Certainly there will be many female fans mourning his untimely passing.

Mourning along with them will be his many bandmates past and present, his musician friends, his family, his fans, his patients and coworkers, and his beloved cat, Burrito, of whom he was fondest of all. How very fitting it was, and beautifully poetic, that the last item I removed from his apartment was a card with a silhouette of a cat and the words, "As you say farewell to a dear friend."

A fundraiser for his estate is being held in Vancouver on April 3rd, 2015, at Funky Winkerbeans on Hastings. Farewell, my dear friend. Farewell.

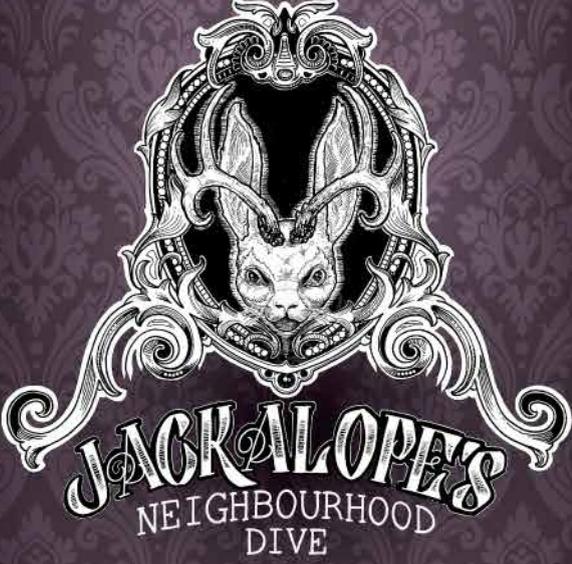


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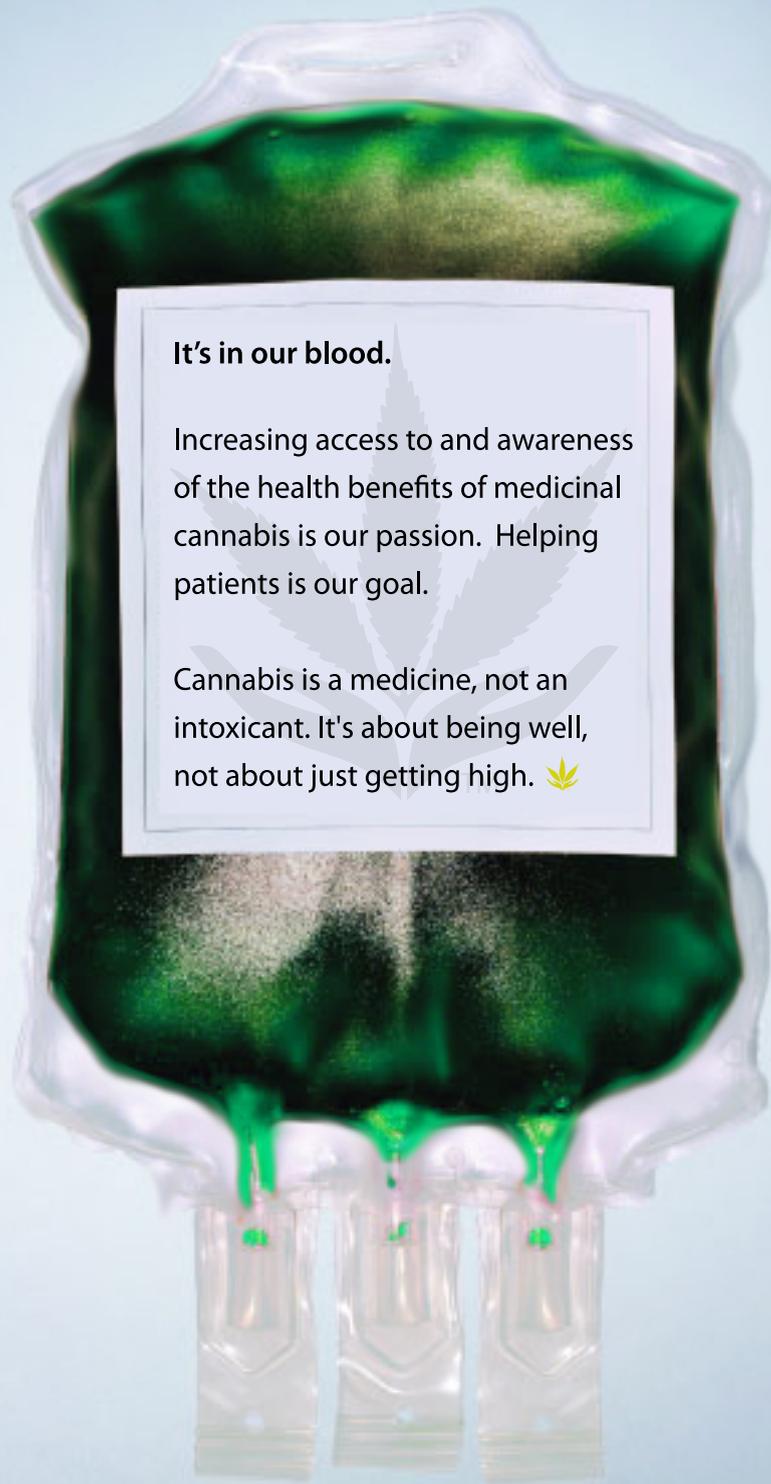
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Todd Serious - In Memoriam

We are still in shock about the passing of our beloved friend and bandmate, Todd Serious, due to a rock climbing accident on March 7th in Black Velvet Canyon, west of Las Vegas.

Todd's lyrics inspired all of us to try to make the world better. He wrote about animal rights, the horrors of war, colonial history, anti-nationalism, veganism, anti-prejudice, atheism, prison justice, police brutality, his love for his community, trying to help others, the power of music, and trying to live your life to the fullest. He walked the walk as well, from helping abused dogs to cooking with Food Not Bombs at Occupy Vancouver. He spent much of his working life as a youth worker, and helped many troubled kids get on their feet. Todd was pessimistic about the future of the world, but worked hard to live idealistically.

At the same time, he was known as a person who could connect with people by "meeting them where they were at." His strategy was to inspire rather than preach. Instead of alienating people who did not live or share the same standard of ethics we held, Todd found a way to make them feel good about taking the next step to become a better person and live a better life. On the Last

Run tour across Canada, this quality became a running joke. After every show someone would approach Todd to confess their sins. Still working in the tar sands? Eating hamburgers? Disrespecting women? Say ten "Hail Seitans" and rescue a dog from the shelter, my son.

He booked tours and helped maintain our tour bus, which he converted to run on waste vegetable oil, which he personally collected and filtered. He did his best to make us all comfortable on those 15-hour drives between Canadian cities. If someone complained about comfort on the bus, next thing you know, Todd would be rebuilding the bunks and wiring up a better stereo. We had the best ride out of any band we know.

The Rebel Spell played 532 shows over 12 years, across Canada, the United States, Germany, England, Ireland, Holland, Belgium, and France. We were supposed to spend the month of April touring Europe for our third time. We covered some expenses, but none of us ever pocketed a dime from the band. We were driven by a passion for the music, the message and connection to the community.

For the last few years Todd lived in Lillooet, a small town four hours north of Vancouver, fleeing the exorbitant rents and stifling rules of the city. He lived with his partner, Anna-Raye, in a small community that included both Travis, our current drummer, and Stepha, our founding drummer.

He was athletic: a skateboarder, swimmer and snowboarder in his youth, with rock climbing being his main athletic passion. He had over 20 years of experience as a climber. He would show us pictures of himself climbing crazy shit. It's a small consolation, but he died doing what he loved.

It's been bittersweet to hear from so many people across the world telling us how much the band and Todd's words meant to them. It's just still hard to believe he is gone. He was not the right guy to go so soon.

Thanks for your support over the years. Much love.

-Erin, Elliot and Travis (The Rebel Spell)

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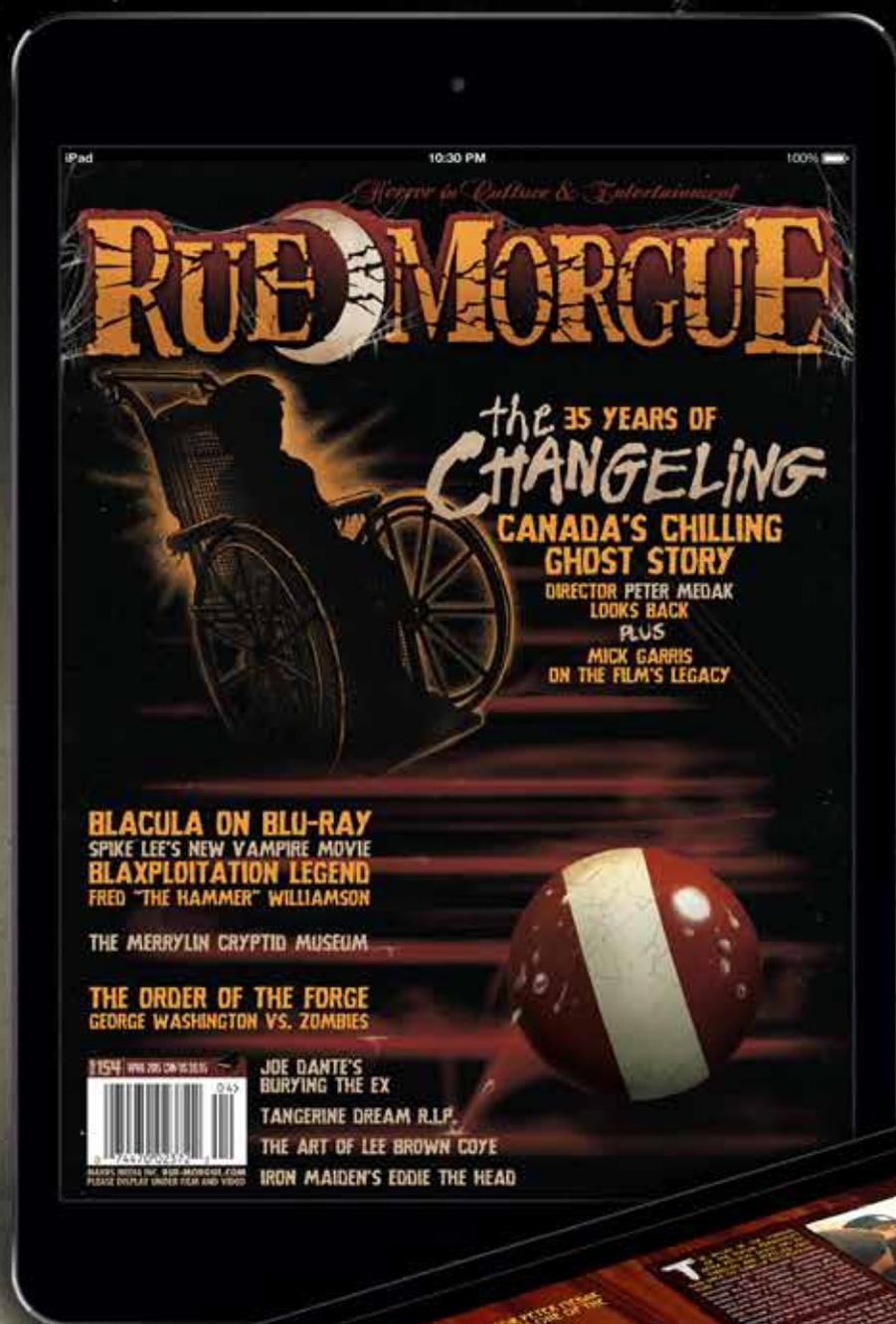
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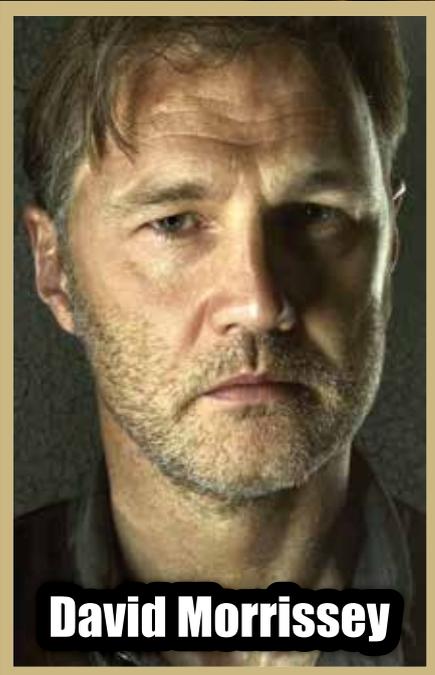
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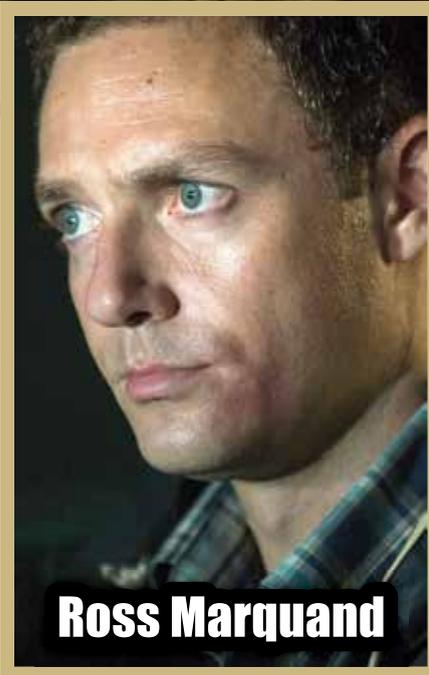
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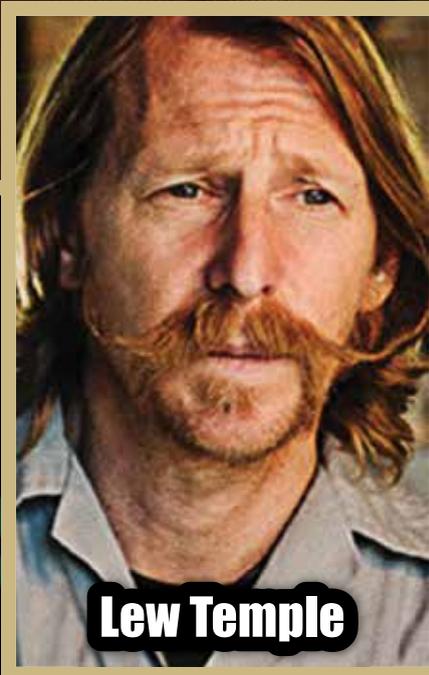
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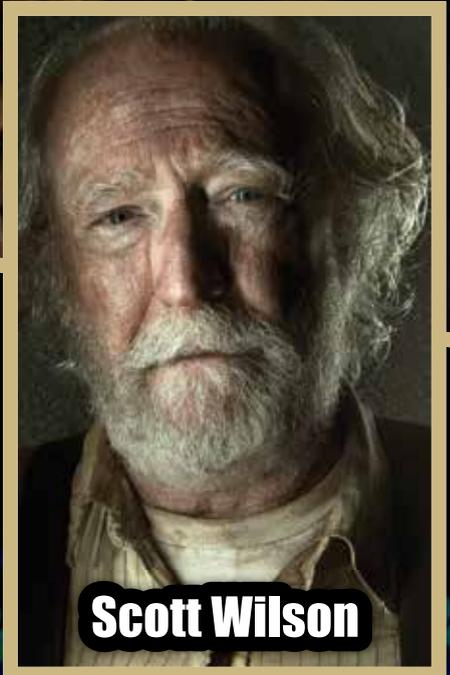
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