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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

10 YEARS
A DECADE
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Amnesian

Interview by Michael F. Carnage

Amnesian is a four-piece metallic grindcore band from Victoria, BC that weaves together harsh vocals, blast beats and evil riffs. They started up in 2013 and have already self-financed and released two full-length albums. In between those, they have planned and played small tours, alongside a mix of local shows. In their history, they've only had one lineup change and are ready to charge forward. I recently interviewed Nick to talk about the future.

AU: What's new with you guys? Any new shows or songs coming up that you want to brag about?

Nick: Amnesian is a project for Simon, Stephen, Cam, and I to play in as sort of a weaving together of all our influences and interests when it comes to extreme music. We are part grindcore, part metal, part hardcore, with doomier aspects going on from time to time. We've been around since 2013, and have two self-released albums up on our BandCamp: *No Atonement* and *Inhospitable*.

AU: What's your most-needed road food?

Nick: It's a bit of both. I'd want the music to speak for itself, being intense and energetic, yet if you're seeking something deeper, the lyrics are there for analysis. Any message I have deals with the frustrations found within life. It's not just the political, it's the personal, and how the two concepts interact with one another. How do we address inconsistencies within ourselves when

in early July, as well as playing Burger Fest in Vancouver in August.

AU: What are your tour plans this summer? What's your dream summer festival to play?

Nick: Tour plans are most likely to see a chunk of BC and Alberta. We had a great time in Calgary last year, and we look forward to going back. As for dream summer festivals, Obscene Extreme is here in North America this year and has a pretty solid lineup all around. Basically, anything that is well suited for our sound and would include bands we'd all like to see live!

AU: A lot of bands these days say, "Grind is Protest," does that suit you? Any opinions?

Nick: Yeah, in a way it suits us. Grindcore in general is a protest of so many different things: a protest of music, by producing more atonal, short bursts of sound; a protest of current political landscapes from varying perspectives; a protest of the personal that represents inner change and analysis. Grindcore I think can be each of these things, or all three. The spirit of rebellion is intrinsically woven throughout the music.

AU: And, following that, would you consider your music fun, a message, or a bit of both?

Nick: Hard to nail down a solid answer! Half of the band doesn't eat meat, the other half does. More than likely some sort of mixed nuts, easy to snack on while between cities or towns on the road.

AU: What are the short and long term goals of the band?

Nick: Basically just to write and record our new LP, which should be out at some point this year. For long term, just to tour, and generally have a good time making this music. It's a great break away from "real life."

the personal overrides the political? Or vice versa?

Where do we find solace in our lives, and how can that be a trap for each of us? How can our politics be applied to affect change in a realistic way? I look towards asking deeper questions with my lyrics, rather than having blanket statements. As mentioned before, grind is indeed protest, but how that protest takes shape is different for each person. Thus I think we should make people think about the broader questions that lie out there.

AU: Thanks for the awesome answers!

VICTORIA - LOCALS ONLY

Neck of the Woods

Interview by Adam VanThiel

AU: Did you produce the EP yourselves?

NOTW: Yes, but the guys at Rain City were great to work with and helped us a lot. Going into the studio can be intimidating, because all of a sudden you're under a microscope. It was a bit of a strange experience because it's so different from playing live, and they really make us feel at ease.

AU: Did Jeff do the artwork for the album?

NOTW: Yes, Jeff actually does all the artwork you see from Neck Of The Woods. His sister contributes as well, and she is actually going to be doing our next shirt design.

AU: Any touring plans in the works?

NOTW: We definitely plan to hit Alberta and Saskatchewan, and then the whole summer is ahead of us, we are playing Armstrong this year and hopefully Calgary Metal Fest. Basically we just want to get our music out and can't

anything wrong with it, but it just isn't us. There is really nothing worse than loving a band and then being completely let down when you see them live because they don't sound at all like the album version of the band. No MIDI controllers and no samples!

AU: How are you guys planning to release your new EP?

NOTW: Vinyl and download cards.

AU: What can we expect from it?

NOTW: It's basically our live set recorded, which is great because when we play these songs live, there is a lot going on, especially in terms of riffs. When the EP comes out, people will be able to take in every part. Also, this time around, we had Jason Puder from Skull Vultures and Ryan Fitzgerald from Witch Of The Waste contribute some vocals on "Left Behind."

AU: How many songs are there on the EP?

NOTW: Six songs totaling just under 30 minutes. We are also hoping to do another play-through video, most likely on our single from this EP, "I Know Where I'll Bury You."

AU: Tell us about that playthrough video! Who did you film with? What can you tell us about the

experience and the reception?

NOTW: The playthrough video was just something fun that we wanted to do. It helped new fans get to know us a little better, rather than just listening to a YouTube stream of the song with pictures in the back round or something. Metal is also littered with guitar nerds (ourselves included!) so you get to see what gear we are using and a closer look at how the riffs and solos are played. We filmed with Andrew Baena from Galactic Pegasus. He's a pro at these by now! Easy to work with and does a great job. We actually just finished up another one, so keep your eyes out for it not too long after the EP is out

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VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

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wait for people to hear it.

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

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30th Anniversary RE-ANIMATOR Reunion

5th Annual Calgary Horror Con
June 20th & 21st, 2015

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Barbara Crampton
Carolyn Purdy-Gordon
Bruce Abbott
Director Stuart Gordon

www.horror-con.ca

Preview: Calgary Horror Con

Calgary, Alberta - June 20th - 21st

By Lacey Paige

The annual Calgary Horror Con is now entering its fifth consecutive year, and what better way to celebrate a half-decade of collectively sharing the joy of creepy culture than with a 30th anniversary commemoration of, not only the holy grail of H.P. Lovecraft adaptations, but also one of few fright films that revolutionized sci-fi body horror? The freaky festivities go down on June 20th and 21st, 2015 at Calgary's Clarion Hotel, 2120 16 Ave NE.

Alberta-based horror fans are anxiously anticipating the welcome arrival of Lovecraft auteur and esteemed genre veteran Stuart Gordon, as well as several key cast members of Gordon's revered HPL adaptations, *The Re-Animator* and *From Beyond*, the former of which was released upon the horror-crazed masses on October 18th, 1985. The *Re-Animator* reunion roster includes acclaimed genre stars Jeffrey Combs, Barbara Crampton, Bruce Abbott and Carolyn Purdy-Gordon.

"*Re-Animator* is probably the most famous H.P. Lovecraft film ever made, with the most famous H.P. Lovecraft director and the most famous H.P.

Lovecraft actors," Doherty cites. "When it comes to H.P. Lovecraft, he was writing in the 20s, so he's influenced a lot of horror over time."

The idea to orchestrate the reunion has been a priority since the very inception of the Western Canada's only horror convention.

"I've known a lot of *Re-Animator* fans and since Year One, we've talked about doing [this reunion]," Doherty explains. "And [this year] just happened to be the [film's] 30-year anniversary, so it was like if we're going to do it, this is the time to do it. It's these anniversary shows that I really look forward to doing."

In addition to the zealous welcoming of the *Re-Animator*'s key players, the guest lineup also includes other esteemed stars of the scary screen, Heather Langenkamp of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* fame, John Carpenter regular Tom Atkins, and 80s starlet Dee Wallace of such recognized killer creature flicks as *Critters*, *Cujo* and *The Howling*.

"I always try to get a cross section from different subgenres of horror," Doherty says. "I try to get people from different periods as well as different types of horror. I'm trying to build a show that has everything horror. So if you're not coming to see [the reunion] then I want to pull from as many subgenres as possible and different periods of horror. I want that representation; it's not just about building numbers, but as a fan of all

subgenres, for the most part, I want to represent it all, basically."

This year, Horror Con team Doherty, Lee Brown and the newest addition to the fright-fanatic family, Katrina Kryzalka, have teamed up with Kevin Martin of Edmonton's The Lobby DVD Shop to spread the love of the red stuff; Martin will be selling tickets at his shop from now until June.

"Having one of the last DVD genre shops selling tickets is a huge deal for me," Doherty enthuses. "Fantastic store. I know it's going to bring in more numbers for us. And we want to make sure [the shop] always stays open because there are no other shops like it."

Doherty is building a strong partnership between Martin and Derek Clayton of Edmonton's DEDfest, which he hopes will lead to the development of a much more monstrous mash of all things macabre.

"I think together we are going to build something and do Western Canada—even bigger than just the [Calgary Horror Con]," Doherty reveals. "DEDfest has done a fantastic film festival every year, and it keeps building and keeps getting better. Anything I can do to help those guys out, anything they can do to help me out. They've been really awesome. It's just one of those things, [where] we're all in this together. And we all have the same challenges and struggles."

With the recent announcement of the discontinuation of *Rue Morgue*'s annual Festival of Fear, Canada is sorely slacking at keeping its thriving horror community connected and embracing the camaraderie that makes horror

CALGARY CARNAGE

hardcores so unique.

"They're like my brothers-in-arms," Doherty says. "Anyone that is doing horror, I love everything that they do. I'm also building community, and everybody that's in what I'm doing I'm working to build better relationships with because we have strength in numbers."

The bloodletting begins on Friday, June 19th at Dickens Pub, 1000 9th Ave, where the Calgary Horror Con will unleash its obligatory kick-off After Dark VIP Party on horror hounds who wish to participate in a night of dark and depraved debaucheries. This year, Doherty and his Horror Con cohorts have partnered with Dickens to organize what is expected to be the most superlative celebration of scary stuff the con has ever hosted.

"We're going to have celebrity meet-and-greets," Doherty divulges. "We also have a bunch of performances. This year I've passed off the role of managing the performers to [Calgary-based creep-queen contortionist] Visha Loo. She's picked all the performers and they've been going to rehearsals and choreographing her performances. This year [the] performances are geared towards the celebrities that are coming. There's going to be a *Nightmare on Elm Street*; there's going to be a *Re-Animator* performance..."

Tickets for the Calgary Horror Con can be purchased online at horror-con.ca, or at the following Calgary retailers: Words & Pictures, 2610 Centre St. NE; Ink, Toner & Moore, 1200 37 St. SW; and Red Moon Curios, Crossroads Market, 1235 26 Ave SE. Tickets can also be purchased in Edmonton at The Lobby DVD Shop, 10815 82 Ave NW, and in Red Deer at The Soundhouse, 4921 48 St.

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of Gallowgeist. Style-wise, we were pretty much on the same page.

AU: The six-track EP boasts elements of Strapping Young Lad, Kataklysm and Morbid Angel, and blends them with the tonal qualities of bands like Converge, Meshuggah, Misery Signals and Killswitch Engage. Were these stylistic similarities intentional?

TB: We play what we want to hear and if people dig it, then great! I think we have a foot in both the old and new, and with a listen I think it's pretty evident. All those bands you mentioned are all bands we listen to! I guess we miss the classic albums from those bands, and we're paying homage to them through our music.

AU: Describe Planet Eater's creative process.

TB: One of coolest things I find about playing in Planet Eater is the collaborative effort that creates our sound. No one person writes the

songs start to finish, and everyone has an opportunity to contribute. I've done a lot of writing for the band, slinging beers behind the bar I work at. I've got stacks of dirty coasters with lyrics and ideas scribbled about, haha. But once the main shell of the song is created, Luc works his magic. He has this amazing ear for offensive noises that adds a lot of depth to the songs. Devin is the gatekeeper of all that is heavy. If it doesn't meet his standards of heavy, you're gonna hear about it! Working with Nick as a drummer is great, too. Not only is he a versatile

drummer, but has his ego in check. What I mean is that he plays the drums that the song needs. He has no problem playing a "four on the floor," but can rip it up if he wants to.

AU: Saskatchewan isn't particularly well known for its local metal offerings. So what makes Saskatchewan's metal community unique, and how do the geographical aspects of the province play a role in shaping the music?

TB: We may not have a huge population, but there are some fantastic bands out here. All these



Western Canadian festivals are really helping exposure of these bands, and I'm confident you're going to hear about a lot more Saskatchewan bands in the coming months. I think what makes this scene unique is that it's evolved relatively independently from many other scenes—that and the long fucking winter doesn't leave you with much else to do but practice and write tunes about winter!

AU: How are you guys gearing up for the upcoming festival shows, and what should

audience. I'm just excited to get out there and meet with the fans and bands. These festivals along with support from [media outlets] like *Absolute Underground*, Metal Nation Radio and Broken Neck Radio are creating a huge and powerful scene. It's awesome to be a part of this movement of metal!

<https://www.facebook.com/planetateer5K>
<https://planetateer-sk.bandcamp.com/>

REGINA RAGE

attendees expect from a live Planet Eater performance?

TB: We're extremely excited to play Armstrong Metal Fest and Loud as Hell this year! We've been practicing the set and making plans. The driving logistics are the most difficult aspects of these fests! So, to all attendees: buy merch. The bands need you! We're just going to play our fucking asses off and hopefully that resonates with the

Planet Eater

Interview with bassist/vocalist Troy Bleich
 By Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: How did the formation of Planet Eater come about?

Troy Bleich: I've played with Luc and Donny in a previous band by the name of Dirtbred, and Nick and Devin played together in a band by the name

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Orally Fixated

Interview by Andre Laniel

Orally Fixated is a hardcore group in which the chemistry is obvious. They came out with a six-song demo and, not too long after, a full album, *I Wanna Be on a Beach*. Just recently, they released four new songs for a demo called *Songs For The Rich*. I have the feeling that Orally Fixated will come out with more songs soon.



Absolute Underground: Who is in the band?

Orally Fixated:
 Will: Guitar (TOA, Beat Yer Meat, The Defamed)

Sam: guitar (NO, Useless, Riktus, Grabuge)

Germ: drums (every band ever from Montreal)

Mike: bass and vocals (TOA)

AU: How did the band start?

OF: The band started when TOA broke up, our co-drummer of NO and TOA got deported back to France, and we decided to combine the two bands to form a new band.

AU: How would you describe your music?

OF: I would think we are best described as hardcore/punk mixed with comedy and sarcasm.

AU: What inspires your music?

OF: Inspiration... our egos, haha. For real, pretty much anything we like and want to talk about. When someone in the band comes up with a new riff, we're just like, "Hey man, that's a cool riff, let's make a new song!" Then Mike puts lyrics on it. Mostly funny stuff.

AU: What was the mindset behind your first album, *I Wanna Be On A Beach*?

OF: The mindset behind *I Wanna Be On a Beach* was to make people love to hate us... But love us nonetheless...

AU: You now have a new demo, are the songs leftovers from the album, or do they just keep on coming?

OF: The songs are definitely not leftovers. We continue to write and as we write enough songs to either release a demo, EP or full-length, we record them and release them. We don't want to wait for songs to get old before releasing them ... release them while they're fresh.

AU: Your sound seemed to have evolved in a short amount of time, how do you explain that?



MONTREAL MASSACRE

OF: The reason for the rapid change is we are a new band and we're growing together. When we feel like doing something different, we just do it.

AU: Do you have more songs coming up soon?

OF: We will stop writing songs when we're dead. We'll always have new material to release. The more we push out, the more exposure we will get.

AU: Whats coming up for OF? Tours / fests / albums... other projects?

OF: Well, three of us are playing in other bands, so we're all gonna be busy as f- this summer. We have a few shows coming up but mostly in Montreal. We're currently working on new songs for a full-length. By the end of 2015, maybe September or October, we'll try to play a few East Coast dates, maybe New York, Boston ... We'll see!

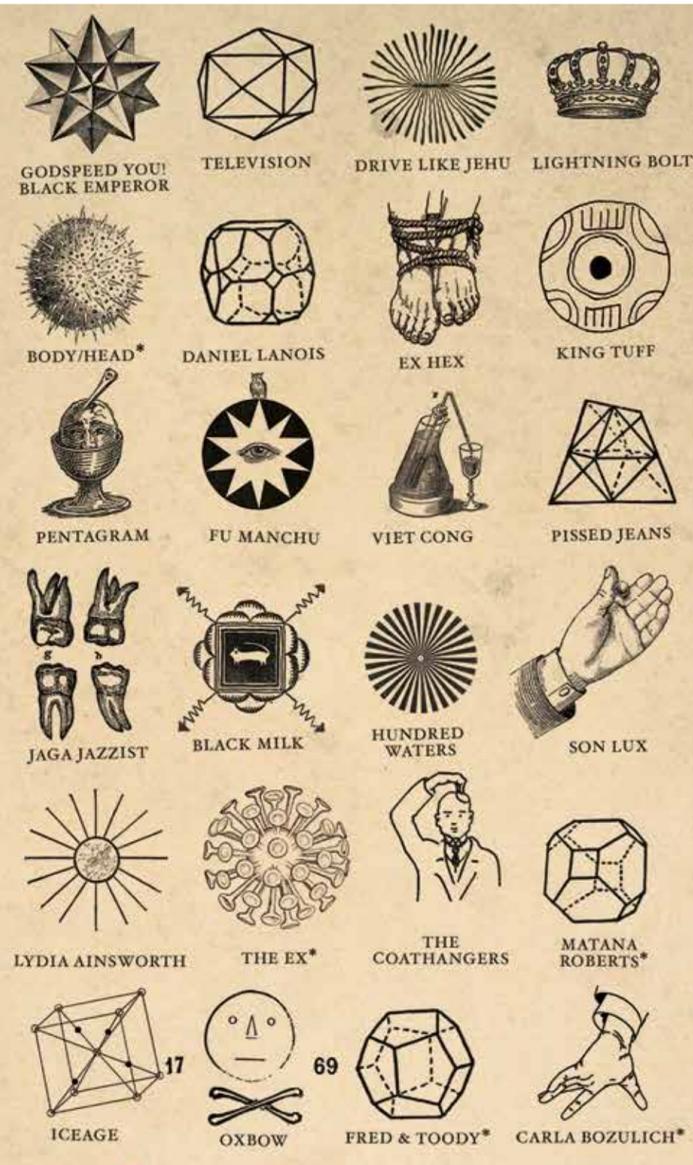
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The Nasties

Interview with bassist Jim Hare and guitarist Keith Carman by AU Editorial

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

The Nasties: We are The Nasties, an old school-influenced punk quintet from Guelph, Ontario. We're pretty much known for bringing the party atmosphere to our shows. People get riled up and boisterous, which can mean anything from slam-dancing to grabbing the microphone, singing along or throwing beer around. It's a crowd appreciation/involvement kind of thing.

AU: How does idyllic Guelph churn out such filthy punk 'n roll? Is your music made in spite of or because of your city?

Nasties: It's more because of, due to Guelph's history. Everyone we love has played here: Ramones, Fugazi, DOA, Gwar, SNFU, Teenage Head, Dayglo... even metal bands like Body Count and Razor. Thanks to seeing awesome, influential bands perform live in a small town, we're into this now. It's weird to think that this place was a punk and metal hub at one point. Most of that is all thanks to an amazing club called The Trasheteria.

AU: You've played beside some big names over the past five years - do you have a favourite show that you've played? What's the craziest thing that's happened at one of your shows?

Nasties: It sounds cliché, but favourite shows are like favourite children: there's something special about each one. Sometimes you can play a major gig and barely remember it while something crazy can happen at a really small show and it's ingrained in your memory.

As for crazy shows, few things could really top playing Skatopia in Ohio at three a.m.: bottle rockets flying around the mosh pit of an old barn ready to burn down, naked drunks falling on the gear, dudes skateboarding in a massive bowl... all while one guy eats whipped cream out of his girlfriend's butt crack. Can you really ask for more?

AU: You've just signed to Sudden Death Records to release your first full-length album... how did that come about? What's it been like to work with them?

Nasties: It gets back to the Guelph scene again, and talking about DOA coming here. That gravitated into Joey Shithead seeing and listening to The Nasties. He must have appreciated it enough, because he came up with an offer that was great for both of us. It's been amazing because he's been incredibly supportive.

AU: Tell us about the new album! What can we expect? Do you explore any particular themes or topics?

Nasties: Musically, The Nasties are reaching out a bit further than in previous years when it comes to *Discipline*. Previous songs have been an awesome blend of formative '77 punk, NYHC, East and West Coast. With the addition of Dan and Keith though, we've maintained that element but also brought in some of the Motorhead/Zeke punk rock 'n' roll aspect.

ON-TERRIBLE

The album takes some rather broad strokes in terms of themes. There are some commentaries but—and let's face it—we're punks. Having fun is more important than political grandstanding.



We get barraged by enough of that in daily life. Going out to the bar shouldn't be more chastising you into what you should or shouldn't do, say, or think. So... there are opinions, but there are also some chant-along anthems.

AU: Tell us about your songwriting process... how do you go about creating your music?

Nasties: It really depends on the song. Sometimes someone comes in with a riff or has a complete tune but we all need to be there, adding our two cents until it's got that "morning wood" feeling.



AU: Where and in what formats will the new record be available?

Nasties: *Discipline* will be available in the usual formats: CD, vinyl and online through our website (www.thenasties.net), social media pages, the other online stores and Sudden Death Records!

AU: Any plans for a tour soon? Where will you go? Any dream destinations?

Nasties: We're doing some Onterrible touring at the moment, and hope to get out across East and West Canada in autumn. There's also some talk about overseas in 2016: Europe and UK, basically. We'll give *Discipline* a big push when it's in our hands.

AU: What does the future hold for the Nasties? Any particular goals or dreams?

Nasties: The future? To keep playing and the memento/momentum going. We want to help people forget the same daily drudgery we all endure for at least one night; just have some fuckin' fun! Sudden Death is already a goal and dream, so the new one is to keep them happy! Ha!

AU: Final words for the readers of *Absolute Underground*!

Nasties: Hopefully you'll have time to come check us out. We'll be partying regardless, but please come and say hello. Thanks to everyone who's taken a moment to listen, comment, complain, buy, argue or consider The Nasties. Thanks to AU for bothering to spend some time on us and to Sudden Death for taking a gamble. Let's party!

www.facebook.com/TheNasties



Interview by Esther Wurley

I got to sit down with one of Victoria's most recognizable faces in tattooing, Sparky from Urge Studios. On Friday June 5th, Urge is celebrating their 20th anniversary at Wheelies Motorcycle Café, hosted by 737 Productions with The Stockers and The McGillicuddys.

Absolute Underground: What are you most infamous for?

Sparky: Drinking too much and making really dumb jokes that I think are really funny.

AU: What got you started in tattooing?

Sparky: My girlfriend's godmother owned a tattoo shop in northern



California, and I had never been in a tattoo shop or anything, and I thought it was really cool and... something that I should get in to. (Triangle Tattoo in Fort Bragg)

AU: Where are you currently located?

Sparky: Urge Tattoos, 1026 Cook Street.

AU: What do you like most about tattooing?

Sparky: Umm... Meeting people and making a living doing something creative.

AU: What style do you specialize in?

Sparky: Realism and Japanese. I like doing the Japanese stuff most, but I feel like it's an easy go-to, so I often try not to do it, so I can push myself.

AU: What makes your tattoos so damn great?

Sparky: 20 years of experience!

AU: What is your ultimate goal as a tattooer?

Sparky: To just constantly improve and learn. I learn from the younger people that work here and I try to do the stuff that they're doing. They are more in touch with a different generation of tattooist. They're tech-savvy and I'm not. I see some young people doing some cool art, and I'm not trying to emulate it, but I'm trying to learn from it.

AU: Any words of wisdom for those just starting out?

Sparky: Find something else to

Sparky from Urge Studios INK SLINGERS



do [laughs]. If you're passionate about it, it will lead to a career of some sort. But that goes for anything.

AU: What is the craziest request for a tattoo you've ever gotten?

Sparky: This kid asked if we'd tattoo the outside of his eyelids like six months ago. And someone wanted me to tattoo something on their tongue (neither of them happened).

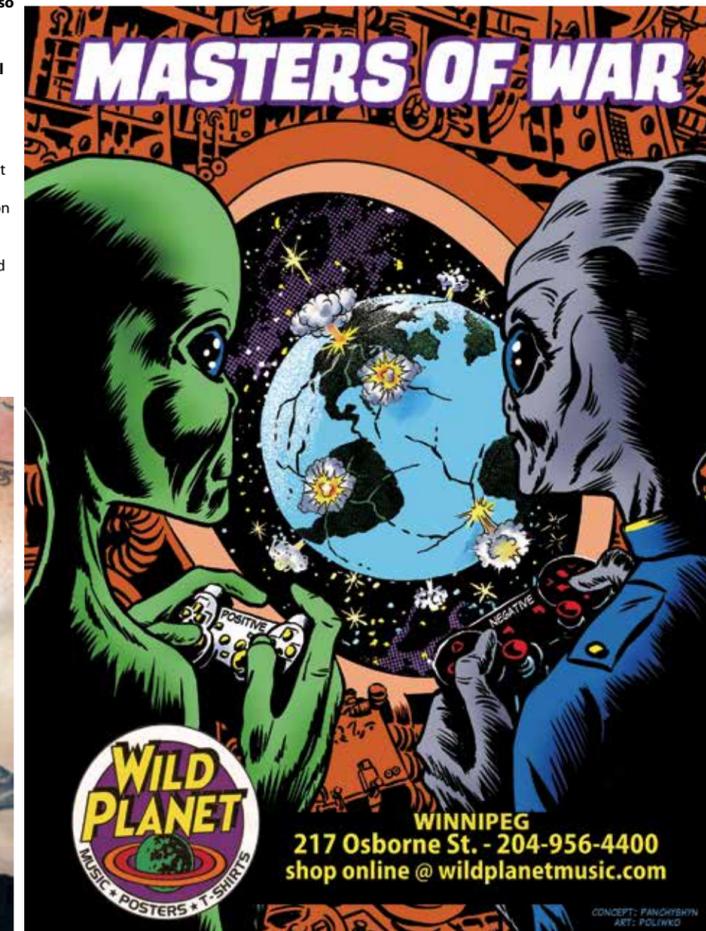
AU: Some people have boner jams... Do you have any favourite music you like to listen to when you tattoo?

Sparky: I actually like to listen to something mellow and happy sounding. Really don't like tattooing in the environment when aggressive music is playing because it makes me feel anxious. Any old alternative 80s [music].

AU: What doesn't your mother know about you?

Sparky: Not much. She used to live with us, so there's not much she doesn't know.

www.urge tattoos.com/





can enjoy the music, and if they don't enjoy the music they can at least enjoy the show.

AU: The nature of your stage aesthetic is really reflective of what most metal is about—the dark, violent and often grotesque nature of it. Why do you think so few

bands actively engage in having a stronger stage show?

Mike: There aren't a lot of bands that have a Rob-like person in them. I mean, making all these props, like making the microphone stand and whatnot, requires some skill and ingenuity, and not everyone has that.

Chuck: It wasn't like BLEED was created and we were like, 'Ok we need some wicked stage shows so who wants to take that on?' It was more of Rob going like, 'Hey let's do this fucking shit and I'm going to get all bloodied and we're going to fuck shit up on stage and it's going to be awesome... hopefully!'

Rob: I've been into making stuff since I was a kid! When I was 16 years old I made my own Oederus Urungus costume. It all just evolved from there. It's something that I've been doing for a long time, and a lot of the props that we have on stage are props that I've made—like even the murder-baby prop, I made that seven or eight years ago. So when I was trying to make a band all this time that would incorporate stuff like that I've just been making stuff, throwing it aside, making something else. And now that a band has come together, I was like, 'I have all this stuff!' I have a microphone stand and I have all these heads and props and gore and faces.

AU: Alberta's metal community doesn't really have much to offer in the way of BLEED's particular ilk. Do you guys feel that kind of gives you a leg up in terms of building a more solid fanbase, or do you feel that it might work against you because maybe people just don't understand or appreciate what you're going for?

Mike: I think no matter what you do there's going to be someone out there who thinks it's outdated and not cool any more.

Rob: With what we do, and being the band that we are with the show that we have in Edmonton, it works for us because we're able to continue that path, and there's not really so much as a measuring stick locally to compare ourselves to. And another drawback is that because we are doing this, if another band chooses to do something in the same way, they might end up doing it better.

Chuck: There's been other bands locally that have done stuff like that. Of course, Dead Jesus with their elaborate and disgusting stage shows... But I mean, now that they're gone, it's not like we're filling the void. There were always enough people that like that kind of a show that's kind of over the top. So if Dead Jesus was still around, I'd say it would be awesome to do a show with them. If there ever are more bands that start doing shows like that I'd say let's do a show; let's make it a blood and gore fest!

AU: Aside from preparing for the Wacken Battle National Final, what else are you guys currently working on?

Rob: We've got a full-length album [in the works]. We're just finishing up vocals, got a few more songs and solos to do, and just a little bit here and there. We're kind of working on how we're going to release it and when we're going to release it. We also have a summer tour lined up for the end of August - beginning of September. So that's pretty much shaping up to be our CD release tour.

AU: If you guys do win the Wacken Battle, how will you celebrate?

Rob: I would like to also bring as much from that experience and again, propel ourselves forward. It would be really awesome to win and play Wacken, but not squander that opportunity and then have other opportunities fall through because we're caught up in it so much, which has been the demise of a lot of bands: they just get caught up in something and then shit falls apart for them, and then they miss opportunities.

Chuck: I'm probably going to get drunk. You know, I'm playing fucking Wacken, so that's a pretty good celebration right there! I'm cool with that prize.

www.bleedband.com/

PHOTO CREDIT: Penny VanderHeyden



BLEED

Winner of the Wacken Metal Battle Alberta Final

Interview by Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: You guys recently beat out the other three finalists in the Wacken Battle of the Bands Alberta Final. To whom or what do you owe your success?

Rob: We do have a very strong, loyal fan base. It's been growing every show. So a lot of that has to do with our performance, because after we end a show, we get back together at next jam and we're like, 'Ok, we're at this level, where can we go from here? Let's try and make it heavier, make it faster, try this...' So we're always trying to push ourselves to have something unique and new for the next show.

AU: What motivated you to incorporate the macabre theatrical component that BLEED has become so well known for? Obviously GWAR has been a huge influence, but where else do you draw inspiration from?

Rob: That was an element that I always wanted to do, and it was just really difficult finding talented musicians to be on board with that. Yes, GWAR. I also like horror movies. I wanted to incorporate my interest of building and making costumes and bring it to a stage with music, to have heavy ass music to back it up and not have it become cheesy or silly in a sense—make sure it's entertaining, that it's engaging, the audiences like it. Even if they don't like the theatrics of it, they

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FRI 19TH CITY OF FIRE | THIS IS WAR | JUNKIES RUSH | TERMINAL HUMAN CONDITION | PERCEPTION OF PAIN
SAT 20TH THE OUTTER | ATTACK ADDICT | HIRAM KING | RECKLESS HEROES

THUR 25TH SILENT ARMY | UNDEAD DRIFTERS | FROM SIX TIL EIGHT | 8NCHANGE
FRI 26TH RAISED FIST PRODUCTION...
SAT 27TH CHAKOBSA | BLOATED PIG | ILLUMINATED MINERVA

TUES 30TH DAYGLO ABORTIONS
OH SHIT | PERVCORE | SPREE KILLERS | RIPPER ALLEY

THUR 3RD PSYCHOMANIK | CLASH OF THE CARNIVALS | 240 | SUCKERS FOR PUNISHMENT
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Vancouver Fan Expo

April 3rd - 5th, 2015

Vancouver Convention Centre

By Ed Sum

Fan Expo Vancouver is now in its fourth year and although *Rue Morgue Magazine's* Festival of Fear is no longer part of its Canada wide show, I'm definitely going to miss them. They were a part of the original 'Fan Expo experience'. At least what's offered in their place might put the paranormal pop culture scene in the forefront, along with the team of guests from programs like

The Walking Dead. I see that Scott Wilson loves these shows. He was at Emerald City Comicon the weekend before and crossed the border for this show. Although this event rebranded the missing component as a 'Horror Expo', just how that will fare remains to be seen.

Rue Morgue issued a public statement stating, "Although we have had a great run over the past eleven years and have always enjoyed putting together a stellar event for you, we felt it was time to part ways with the show. Thank you all for your support over the years and stay tuned for further news..."

Although the Vancouver show felt smaller without them, the arena was still packed with fans looking for merchandise to fill their shelves with. I do not think *Rue Morgue* will be missed. Although certain friends of this magazine, namely the Ghostbusters of B.C., were not present, the Vancouver Paranormal Society was out in force and they proved that the pop culture scene welcomes the supernatural! They had a standing-room-only

panel where they talked about what they do and played back audio/video clips showing that there is something that exists after death. Their interaction with fans lasted beyond the scheduled hour (it spilled to personal discussions outside the room). According to Blair Jordan, the media liaison, and Peter Renn, the president, being at this show was a fantastic experience. This group hopes to do it again next year and perhaps offer a 90-minute presentation with a 30-minute Q&A afterwards. Who knows, maybe they will also have a table in the exhibit hall so people can talk to them during the show instead of being a short one-off panel that patrons have to navigate the conference centre for.

The horror scene amongst the Artist's Alley

was good, and the indies made the big names invited not necessarily feel missed. Although two comic-book illustrators (George Perez of *Infinity Gauntlet* and Bernie Wrightson of *Swamp Thing* fame) cancelled due to illness, I'm hoping they will find another show to attend here in the Pacific Northwest. I really wanted to talk to them about their works. I had hopes to hear what Perez thought of the Marvel Entertainment's plans to build to the *Infinity Gauntlet* storyline he helped create and illustrate, and I wanted to learn what the world in horror is like, according to Wrightson.

In the Artist's Alley, indie publishers from the comic book label of *Absolute Underground's* own Ira Hunter, 13 Flames, to *Zombie Robot Comics*, certainly showed that there are horror products to be found. They were there plying their (undead) wares. This year, I thought the balance between these publishers and exhibitors was even; as I walked around, there was a lot more to find in this alley than at the merchandise row. The same companies are back, and I had hoped for more variety, or for the return of at least one Ottawa-based book seller (they'll be there for the Toronto show), so I can increase my art book collection.

At least the panels are highly entertaining. Lance Henriksen talked about his career and there were plenty of *Millennium* fans in the house. When Carrie Fisher took the stage, she was quite the personality. Both William Shatner and John Barrowman packed the house with an entertaining retrospective of their careers. If there was a best in show for panels, Barrowman won



when he sang a few lines of "All I Ask of You" with a fan, and revealed that "Rhinestone Cowboy" is his favourite song when out karaoke-ing with his hubby, Scott. Some discussion was had with Stephen Amell about the latest news of him being in the next *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movie as Casey Jones. But when Michael Bay's name is attached to the project (I wasn't rocked by his first film), all I can say is that I have mixed feelings.

Overall, the Fan Expo experience is going to vary depending on the individual's tastes. Yes, while Festival of Fear is going to be missed, not everyone is going to notice on this side of the Rocky Mountains. Toronto's show is going to be impacted, but I'm sure the new owners will find a way to make a new horror scene. I'm hoping they get more paranormal pop stars to come to these shows, as more representation in this area will be great.

fanexpovancouver.com/

PHOTO CREDITS: Ed Sum

JUNE 2015

03 LONDON CALLING (NO COVER)
BAND: VIKING, LANTANA, THE NEW WAVE

05 CALGARY METAL FEST
VILLAINIZER + BEGRIME EXEMIOUS + WITHOUT MERCY + NECK OF THE WOODS + VILE INSIGNIA + EVERY HOUR KILLS + RIOT CITY + MUDSIFIX

06 CALGARY METAL FEST
KOBRA AND THE LOTUS + INTO ETERNITY + CAVEAT + UNTIMELY DEMISE + VIATHYRN + SPARKY + NOIRE + APPRENTICE

08 BOB ROSS PAINTING PARTY

09 404'S IMPROV COMEDY

11 FARMAGEDDON LAUNCH PARTY

JUNE 05-06 CALGARY METAL FEST IV

JUNE 24-27 Sled 2015 Island

23 TUESDAY NIGHT LIVE

24 SLED ISLAND
WITCHSTONE + CHIEFTAIN + MONOLITH AG

25 SLED ISLAND
WAINBRO + CHRON GOBLIN + MANCUB

26 SLED ISLAND
LOW LIFE + FOUNTAIN + GUESTS

27 SLED ISLAND
SLATES + EMPTY HEADS + BRASS

29 ROYCE DA 5'9

30 FIVE ALARM FUNK

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12 OUTLAWZ

13 SOLID BROWN ALBUM RELEASE
DEAD EMPEROR + BRASS + ERIC CAMPBELL + THE DIRT

16 ABSINTHE CAFE

17 EN ESCH

20 HANG THE DJ (NO COVER BEFORE 10PM)
RETRO + NEW WAVE + CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE + GOTH + INDUSTRIAL + BRITPOP

21 GOATWHORE
RINGWORM + BLACK BREATH + THEORIES

22 SUMMIT BIG BAND

23 TUESDAY NIGHT LIVE

24 SLED ISLAND
WITCHSTONE + CHIEFTAIN + MONOLITH AG

25 SLED ISLAND
WAINBRO + CHRON GOBLIN + MANCUB

26 SLED ISLAND
LOW LIFE + FOUNTAIN + GUESTS

27 SLED ISLAND
SLATES + EMPTY HEADS + BRASS

29 ROYCE DA 5'9

30 FIVE ALARM FUNK

JULY 2015

01 BURLESQUE FEST FUNDRAISER

04 HANG THE DJ
RETRO + NEW WAVE + CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE + GOTH + INDUSTRIAL + BRITPOP

09 FAKE MUSTACHE

10 A DAY AS WOLVES

15 HIGHWIND
ROCK DEER RUN + COMING OUT SWINGING + ALONE I WALK

17 THE OUTER ALBUM RELEASE
MAGDALENE + CITIZEN RAGE + CRAIG THE LENS

18 HANG THE DJ
RETRO + NEW WAVE + CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE + GOTH + INDUSTRIAL + BRITPOP

24 TERMINUS: VELOCITY

25 TERMINUS: VELOCITY

26 TERMINUS: VELOCITY

30 KC ROBERTS
FREAK MOTIF

31 IRON KINGDOM
RIOT CITY + GATEKRASHOR + MONARCH SKY

13 HANG THE DJ
RETRO + NEW WAVE + CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE + GOTH + INDUSTRIAL + BRITPOP

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 FRIDAY - JULY 31 - MMXV

Chuck Billy

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?
 Chuck Billy: This is Chuck Billy, lead singer from Testament.

AU: Where are you at today?
 Chuck Billy: I'm in California, I'm at home and we're getting ready to head to Europe in two days, to start a five-week tour.

AU: And you just invented a new vaporizer?

CB: Yeah, it's a non-combustion herbal vaporizer called The Chief, we put it out through lordvaperpens.com.

AU: So does it do the extracts and the oils or is it just for the herbs?

CB: This is just for herbs. We are coming out with a new line of Chiefs that are going to be wax and oils and herb also. But right now The Chief is what we've had out since March, the next line will come out in June.

AU: So was your thought that it was too hip-hop-laden, Snoop Dogg's got one, but where was the metal vaporizer?

CB: I think it was Adam, who owns Lord Vaper, Adam's been a friend for 30 years, grew up in the Bay Area, into metal, he's been friends with the band for a long time. He got into the paraphernalia business years back and we had talked about possibly doing that, but he's approached by people that are more in the rap field and that for his product. He wanted to do something metal, so he asked me if I'd be interested in doing a signature series artist... so we put our heads together and came up with The Chief, and just laid into the design and took a product that he had, that was out there, and modified it and got it burning hotter, so it vapes weed a lot better. It took us about six months to design and work on it, until it became a reality.

AU: Since the legalization in California, have things just blown up?

CB: Well I wouldn't say it's blown up, but I think there are a lot more people using them. For me, I still enjoy a joint, but I also enjoy maybe at the movies or a baseball game or whatever, I'll want a couple vaporizers in my pocket, I'm pretty low-key about getting stoned out in public. So I thought it was a pretty cool item because when I browsed through vaporizers, there seems to be a lot of smoke shops popping up all over every city now, and when you go and look amongst the vaporizers, you'll look and they're actually kind of boring, nothing really pops out. So we thought the design was a pretty important factor, to make it look cool first of all, and we wanted something that really worked and really did what we needed it to do, and I think we found that with The Chief.

AU: What is it that makes it unique?

CB: Just the temperature. Most of the ones now, the temperatures were too low, so what we found, at the first prototype, that we wanted to



get it hotter and have a better cloud, we thought it didn't have enough of a cloud. So we went back to the manufacturer and made a tweak on it and once we got it back to where we felt it was good, we moved forward with it. But the design, as far as the red and black and the Indian skull on there with the headdress, we thought that was a pretty strong image that kind of popped out.

AU: What is the perfect temperature to vaporize the herb?

CB: Well I enjoyed the blue, which is the hottest (there are three temperatures on The Chief), and the hottest one is 430 degrees, whereas the other standard ones, the hottest temperature it got to was 400, so I think it does make a big difference. Medium's still good, but I enjoy the hottest.

AU: Did you wake and bake today?

CB: Already did, yep. Sure did. Some real good, skunky green indica.

AU: It's kind of awesome how they're finding all the health benefits now, it's curing cancer with the phoenix tears and all this.



Punk Rock Bowling

Las Vegas, Nevada
May 22nd - 25th, 2015

By Hans Park

Love punk music? Or just plain "like" punk music? Whether you're a die-hard punk fan wanting to get the most music you love in one place or a casual fan looking for a fun music festival in a fun city, Punk Rock Bowling is definitely the festival for you. It is easily the premier punk festival in the USA, held every year during the Memorial Day long weekend in late May. Fremont Street in downtown Las Vegas gets taken over by a sea of punk fans adorned in mohawks, tattoos, vests, and band shirts. The festival itself is held over three days with nine bands each day, starting in the late



afternoon and running into the evening. This year's headliners included Rancid, Refused, and Dropkick Murphys. There are so many bands playing each day that even for the casual fan, there is likely a band they would really enjoy as well as the opportunity to be exposed to

new types of punk or maybe see bands that don't play where you live. Overall, there's a massive variety of punk ranging from oi to ska to hardcore, played by bands that started in the '70s, '80s, '90s, and '00s. Get there early to avoid the long lineup, as it's quite likely you will miss a band you want to see. You will meet more than one person that says, "I wanted to see (insert band here) but I got stuck waiting in line."

Fans of all genres of punk were in for a treat. Rancid played their seminal album *...And Out Come The Wolves* in its entirety, to a crowd



that sang and danced along with the music. Not to be outdone, Dropkick Murphys played their debut album, *Do Or Die* in its entirety, as well as an energetic encore where they invited members of the crowd on stage to sing and dance, as they are known to do. Much to the

delight of the fans in attendance, Sweden's recently reunited Refused played a variety of songs from their back-catalogue. On top of fantastic headlining sets, veteran bands such as The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Sick Of It All, The Murder City Devils, and Agnostic Front were eagerly received. Veteran acts, bands such as Conflict, Anti-Flag, The Business, and Jello Biafra & The Guantanamo School Of Medicine, represent-

ing a wide variety of styles, played energetic sets. The festival site is well-organized and all of a fan's needs are taken care of. A large tented area bar with reasonably priced beers and hard liquor that was generously free-poured, as well as food trucks were made available for food and drink. Food trucks ranged from lobster to Jamaican to Filipino, to cold drinks and smoothies. A large section of bleachers, two VIP tents for those who purchased VIP passes, as well as picnic tables with umbrellas were available.

No festival is complete without a large variety of "stuff." Band merch, clothes, and CDs/vinyl were readily available and snapped up by fans. Record labels such as Alternative Tentacles, Fat Wreck Chords, and Taang! Records were selling



their wares, as well as limited edition vinyl. There was also no shortage of other vendors selling everything from clothes to accessories to assorted punk CDs/vinyl. A non-profit dedicated to matching bone marrow donors with recipients as well as organizations working

with at-risk youth were also present to engage with the festival crowd.

Punk Rock Bowling is more than just the main festival. It's much more than just a bunch of bands playing in a parking lot. No trip to Vegas seems to be complete without a pool party, and Punk Rock Bowling has them as well. There was a pool party preceding the main festival on each day. This year's pool parties were held on one of the rooftops of The Plaza Hotel. The UK's Booze & Glory, a reunited 88 Fingers Louie, and Infa-riot headlined each afternoon.

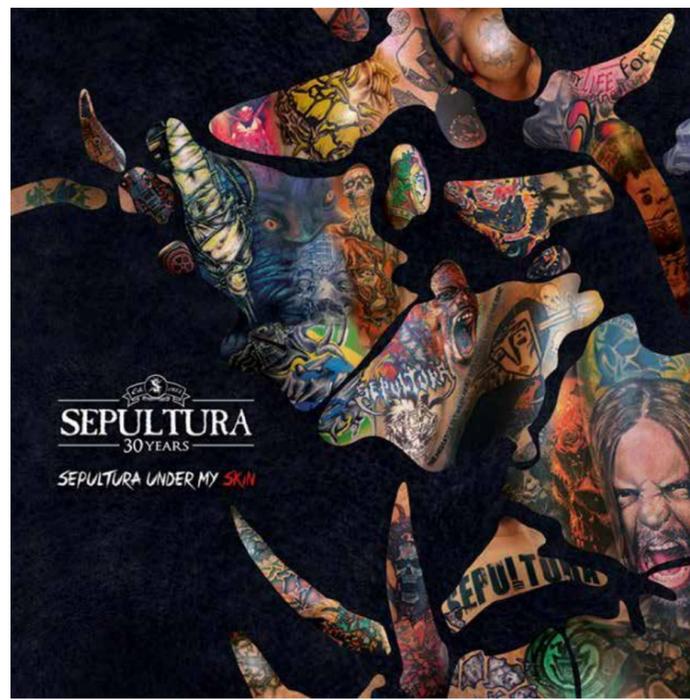
Arguably the best part of Punk Rock Bowling is the multitude of club shows. The 2015 edition had five separate venues, all within walking distance of the main hotels on Fremont Street. Opening bands for the club shows started before the headliner finished at the main site but the clubs would fill up shortly after the night's festivities were over. Tickets for the club shows were coveted and it was not uncommon to see people



walking around during the day asking random fans if they had tickets to sell. Club shows featuring the likes of Me First & The Gimme Gimmes, G.B.H., 7 Seconds, Strung Out, Laura Jane Grace, as well as Street Dogs were in demand.

You also can't forget the two-day bowling tournament the festival gets its name from. Teams register online and compete in four different bowling alleys over two days, before the winning team is crowned. Of course, Punk Rock Bowling is already a busy weekend. Between the main festival, club shows, pool parties, and the bowling tournament, it's easy to forget you are also in the city that never sleeps. Many people I met talked about trying to figure out how and when to eat, sleep, gamble, see the main festival, go to club shows, pool parties, and take in the sights and sounds of the city itself. So after reading this, are you still undecided? Unfortunately you've just missed the 17th annual Punk Rock Bowling for 2015, but you can always plan for the next one!

<https://www.punkrockbowling.com/>



Sepultura

Interview with Andreas Kisser
By Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: Over the last 30 years, you guys have witnessed and endured a tumultuous tsunami of socio-political upheaval. Can you elaborate on some of the more pervasive issues that seep into Sepultura's music?

Kisser: Well, we have the privilege to travel the world—30 years of history, 73 countries we've [been to]. We've played in dictatorships, democracies and kingdoms. I think the thing that we attack the most is ignorance, phobias. The more that you know and the more that you understand, the less phobias you have. We attack ignorance, we attack corruption. We have a song called "The Vatican" on our last album, which attacks the political structure of faith, like using a belief in the worst possible manner—from formatting wars and pedophiles and crazy shit and orgies inside the Vatican. So we attack that kind of stuff, like hypocrisy, the lies and the masks, and people that are not true to themselves.

AU: Sepultura's latest album focuses on consumerism, capitalism and propaganda. How have those particular issues impacted you?

Kisser: Just the abuse of everything. I think we could survive or live through with a lot less. There's a lot of food being thrown out; [companies] that only look for profit, everything's [about] profit. I come from Sao Paulo, and it's a huge city—a metropolis. Building after building and people... 20 million people living in the place. And they're just building houses and big skyscrapers for profit. There are a lot of people living on the streets, but at the same time most of these places are empty because they're so expensive. So those kind of things we talk about in our lyrics as well. We try not to overdo things. In Sao Paulo is where we had a problem with a water shortage, so we had to take more care with what we did in the bathroom, or cooking and cleaning the house, which is absurd because Brazil is a country of water, but Sao Paulo is so overpopulated that it's very hard to balance

certain things. But traveling, we try seeing different ways of doing things and try to bring a little bit of that knowledge to our [home country].

AU: Fritz Lang's Metropolis played a significant role in shaping The Mediator. How did that film impact you on a more cerebral level and find its way into the making of album?

Kisser: I think that movie is was an amazing achievement. The storyline is very direct, very heavy. The phrase ["The Mediator Between the Head and Hands is the Heart"] is what really inspired the whole [album]. In our concept, it means that we're not robots... yet. Society is driving towards that direction, you know like everybody kind of acting and thinking the same—and *Metropolis* showed that a long time ago. We didn't do a soundtrack for the movie, but just the phrase was so strong: if you don't have a heart, which is the more human part—contesting, protesting, questioning—not only receiving in your mind and acting through your hands, which is information and action. I think it represents the human part, that you are free of choice, you have your own opinion. I think it's very intense; it's a very significant phrase.

AU: You guys worked with producer Ross Robinson on that album for the first time since Roots.

Kisser: Yes, it was great! Ross is a great friend and we admire his work so much and vice versa. He worked with so many different people during [those] 18 years, people like Vanilla Ice and The Cure and other metal bands, different projects—and us, too. We worked with different producers; we produced albums ourselves, working more in Brazil, developing new technologies that Brazil was starting to get, new equipment, better studios... so we are much better professionals [because of] the experience in our career. But the vibes were the same; Ross is a great producer, very organic, very much about the performance at the time. We talked a lot about concepts of lyrics and music. So we went right to the heart of the song. [He's a] very conceptual producer, and that was very important for this album.

AU: The Mediator also marked the studio debut of Eloy Casagrande. How has the addition of someone much younger changed the vision and the dynamic of the band?

Kisser: He's an amazing musician and an amazing drummer. He brought so many new possibilities. He's very metal; he's very powerful, very technical, has amazing technique. He started playing drums very early when he was seven or eight years old, and he played a lot like in many different situations. He did tours in Japan and Europe before joining Sepultura, and he had all his endorsements. He came with the whole package



when he was ready to join [us]. He's very focused and very professional. He was a great addition to the band—not only to the music, but all around, as a new friend and a new partner on the road. It's great to have such a young beast on the drums really pumping and really giving us that extra energy. We're really fortunate and very lucky to have the possibility to have musicians like that. And he's from Brazil, which is important for a drummer. The way we play percussion in Brazil is very unique. So it was important for us to have a Brazilian guy there.

AU: Sepultura has proven itself an unwavering metal force, fueled by versatility, perseverance and your ability to adapt to the progressive trends of current metal. How do you guys stay focused and continue to produce provocative and poignant material?

Kisser: We just love what we do. Sepultura has a 30-year history but we are not locked in our past. We integrate the old and the new very well. We respect our whole history in the same way. We keep our mind fresh with ideas. We're always looking for something, keeping our ears and eyes open. We play with different bands; we see different attitudes and different music everywhere, so it keeps our mind really fresh. And we're never scared to try new things, to risk. Art is risk; if you don't risk you're going to be there

doing the same kind of shit. So I think that's why we're still here. This is the Sepultura spirit; it's a risk spirit. It's a privilege to be part of a band like Sepultura that still travels and still sees so much everywhere.

AU: You guys recently announced the upcoming release of the exclusive 30th anniversary single.

Kisser: We're very happy to celebrate the special mark. We decided to give a gift to our fans. It's been 30 years, so many different fans, lovers and haters. We love them all. We are here because of that—because of criticism, because of compliments, because of everything. And lately we felt that a lot more people are wearing the Sepultura tattoo in many different ways, like the Sepultura tribal 'S' and even our faces, which is kind of odd and weird to see. It's great to see that kind of passion a fan has for you, your band and your music. So we wrote [the single] for them, and it's coming out only on 7" and digital on June 5th. The artwork was done using tattoos from our fans; we made a contest on the website for them to send pictures. It looks great, and the song is called "Sepultura: Under My Skin."

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Twitch

Interview by Jason Flower

Twitch was formed in Port Coquitlam, BC in late 1971 by Ian Steeksma (guitar, lead vocals). Despite the backdrop of a bustling local scene, Ian resented psych and opted to create a hard rock trio unlike any other local group. A newspaper article dated January 18, 1973 mentioned "the ear-splitting Twitch" playing regularly to capacity audiences. In May of 1973, a 45 single was pressed in a small quantity of roughly 100 copies; "Things" and "Pick-Up is Illegal on 401" both contained a formula darker and heavier than anything the West Coast scene had been accustomed to.

Itching to move ahead, Ian prompted the group to take on a new stage presence with bloody corpse paint, bizarre glam outfits, smoke effects, and fog. In May of 1974, a newly solidified quartet (Ian, Colin, Steve, and Mike) decided to build an act centering on the occult, with a storyline based on possession and demonic debauchery.

"Twitch was known for its bizarre stage theatrics and theme-inspired fast rock; our main goal was to put on a heavy show. We'd recorded a sound that climbed slowly in pitch until it was so loud and high that people were overwhelmed... at a certain frequency, it cut into a prerecorded monologue of a witch just before she was burned at the stake, putting a curse 'on all your children' and screaming, 'May you burn in hell!' before the guitar work started setting the stage for our entrance. We'd enter with large wooden crosses burning, all serious and evil with a 'bubbling cauldron' on stage, the sound culminated in a massive explosion and we started into our first song of the opera with Steve singing and screaming. People were stunned both visually and audibly."

Twitch's *The Dark Years* performance storyline explained: "Alex was a teenager who found himself on the wrong side of life after running away from home due to indecent goings-on with his mother (song "Sex with Mother"), and experiencing

life on the street ("Sweet Judy CT," "Vaseline," "Roaring Drunk"), Alex ran afoul after meeting a transvestite prostitute, a nasty fellow who raped him. Having no luck at all, he's given to a coven of witches and their leader, a wizard ("I am The Wizard") to be sacrificed

in order to resurrect ("Litany to Raise the Dead") a witch named Jessica, who'd been killed in the Salem witch trials. "Satan's Blood" is Jessica's rant when she's resurrected, vowing to wreak havoc on everyone. For the third set, we had the shock penultimate, ending with our drummer Mike being shot by Steve, the guitarist, with a fake revolver as he climbed onto a platform behind the drums. He'd dive/fall over the drum kit on a riser and land writhing around on a pressurized blood bag hidden in his mouth."

"On one particular gig (might have been at the Commodore), we'd run out of dry ice for the cauldron and decided to use flash powder. Steve was always the frontman for 'Litany to Raise the Dead' and when the time came to seal the incantation, he'd take off his guitar and bend over the cauldron to get the dry ice smoking up. Obviously we weren't thinking too clearly, because when Steve bent over and lit the powder it flashed right up into his face. He straightened up and strolled nonchalantly back to pick up his guitar as I stared at him and gave me a glance and sardonic grin saying "Holy Fu-u-u-ck!" The crowd loved

it, of course, but that was the day when silver makeup saved Steve's skin, only a bit of his hair and eyebrows were singed. We would never get away with this show nowadays."

"One night in Victoria, we had one guy come close up where he stood in front of Ian and stared at the crosses still smoking in their holders on the stage. Suddenly he started shaking all over, then appeared like he was praying, made the sign of the cross, and took a knife out and sliced the palm of his hand open and held up his fist with the blood dripping down in front of us into the cauldron. He began pumping his fist and dancing and

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yelling, then just as suddenly turned around and vanished into the crowd with the bouncers taking him out in a hurry. We talked about it after the show, wondering what we would've done if he'd stabbed himself or one of us."

"Strange things started happening during the Dark Years of 1974-75... something wasn't quite right and there seemed to be an aura of negative energy that we all began to feel, so it was onto the next thing. We lightened up on the makeup and focused on catchier music with a rock opera show idea behind it. Modern punks in an alley with music and thin story to

match; *West Side Story* meets *Clockwork Orange*. The public (still) just thought we were copying Kiss, we hoped it might be different enough to continue to catch on anyway, but New Wave and Punk kinda overrode all that."

On June 30th, Supreme Echo records will release the eight-song LP, *Dark Years* (1974), in a first edition of 550 hand-numbered copies.

www.supremeecho.com



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YOB

Interview with Mike Scheidt

By Willow Gamberg & Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Where are we and who are talking to?

Mike Scheidt: We're in Vancouver, British Columbia, and I play in Yob.

AU: This tour sees you guys stepping out with *Enslaved* and *Ecstatic Vision*, it's a pretty groovy lineup... How's the reception been, good turnout?

MS: Sure seems like it, but you know *Enslaved* doesn't hurt, as far as that goes! We can't take credit for that, but we do have a pretty good crowd up here.

AU: What are your goals for this tour?

MS: We're supporting our new album, [*Clearing The Path To Ascend*], for Neurot and Relapse, I think our idea is to support the record and show them support, and also there's been a lot of very good response to it, so I guess we just want to bring that to people that

want to see it.

AU: How has being on Neurot influenced your views on the business side of things? You're also still on Relapse?

MS: We licensed the vinyl to Relapse, but the record proper is on Neurot. I've been listening to Neurosis since the late 80s, so to be working with them on an artistic level, because there is business involved, but for them the balance between the artistic and business... it's a really good balance that they achieve, I think partially because it's the balance that they want to have for themselves, which is why they created a label for themselves to begin with.

AU: Has that process changed anything about the new record for you?

MS: It's the first time that I've ever been nervous handing in a record. It's our seventh record, and I've been on a lot of other albums, it was always like, "Well, we are who we are, and we know who our crowd is, we're not for everybody and whatever." But to hand an album in to Steve von Till and Scott Kelly, and they signed us on faith, hadn't heard one lick of the new music, so that

was about as nervous as I've been, handing in music, but it's been so fabulous.

AU: The cover art of the latest album features a mysterious, misty mountain kind of vibe, does that reflect any of the themes that you explore on the album?

MS: The themes on the album are meant to be esoteric, a combination of worldly elements and otherworldly elements, things like mountains, clouds, and mist, the darkness to it... you already see that in a lot of different esoteric art to begin with, but then you have the three discs as well...



we wanted the album to be abstract but heavy at the same time. It didn't spell anything out, and there wasn't any particular point where you centred, so in other words, if you have something with a bunch of frilly stuff around and then there's eyes, the eyes would be the centre point - you'd look at the eyes or the creature or whatever. We wanted something that didn't have a centre point, but yet had symmetry, and was spacey. Orion Landau, who did the album artwork, he's known us for a long time and had been thinking about it for a long time too, so when we first started talking about ideas, we arrived where we did fairly quickly. And as soon as we saw that version, there were like two or three other versions before that, we were like, "Yeah, that's it."

AU: Philosopher Alan Watts makes several appearances throughout your albums, do his or anyone else's philosophies particularly resonate with you?

MS: Alan Watts, most definitely. With Alan, it's as much his spirit as what he says, because he is a philosopher and he has a number of his own ideas, but he's also a scholar and quite a distinguished one, as far as theology, religion, and philosophy, and so his knowledge and how he came at subjects was total... but he was also wide open, always ready to learn more. There's also Sri Nisargadatta, Ramana Maharishi... and we certainly have lots of music influences as well. HWL Poonja has a say in what we write... [and] Michael Gira's lyrics.

AU: Any particular musical influences? Anything we might find surprising?

MS: The Cure is a big influence on the new record, I was listening to a lot of *4:13 Dream* on this one. The first couple Smashing Pumpkins [albums]



have always been a big influence on me, just the way the heaviness and lightness of the vocals fit together. I've always been pretty impressed by those first two records. Swans, for sure, maybe that's not so surprising... Merle Travis and Doc Watson and Townes Van Zandt, were all very big influences on the album. In fact, if I didn't play any kind of country blues, my style wouldn't exist, because I base my style of off old country dudes, but I love metal. And it doesn't sound country at all, it's just the way that I approach it, alternating bass lines and melody lines and a bunch of different sounds all at once.

AU: Any final words for your Canadian fans?

MS: Thank you for coming out and supporting us... we're honoured and privileged.

www.yobislove.com

PHOTO CREDIT: James Rexroad

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Absolute Album Reviews

Atrocity Exhibit - Atrocity Exhibit EP Grindcore Karaoke

The Atrocity Exhibit is a four-piece sludgy grind act from England that's been around for close to ten years now. They are stridently DIY and basically just work their asses off playing shows all over Europe and selling their releases and merch personally. This is the eleventh release they've done so far, most of which have been 7" splits and EPs. The first 100 copies of this one sold out immediately so there's just the digital copies on BandCamp.

Right away, I noticed this thing is only about twelve minutes long, even though they packed eight songs into it. Right into the first track, you know what you're getting into. It rips right off the start and doesn't slow down. Third song in, we get "Slave To the Mind," that has a bit of a groove start to it and the groove flows in and out throughout the song amid extra snarly vocals. The drumming in the next couple songs is what you hear in a lot of good hardcore punk, having a small kit and just hitting it hard and fast. These tracks go by fast but still really intensely. The two guitars interplay pretty well, holding down a decent groove and leaving the other to rip some solid riffs. It sounds like grind played by people who love grind.

You can totally hear the UK grind influence in this band, kind of Nihilist-esque but still with a little variety. Kind of like if Acid Bath played a lot faster, with a little more of a punk sound than Napalm Death. For me, this was a pretty easy listen and as a

whole it was definitely above average. So throw these guys a couple of bucks on BandCamp and stream it a bunch of times. Being that it's under fifteen minutes long, a full listen goes down real easy.

-Michael F. Carnage

Profits Of Crime 2015 Demo Self Released

Profits Of Crime hail from Calgary and is comprised of members from such local bands as Dog Faced Models, Ground Up, Epi-Demic and Cadavor Dog. Sporting an overall heavier and angrier sound than previous efforts, this one cooks along at a mid-paced to fast tempo with manic screeching vocals à la early Die Kreuzen, a wall of distorted guitar and earthquake-worthy rumbling bass. These guys will be playing Victoria for Willy Jak's Pre-Reunion bash at Logan's Pub, so get out and be prepared for some acrobatics and in-your-face antics.

- Mark Morr

Absolute Live Reviews

The Shrine Dirty Fences One Six, Victoria, BC April 8th, 2015

It's rare that a venue overshadows the bands performing, but such was the case with The Shrine and Dirty Fences at One Six. Now, that isn't to say that the acts were poor, in fact it was the contrary.

Dirty Fences' brand of power-punk acted as an ample starting point for what would prove to be a high-energy evening. Tracks like recent single "Judy (Don't Go)" showcased the quartet's affinity for both the Ramones' catchiness and the swagger of old-school rock bands like Thin Lizzy and Cheap Trick, all while incorporating an impressive three-pronged vocal attack.

Playing yin to Dirty Fence's yang was Venice, California's The Shrine. Pairing well with Pabst tallboys and Thrasher magazines, The Shrine fuckin' rips. Their party-thrash style tip-toes the line between metal and punk, providing a listener or concertgoer with a crunchy offering of good ol' rock n' roll. But whereas some thrash bands go for a "play fast as shit and pack as many carpal-tunnel-inducing solos as possible" approach, The Shrine sets itself apart with snazzy hooks on top of the relentless riffage. Their songs can begin to feel a bit samey, but why mess with what works?

But to the star of the show: One Six. A skateboard shop by day, the performance was situated in the store's half-pipe in the back, the ramp separated by a spine. Half of the venue was dedicated to the bands and crowd, while the other half was dedicated to skaters. Surprisingly, few boards hurdled into the crowd or bands.

Watching metal and punk bands while skaters young and old tore up the pipe was a dream come true for my slurpee-guzzling, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater-playing teenage self. And speaking of gawky teens, the show was all-ages one, something which Victoria desperately needs more of.

-Michael Luis

Puttin' On The Foil The Drunken Superheroes AbombAnation Landon Barrowman. DV8 Underground, Edmonton, AB May 9th, 2015

A great lineup of drinkin' tunes for the night. When myself and Hoon Trash set this one up, we were hoping to get Whiskey Wagon on the bill, but we only managed to get the front man, Landon Barrowman, on the bill in lieu of the whole band, which worked out fine. Landon's set

consists of a lot of drinkin' tunes and a few Whiskey Wagon originals so it's a win-win. Landon is one of those guys that his been rocking the DV8 stage since year one, so it's always a treat when we get to book him.

Next up was Victoria's AbombAnation, a snazzy three piece with... get this, no guitar player! (I believe they had one at one point, but they sounded fine to me). They have a heavy rhythm section and a female lead vocalist who rocks a small keyboard, which adds a neat dynamic to the sound of the band. This was my first time seeing this outfit, and it would be fair to say that this was a pretty explosive debut for them in Edmonton. Next up in this on-the-spot review was one of my favourite groups, Victoria's Drunken Superheroes. They kinda caught me off guard, firing it up without getting a sound check in, but their high energy stage antics whipped the crowd into an instant frenzy, and the party was on with no turning back. This band is a super-powered retake on the former Blackie And The Triumphs, trading in the acoustic guitar for an electric one. No fiddle in the mix for this show, but a barnburner of a performance nonetheless. Puttin' On The Foil capped off the night. This was their DV8 debut and I was very impressed with them. These fellas carry themselves like real pros and are a hell of a great live band.

They were recently doing a stint of gigs in Banff, which is a pretty tough nut to crack for many a travelin' band, even for one show.

Puttin' On The Foil surely gives the nod to country music n' all that, but fear not - these guys are a bulldozer of a rock band and will surely make a fan out of you if you get the chance to check them out online or onstage.

-Rod Rookers

Wheelhouse Crowchild Snakebite Sleep Demon DV8 Underground, Edmonton, AB May 15th, 2015

Sleep Demon is a new rawk outfit from Edmonton, featuring two former members of an old DV8 favourite, Bad Acid. The lead vocalist, Greg, showed up at DV8 a few months ago and has since been one of our favourite new regulars, so I had been looking forward to seeing these guys. They came out swinging with some great fast n' loud heavy rawk n' roll and did a perfect rendition of G.G. Allin and the Jabbers' "I Need Adventure," which won me over right away. They are powerhouse musicians for sure! I hope that these guys keep it together and keep the rock rolling. An impressive debut... If Sprædeagle ever got back together and did a show here,

I'd put Sleep Demon on the bill for sure! Snakebite hit the stage next, and I can't say enough great things about these guys. Fritz, the drummer, is easily one of Edmonton's finest - hearing him warm up is enough to let everybody know that these cats mean business: tough as fuck vocals layered over slick guitar riffing and a killer Motorhead-esque rhythm section. Greasy, fast driving, hard partying rawk of the highest order, as far as Edmonton goes. True rockers, these guys can rule any night regardless of where they are on the bill. Snakebite don't give a fuck... rawk n' roll is priority one, as it should be. Some hard hittin' new stuff in this set too. Calgary's Crowchild started their set with a groovy number and carried on with a mix of modern rock, grunge and psychedelic tinged numbers, a bit edgier than your average rock band with some pretty impressive guitar work in the mix. Capping off the show was local rockers, Wheelhouse. This was the first time we had them here at DV8, and there seemed to be quite a bit of buzz from a few friends who had seen them before.

Pretty good turnout, we kicked Facebook's ass for numbers at the door and people stuck around, so all of the bands got a decent audience which can be illusive on nights when we have acts that haven't played here previously. There's a member or two from local metalheads Tef-forst in the lineup, so I was all ears. I caught kind of a heavy southern rock vibe from these guys, and it's always cool to see metal dudes busting out the bluesty rock and roll stuff, very crisp and well executed rawk - these guys could be easily be doing big things in the future... a nice mix of laid back riffing with enough high-octane blasters in their set to please anybody with an ear for classic rock and metal.

-Rod Rookers

Cocaine Moustache Drunken Superheroes AbombAnation DV8, Edmonton, AB May 16th, 2015

This turned out to be quite an amazing show... The Drunken Superheroes were returning from a couple Alberta dates with four mates AbombAnation. Both of these bands rocked DV8 on May 9th and were a little more subdued after spending a week on the road.

AbombAnation sounded even tighter than they did the first time around, still rockin' it with a keyboard, bass and drums. The beauty of doing "the boomerang" as I call it, hitting the same place twice on the same tour, is of course being seen twice, and the crowd was quite a bit larger on this night than

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the previous week, due to the buzz surrounding Cocaine Moustache. The Drunken Superheroes were also a tiny bit more laid back at this point in the tour, making for an outstanding performance - their live show was chaotic as always; this group never fails to get people drinking, dancing and in full-on party mode. The show was already cookin' pretty well by the time Cocaine Moustache hit the stage and treated the Edmonton crowd to an absolutely explosive live performance. I really

like all of the guys in the band, and it had been quite some time since I had seen them play. This band totally has every bit of machinery to rock a room and rock it fucking hard. Vocalist Jesse's new hairdo alone is something to see, but the man's on-stage persona is as rock and roll as it gets - add in the amazing musicianship of the band and you have got an atomic bomb of a live show.

Cocaine Moustache has so much energy, and is just such a hard struttin', delightfully abrasive, party hard

band, that I can say with true conviction that Cocaine Moustache has to be Canada's finest hard rock party band, possibly of all time. Respect The 'Stache, god damn it - these guys are killing it on stage right now as I am writing this review... they also announced that they have a new album in the works. After tonight's show, I am definitely going to dig up their first album and give it another spin.

-Rod Rookers

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HELLMOUTH FORGED TO THOROUGHLY CHEW ITS STORY: A MOVIE REVIEW

Director: John Geddes
 Writer: Tony Burgess
 Cast: Stephen McHattie, Siobhan Murphy, Ari Millen and Tony Burgess

Writer Tony Burgess (*Pontypool*) and actor Stephen McHattie team up again for another horror title. *Hellmouth*, Part hellscape, the film develops much like a nightmare, in which nothing is real. Even the plot dissolves as certain key points. Meanwhile, the CGI visual field is full of demons, an angel and even a Sauron-like antagonist. None of these characters come together in a compelling fashion, with the film struggling to define itself. Possibly meant only as an opium dream, *Hellmouth* forgets that storytelling is longer-lasting than any series of barely connected fantasy sequences. The plot begins with Charlie Baker (McHattie). He is a gravedigger, with only a couple of years to live. He has a "brain rattle," which might explain the film's second, surreal half. Baker is reassigned to a new cemetery. Here, he will serve six months, before retiring to Florida. But, there is a catch. Baker must survive his new environment, which hellishly kills the unwary. After some ghost sex, Baker sets out on a *Lord of the Rings* journey to Mordor. But, the final denouement comes on like a whimper, rather than a compelling reveal, or insightful message. Most nightmares are best forgotten, unless they house a deeper meaning. The visuals of the feature are as CGI and most look horrifying enough. The film was developed exclusively through greenscreen. Few settings

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Absolute Film Reviews

Compañeros
 Sergio Corbucci
 Blue Underground

In 1970 during the tail end of the spaghetti western craze, director Sergio Corbucci (*Navajo Joe*) made one of the best entries in the genre, *Compañeros*. Starring two European powerhouse actors, Franco Nero (*Django*) and Tomas Milian (*The Big Gundown*) this film is an action-packed, political take on the Mexican revolution. Nero and Milian are sent on a quest to find the leader of the Mexican revolutionaries being held captive in America and bring him back to Mexico. Nero plays Yolaf the Swede, a money-hungry weapons dealer supplying the Mexican army with guns, and Milian is Basco, one of the Mexican guerrillas. The two unlikely heroes have to put aside their differences for the common goal and eventually end up joining the rebels against the Mexican military lead by general Mongo. On their journey to America they are hunted by pot-smoking bounty hunter, Wood Hand John, played by Jack Palance (*City Slickers*) who wants to get revenge on Nero's character for a previous endeavor the two had been involved in. Not only are the action sequences great in this film, but so is the comedy. Nero is constantly pulling the rug out from under Milian, until they finally become compañeros by the end of the picture. Ennio Morricone's score is powerful and the title track, "Vamos a Matar, Compañeros!" is very reminiscent of his previous work with Sergio Leone in *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*. The Blue Underground Blu-Ray has both the North American dubbed 115 minute cut and the Italian language track cut that runs 119 minutes on it. There are also some great interviews with stars Milian and Nero and composer Morricone. In my opinion, this is easily one of the best Italian westerns, mixing both action and comedy with the political issues of the Mexican revolution.

-Cody No Teeth

Hellmouth Forged to Thoroughly Chew its Story: A Movie Review
 Director: John Geddes
 Writer: Tony Burgess
 Cast: Stephen McHattie, Siobhan Murphy, Ari Millen and Tony Burgess

Writer Tony Burgess (*Pontypool*) and actor Stephen McHattie team up again for another horror title. *Hellmouth*, Part hellscape, the film develops much like a nightmare, in which nothing is real. Even the plot dissolves as certain key points. Meanwhile, the CGI visual field is full of demons, an angel and even a Sauron-like antagonist. None of these characters come together in a compelling fashion, with the film struggling to define itself. Possibly meant only as an opium dream, *Hellmouth* forgets that storytelling is longer-lasting than any series of barely connected fantasy sequences. The plot begins with Charlie Baker (McHattie). He is a gravedigger, with only a couple of years to live. He has a "brain rattle," which might explain the film's second, surreal half. Baker is reassigned to a new cemetery. Here, he will serve six months, before retiring to Florida. But, there is a catch. Baker must survive his new environment, which hellishly kills the unwary. After some ghost sex, Baker sets out on a *Lord of the Rings* journey to Mordor. But, the final denouement comes on like a whimper, rather than a compelling reveal, or insightful message. Most nightmares are best forgotten, unless they house a deeper meaning. The visuals of the feature are as CGI and most look horrifying enough. The film was developed exclusively through greenscreen. Few settings

are real, outside of a few pieces of furniture. The rest of the environments are computer enhanced and most host terrifying gravestone visages, or winged demons. Baker's head cancer creates all kinds of zombie-like characters and haunting landscapes. Each promises to draw Baker down below. Even characters, including the angel-like Fay (Siobhan Murphy), are amplified with enhanced lighting. But, it all rings as very unreal, or at least surreal. Sometimes described as a fever dream or head film in other reviews, the film can best be described as a nightmarerap. The visuals and unsteady story are meant to unsettle the viewer. They rarely accomplish this goal. Also, the lack of story is reminiscent of a nightmare, in that the visuals tell the story, metaphorically. Though, the best that the protagonist can discern from his journey is that he is real. In a nightmarerap or dreamscape, nothing is real, especially the characters. Earlier, the protagonist shows some actual awareness of his predicament: "I'm caught in a nightmare." But, he never attempts to wake himself. Most nightmares have a message lying just out of consciousness; that is not the case here and the lead character never questions the surreality of his experience. Finally, the film is very anti-plot. The film reminded this viewer of David Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997). Everything is surreal and very little can be connected. Instead, the film is meant as an experience. The lack of story resists dissection. This lack of story connection lessens its impact. And, just like a nightmare, it is soon forgotten once the film has stopped playing. The finale tries for a meaningful exit, but it all disappears like sand in the film's final setting, a desert.

This horror fan is excited for Burgess' upcoming *Septic Man*, but *Hellmouth* offers very little adrenaline here. The film came across as an exercise in the use of greenscreen, with story elements an addendum. At its core, the film is missing a reason to be. It is also missing compelling conflicts and an internal message. And, this viewer wonders if the film was developed from one of Burgess' nightmares. If yes, his nightmare required more thoughtful analysis and interpretation.

-Michael Allen

This Horsehead is Screwed on Backwards: A Movie Review
 Director: Romain Basset
 Writers: Romain Basset and Karim Chériguène
 Cast: Lilly-Fleur Pointeaux, Catriona MacColl, Gala Besson, Murray Head and Fu'ad Ait Aattou

Romain Basset's feature film debut, *Horsehead*, is conceptually and stylistically cool, but its story makes you work at piecing things together—if you're not careful, you could miss the mark. The film follows in the tradition of other dreamscape horror films like *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *The Cell*, with the protagonist purposely falling into a dream state in order to solve a mystery and/or defeat the enemy. In *Horsehead*, the lovely Jessica, who studies the power of lucid dreaming, grapples with nightmares. While attempting to control her dreams, she unearths a sinister family secret. However intriguing, this film will have you wishing that you were in your own lucid dream, taking hold of the reins, so you could gain a better understanding of what is happening. *Horsehead* begins inside one of Jessica's (Lilly-Fleur Pointeaux) nightmares. Our protagonist lies paralyzed on a bed while disturbing images, including a strange face horse head, atop a human body, appear. After waking, Jessica is informed of her grandmother's

death, and she plans to attend the funeral at her estranged mother's request. Tension quickly mounts between mother and daughter after Jessica's arrival to the family home; it becomes apparent that part of the hostility is due to the fact that Jessica doesn't know who her biological father is. It's not hard to figure out where this is leading—a mother's resentment of her daughter—an unknown father. What could this family secret possibly be? When you think you've figured it out early on, the story loses its grip... for a while.

The majority of the action takes place in Jessica's dreams, which are accompanied by the horse-headed human and a lone wolf protector. The film tells us that, in dreams, a horse can represent a mother figure, a guide to the beyond, or it can be the messenger of death. Jessica's grandmother, Rose, (Gala Besson) warns her to, "follow the wolf and run away from the horse. Always." At first it isn't clear what the wolf represents, but in the end it seems like the animal is a version of Jessica herself. Either way, the horse-headed figure and the wolf are pinned against each other, ending in a battle that does not live up to expectations. Jessica's dreams are also riddled with religion and the occult; these elements help to explain her family's past and push the creep factor into another direction. While this aspect of the story is necessary, it is slightly overdone and too much is given away too soon.

Where Basset does an excellent job in maintaining a dark, creepy atmosphere throughout the dream sequences, and nicely working unsettling elements into the scenes when Jessica is awake. The characters are constructed in ways that make it hard to tell who is on the level, adding even more mystery to the puzzling plot. Unfortunately, some of the scenes, particularly the waking scenes, are quite boring and the pacing could have been sped up.

Also, the film is plagued with horrible dubstep music. At first it seems like it's there to create a more freaky dreamscape, but it isn't all that convincing; the music interrupts the story and, besides, does anyone dream in dubstep? Given a second thought, the music could intentionally be used to throw the viewer off the story's scent. If that's the case, mission accomplished—this viewer couldn't stand the music. As Jessica at one point says, "silence is golden."

The actors are generally on point in this film, but there are no truly stand-out performances, other than that of Lilly-Fleur Pointeaux's breasts. Tits aside, Pointeaux is fairly believable in this role—impressive for someone with a short acting resume. My guess is that it won't remain short for long. Catriona MacColl (*The House by the Cemetery*, 1981) is solid as Jessica's mother, as is Jessica's stepdad, Murray Head (*Sunday Bloody Sunday*, 1971, and the 80s one-hit wonder, *One Night in Bangkok*). Dreams are often exaggerated, so it's hard to get a definite read into the quality of acting in the film, but the cast certainly warrants a passing grade.

As a fan of most things dark and weird, you want to love this film—the atmosphere is effective and the horse and wolf motifs are interesting. That said, this film is not as riveting as the trailer would have you believe. It does, however, exercise your mind, forcing you to piece the story together, and some audiences will appreciate that. It will be interesting to see what direction Romain Basset goes in as he certainly possesses some creative talent. Unfortunately, even with the twisting plot and wicked effects, *Horsehead* falls short of the triple crown due to its lack of clarity—too many questions go unanswered.

-Kenna Rae

The Drownsman
 Director: Chad Archibald
 Writers: Chad Archibald and Cody Calahan
 Cast: Michelle Mylett, Caroline Korycki, Gemma Bird Matheson, Sydney Kondruss, Clare Bastable and Ry Barrett

Canadian-based production company Black Fawn Films is known for developing quality horror film fare. They have completed films such as *If a Tree Falls* (2010), *Neverlost* (2010) and recently, the zombie thriller, *Antisocial* (2012). Developed by Chad Archibald (*Desperate Souls*) and Ry Barrett (*The Demolisher*), Black Fawn Films offers another solid horror entry, with their title *The Drownsman*. *The Drownsman* is an atmospheric film. Appropriately darkly lit, this horror title offers an interesting storyline of a woman haunted by a mysterious beast; Madison's (Michelle Mylett) journey through redemption will reveal a few familial secrets. Heavily influenced by Wes Craven's early films, *The Drownsman* is one Canadian horror title which should not be missed.

The film begins and stays with the character, Madison. Madison is tormented by visions of a creature who drowns his female victims in tubs of ice cold water. These visions come through nightmares or bouts of unconsciousness, with the Drownsman (Ry Barrett) lurking just on the periphery. The protagonist finds support from a group of girlfriends; but these minor characters are faced with their own tragedies, as the Drownsman stalks everyone onscreen. A late reveal creates for a monstrous family situation, which is not unlike the Sawyer family (murderous), from the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1973). Though, blood is not thicker than water in *The Drownsman*.

This viewer enjoyed the film's good use of atmosphere and lighting. The film begins with lighter moments. For instance, one character appears in a bright white wedding dress during an interior shot. An intervention, in an early scene, is also bright and well-lit. However, these lighter scenes begin to fade into the background as Madison faces the film's villain. Now, darkness is dominant. Blood reds and shadows inhabit the film's landscape, with Madison delving deeper in the Drownsman's lair. Hidden in dark light, the creature is almost invisible, until the heroine utilizes flares to lighten the screen. This subtle transition from bright light to darkness is symbolic of the protagonist's journey into her own personal nightmares and possibly her subconscious.

Long-time horror fans will see the influence of Wes Craven's work in this title. The homages are not subtle. Craven's most horrifying work, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), can be strongly seen in Archibald's latest work. As an example, the character Lauren (Sydney Kondruss) is sucked into a piece of watery furniture. This scene is heavily reminiscent of Glen's (Johnny Depp) death in this 1984 movie. Glen is sucked into a vortex, found in the middle of a bed. Both characters die a painful death, while dissolving in frame. As well, the use of dark basements and settings in *The Drownsman* similar to the settings in Craven's *People Under the Stairs* (1991). Both films spend a lot of time in underground, dank environments, from which escape is not easily found. Finally, villains in *The Drownsman* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* are

susceptible to fire. Both the Drownsman and Krueger have weaknesses, which are utilized by the protagonists. Craven's influences are many in *The Drownsman* and Archibald even makes note of this famous director's works through a small set piece. The story, from writers Chad Archibald and Cody Calahan, is well developed and paced; the character arc is also appreciated. Scenes are terse and very little time is wasted developing the major plotline. Each scene is drawing Madison closer to a finale with the Drownsman. Characters are well set up, through flashbacks and dialogue sequences. The hydrophobia intervention brings all of the characters together in several scenes. Though, characters in horror never seem to stick together. Also, Madison's character arc involves hydrophobia and facing fear. This character transforms over the course of the film. More character angles and complexity are developed as Maddy learns of her childhood. Maddy's childhood is one that will have to be revisited, if she wants to be free of her current torment. The minor characters are not as round as Madison, but this is for a blood-curdling reason. Minor characters do not last long in horror. Most of the characters are intriguing and the storyline is well focused.

This title will have its world premiere in Montreal at the Fantasia Film Festival, and this viewer hopes that horror fans will support the debut. *The Drownsman* is a consistently compelling horror outing, which is heavily influenced by Craven's films of the past. Well paced and very atmospheric, *The Drownsman* offers a lot of energy and conflict, in a short eighty minutes.

-Michael Allen

Let Us Prey Rots from Within (In Story)
 Director: Brian O'Malley
 Writers: David Cairns and Fiona Watson
 Cast: Liam Cunningham, Pollyanna McIntosh, Bryan Larkin and Hanna Stanbridge

Let Us Prey is a horror film from Ireland. Partially funded by the Irish Film Board, the filmmakers have described the film as similar to *Assault on Precinct 13*, with the threat coming from within. That threat has been cast in fire and brimstone. The Devil is searching for souls and the Christian themes were yawntastic. All of the characters are morally vacuous. Instead of finding courage, they succumb to murder and cowardice. With no one to lead the film away from evil, the film offers no real strong, underlining message. Some tension is created by the antagonist, Six (Liam Cunningham). But *Let Us Prey* only devolves into a gory spectacle.

Small-town police officer Rachel (Pollyanna McIntosh) is new on the job. While walking to her new work location, she witnesses a hit-and-run. The victim manages to disappear in a figurative puff of smoke. At the precinct, Rachel's co-workers are dubious in nature. The sergeant is a gay serial killer. The other two use torture and murder to keep

the local, mostly absent, townsfolk in line. Even Rachel is enticed into murder, when the Devil makes his appearance known. The film shows strong influences from *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976). The film's story stays focused on one setting, the police station. Much like the earlier film, this location is set upon by a malefactor. The sparse regiment of police officers are put to task by this threat, in both films. Though, as admitted in a behind-the-scenes featurette, the threat promises to rot the police station (and characters) from within, rather than from without. The Devil is introduced into the story via a trojan horse, by appearing to be the victim of a crime. In actuality, he is the force behind much of the terror. Both *Assault on Precinct 13* and *Let Us Prey* take place over one die night, in which evil promises to overwhelm the good.

In *Let Us Prey*, there is very little goodness present to fight back. Many of the characters are killers. The most noble, arguably the Devil, is just a killer of killers. There is no one really to root for. Even the protagonist is too damaged, from previous abuse, to offer resistance. She is tempted to sin and vice (murder) and she cannot resist the Devil's influence. Other minor characters include: a hit-and-run killer, a family murderer, a wife-beater and many others. All of the minor characters are corrupt, on some level. So, from central to minor characters, everyone is moving towards evil. Where is the heroism?

The film does manage to put forth some mystery. The Devil emerges from the ocean, with a murder of crows in tow. Why is he entering Inveread? And, why is he mute? It is only over time, with the introduction of the Devil's supernatural powers, that it becomes clear who the antagonist is. Satan even provides hints to his identity. When he speaks to Rachel he says: "We are both cast out." Where Rachel has been cast out of her community, the Devil has been cast out of Heaven. This fallen angel even enjoys fire. During one fiery scene, he relishes the heat: "I like the weather." Unfortunately, once the antagonist's identity is revealed, any of the mildly simmering tension is removed.

Let Us Prey sources a quality film, but it adds very little to the material. A few gory scenes might shock some viewers. But violence and chaos are pointless, if there is no underlining, purposeful reason for it. As well, all of the characters are amoral and difficult to empathize with. They all get their just desserts. With the Devil winning and stealing everyone's souls, the film ends flatly. The heroine required more courage and strength to overcome those around her. As it is, the film plays out feebly. And, is there anyone out there who still believes in the power of the Devil?

-Michael Allen

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Bad Guys

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Greetings, dudes! Where are you now? Can you paint a picture of your scene for the readers?

PJ: We are currently driving on the A3 between Portsmouth and London in the Bad Van after playing in Brighton and Southsea. We are just about to go through the Bob Hoskins Memorial Tunnel. It's really windy today.

AU: I'm drinking a gin caesar. It's spicy, but has celery. What are you drinking right now?

Dave: Tamas and I have got shit roadside Costa coffee and Stu is drinking a Tyskie (Polish beer). That's pretty standard for Stu anytime after 11am, though. PJ isn't drinking anything as he is trying to drive in this rubbish weather, poor guy.

AU: Tell us about Bad Guys. How did the band form? Says here you've got a Canadian, a Hungarian, a midlander, and a southerner.

PJ: Well we all came to London from shitty little backwater towns to try and escape the monotony. We actually met purely by chance outside of London. We were all on a wine tasting and spelunking weekend in the Lake District. Stu kept humming "Run To The Hills" in this cave and we all just randomly joined in. We exchanged numbers in the winery later that day and Bad Guys was born.

Dave: Yeah, that cave was really amazing. It had the most spectacular Vaulcusian spring that had just this single, multi-coloured cavernicole swimming around in circles.

AU: The new album rocks! *Bad Guynaecology* is the title... In a scientific and perhaps vaginal sense, what did you learn from making this

record?

Stu: You have to go in deep and hard until you're drained and everyone in the room is satisfied.

AU: The video for "Prostitutes (Are Making Love In My Garden)" addresses a real problem: the song title itself. How has the release of that video influenced the actual garden prostitution in your backyard?

Stu: No change really, it's winter though and a bit cold. I expect it to pick up soon with spring around the corner.

AU: You've got a European tour dialled in to support the new album. Tell us about your aims for it.

PJ: We usually try and find a place to fire hand guns and assault rifles in Eastern Europe, we can't fire guns in the UK, so it's a nice calming activity after spending days on end in a van with the same four people.

Tamas: I'm just looking forward to all the different cakes. Oh, and trying to find parts for my Mercedes.

AU: You've got a sense of British humour coming through, and at the same time, some serious themes as well.

How do you find a balance between the two?

Tamas: We aim for a 60/40 split. That's usually the perfect ratio.

Stu: I usually aim for 60% humorous and 100% serious.

AU: So which guy is Canadian? And where is he from in Canada? And why the hell is he in

England?

Dave: That would be me. I'm from a little farming town in Saskatchewan called Wadena. Don't worry, no one has heard of it. I think the only thing it's known for is Pamela Wallin. If you ever manage to go there, you'll know why I'm in

England. Oh, and I fucking love constant rain, lengthy queues and being overly polite. It's perfect for me, really.

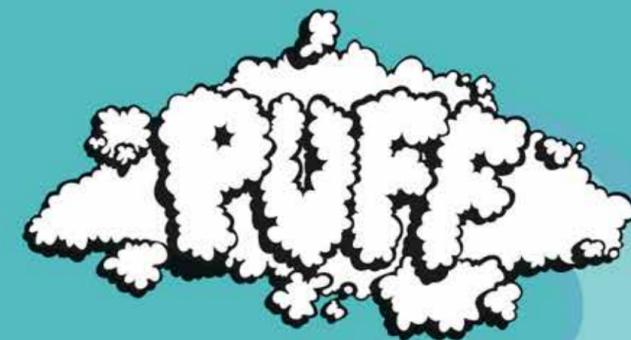
AU: What do you consider to be the single, must-have heavy rock album and why?

PJ: *Bad Guynaecology*, obviously. It's a future classic. Please buy it, people, we could really do with the money. The brakes on the van are on their last legs, and it's really windy.

AU: Last words to rock 'n roll fans across the north:

Stu: Keep on truckin'

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Suicide Girls Blackheart Burlesque Tour Review
By Ed Sum

look at nearly all that's beloved from the 70s pop culture scene and onwards. From *Rocky Horror* to *Game of Thrones*, their re-imaginings on a dance hall stage will have plenty to hoot and holler about. There's even a soft and not-so innocent take of *The Little Mermaid* for the adult generation, and not even *Adventure Time* gets missed.

The Suicide Girls Blackheart Burlesque is traveling worldwide to give fans of nerd culture a sexy



The show started about ten years ago and has had many lineup changes throughout the years. The dancing team is hosted by Sunny, and she really knows how to whip up a crowd. The Victoria show took place in early April at the Distrikt Nightclub, and it had a packed house. The area around the stage was standing room only. Although the stage itself had certain limitations with fixed lighting elements, sometimes the technical directors of the show have to let the technicians of the venue know what kinds of lighting changes are needed so the best breast forward can really shine. The back lighting wasn't an issue. Being sexy is great



when the spotlight silhouettes the fine figures, but a few of the acts could have benefited with having more props available to use and proper rigging above the stage to mount them on. To see a disco ball drop down during the *Rocky Horror* number would have made that act better. Michael Jackson's "Thriller" would have been spectacular if only a fog machine was used — that would have given this number the supernatural ambience it really needed.



The team's routines are solid. Choreographer Manwe Sauls-Addison, who worked with performers like Beyoncé and Lady Gaga, has taught the girls well. The *Harry Potter* one is particularly sensual when Hermione gets sultry over at Slytherin House.



Overall, these girls certainly know how to make best use of the stage space offered to them. When it's normally used for bands at Distrikt, the confinement didn't feel so limited. All five of the ladies can prance around the space without overshadowing the other. But some people may wonder what this performance can look like if more of the girls got together for one huge marching band number? If a larger stage was available, a huge

show took San Diego Comicon by storm many years ago; for it to evolve, it really will have to involve more girls. When the show returns, it should be known as Suicide Girls Blackheart Burlesque LEGION tour!

blackheartburlesque.com/

PHOTO CREDITS: Ed Sum

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<p>KOBO TOWN - DOPE SODA</p> <p>TASMAN JUDE - BOOMSHACK</p> <p>THURS JULY 2ND</p> <p>SHIP POINT - 4PM - 10PM - ALL AGES!</p> <p>STICKYBUDS</p> <p>DUBMATIX - YDNA MURD</p> <p>DISTRIKT - DOORS - 9PM (19+)</p>	<p>THIRD WORLD</p> <p>RED, GOLD & GREEN MACHINE</p> <p>BLACKWOOD KINGS - TANK GYAL</p> <p>FRI JULY 3RD</p> <p>SUGAR - DOORS - 9PM (19+)</p>	<p>SAT JULY 4TH</p> <p>THE REAL MCKENZIES</p> <p>HILLSIDE HOOLIGANS</p> <p>MC ONITE!</p> <p>TALLY HO SPORTS BAR & GRILL - DOORS - 9PM (19+)</p>	<p>FREE</p> <p>HOUSE OF SHEM</p> <p>ARISE ROOTS</p> <p>WHITEY - ALI & THE BUDZ</p> <p>SUN JULY 5TH</p> <p>SHIP POINT - 3PM - 9PM - ALL AGES!</p>
<p>DEF 3 - DIA-NOS</p> <p>LACEY LOU'S - DOORS - 9PM - ALL AGES!</p> <p>ROCKSTEADY COLLECTIVE VENUE</p>			



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THE ROCKSTEADY COLLECTIVE IS SKAFEST'S EVER GROWING ART EXHIBITION. ARTISTS SHOWCASE THEIR ARTISTIC TALENTS USING INFLUENCES FROM SKA AND REGGAE MUSIC. IN IT'S 5TH YEAR, THERE'S MORE TO SEE, TASTE, AND HEAR THAN EVER BEFORE. CATCH LIVE PAINTING AT SHIP POINT, AN INFO TENT WITH FEATURED ART EACH DAY.

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BM: I have fun in M.O.D.

AU: What was it like in New York when Method of Destruction was playing shows?

BM: It was a weird time, we were more hardcore punk, and I had a history

what other bands?

BM: Scott Sargeant- Bass (Skinlab Laz Rockit, Killing Culture) Mike Deleon – Guitar (Flesh Horder, Disfigured) Mike Fury – Drums (Indisgust, Will To Live).

AU: What does a typical day in the life of Billy Milano look like?

BM: Wake up, make coffee, cook dog food for four dogs, about two hours. Take a couple dumps. Read, plot to overthrow the world, take a nap, off to work!

AU: What was the last M.O.D. release? Are you working on a new album as well?

BM: *Red White and Screwed*, 2007. Yes, we are going to record a new record next week called

Busted, Broke and American... more information at www.milanomosh.com.

AU: Are you stoked to play Canada? What do you think about Canada?

BM: Yes, we are just wanting to have fun and enjoy life before the crazy people running the world and America blow it all up. Canada is America's hat. Respect!

AU: Final words?

BM: Honour your mothers and fathers. Be kind to the elderly. Nurture the youth. Help the animal shelters, protect your community, and ammo up!

www.milanomosh.com

M.O.D.

Interview by Ira Hunter

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

Billy Milano: Singer of S.O.D. and M.O.D., New York Hardcore Punk.

AU: Where are you living these days? What's the underground music scene like there?

BM: I live in Austin, Texas, live music capital of the world. The music scene is very diverse. There are so many venues, you could play almost every day to a new crowd.

AU: What first got you involved with being in bands?

BM: I was hanging out with friends who wanted me to jam with them. That pretty much changed my life. I went and saw The Ramones in NYC and I was hooked.

AU: What bands have you been a member of?

BM: Gross Misconduct – Bass player, Cause for Alarm – Singer, The Psychos - Bass player, S.O.D. – Vocals, M.O.D.- Vocals.

AU: What was the difference between S.O.D. and M.O.D.?

in crossover thrash. So the crowds didn't understand why I wasn't metal, or whatever the hell you call it! Odd timing. Never cared too much for playing the east coast!

AU: What was the most insane show you ever played?

BM: I played a show at a mental institution in New York State. We played Dead Kennedys covers, Sex Pistols and Ramone songs. It was bizarre.

AU: Who are the current members of M.O.D.? From



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Festival Preview: Obscene Extreme Festival

August 20th -23rd, 2015
Montreal, Quebec

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you most famous for? What is your position with Obscene Extreme Festival?

Curby: Well, I'm Curby/Obscene and people know me through my label, Obscene Productions (20 years this year and still active, doing good

do you run your show?

Curby: Obscene Extreme is a festival, but a unique one. It has a different vibe than any other fest... We are into extreme music (thrash, grind, death, crust, hardcore/punk, power violence, fastcore, goregrind and everything between), and we have supported our favourite music since the first volume, trying to mix bigger names with newcomers or relatively unknown bands. We really believe this can make the scene stronger and a better place to be part of. OEF is also about stage diving, circle pits, good crews (we don't say security staff), that help in any case. In Czechia we run our own Kinder grinder for kids that can stay there all the day long, and parents can go and enjoy the bands. We also do charity for Doctors Without Borders, which is really important to

business. So after that bad year, I asked all around about a great place to go with OEF and most of my friends said Montreal, as the scene is great here and a lot of bands mention Montreal as one of the best places to play in North America. That's what I heard from almost everyone, that Canada is a place way closer to Europe, so my choice was really easy... we booked venues quite quickly and all looks good so far!

I really feel everything is easier and closer to the European mentality in Canada, and that's a big advantage!

AU: Tell us about the venue you found in Montreal... what can we expect when we show up?

Curby: We have a pre-fest at TRH-Bar on Thursday night, then two bigger nights at Théâtre Telus, then an aftershow at Katakombes. We have chosen those venues because the staff at all the mentioned venues were very friendly and really excited to see OEF coming their way. We also discussed cheaper beer, possible vegan food inside venues, stagediving and so on... we are very [determined] to bring as much from our original fest as we can and we can't wait for this co-operation!

AU: How about this year's headliners, who are you most excited to see? Who should we be watching out for?

Curby: Well, hard to say as I booked some bands that I really love... Also definitely see Agathocles, as it will be surely heaps of fun, even though I have seen them maybe 50 times! I adore the last Trap Them album, *Blissfucker*, so this will be a perfect band to do some serious headbanging to! Immolation - true death metal kings with a

superb live show, or Austrian sick and twisted Schirenic Plays Pungent Stench, they play the first three Stench albums and their show is sick! Also the only Czech export, Jig-Ai, even though they're a smaller band, they know how to kick ass and leave the venue in total mess! And there are more bands I wanna see, hyperfast American outfits like Dropdead or Magrudergrind... the last booking we did are brutal death metal heroes Broken Hope, and we are still searching for one bigger headliner for Saturday night... be sure I'll also check out my favourite Canadian bands, Fuck The Facts, Mesrine, Archagathus, Powercup, Deche-Charge, Hard Charger, and I'm very curious about bands I have never seen, like Soothsayer, Aggression, G.O.D., Homolka, Corrupt Leaders and more... it looks I'll be chained to the stage, haha!

AU: Your website promises "No shitty rules, no shitty security." Does this mean we can do whatever the hell we want, or what?

Curby: Surely not... we respect each other, and we don't need big guys to beat us to understand that! We really want to do a good festival, a friendly festival. We don't want to be part of those festivals that have so many restrictions and special laws that you feel like you're in a prison! We believe in people, in their good spirit and their co-operation and responsibility!

AU: What is the one essential item or supply we should bring with us?

Curby: A mask! Some funny costume, a superhero costume or an animal, or whatever you wish to be! And [bring] a good vibe to hang out with freaks like you, with 100% passion for extreme music!

AU: Any final words for Canadian potential attendees?

Curby: Come to join us to make this festival a special one!

www.obsceneextreme.cz/en

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recordings from time to time), and though Obscene Extreme Festival, which I have been organizing since 1999. Since then, we have been growing and doing a better fest every year, not only in our hometown of Trutnov, Czech Republic, but also on OEF World Tour in Mexico, Indonesia, Australia and Japan... we have had exactly 726 bands that have played a show at an Obscene Extreme Festival, from all over the world. I can say I'm the main man behind OEF, doing all bookings since the first volume, and I'm also the first visitor of the first festival, haha... I work on OEF every day, doing whatever is important to have a great weekend full of circle pits, stage diving and other nice activities and fun!

AU: What is Obscene Extreme all about? How

us, and since the first volume, we have had only vegan/vegetarian food at the festivals; we simply promote a cruelty-free way of life. All this makes OEF different.

Since the first volume, I've tried to mix different scenes from different countries and continents... usually the bands represent like 25 countries from five continents! And it's so cool to hang out with bands from India, China, Thailand, Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Australia, Singapore, USA, Chile, Canada, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and other unusual countries! Same with the fans, they're also coming from all over the world.

AU: This is the first year the Obscene Extreme Festival has been held in Canada, correct? What prompted the move?

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THE FINAL CHAPTER

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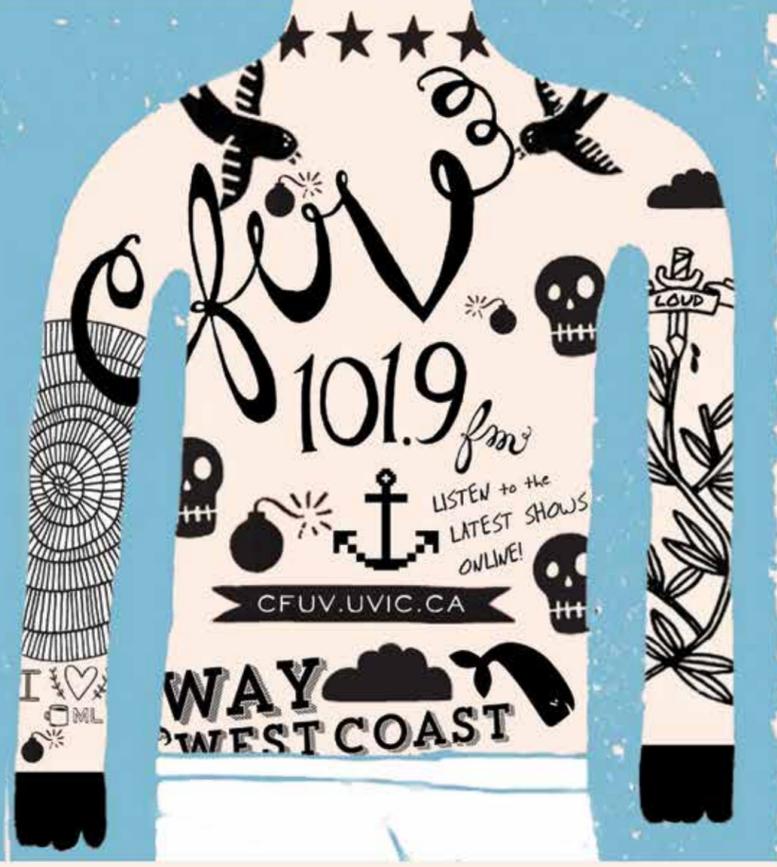
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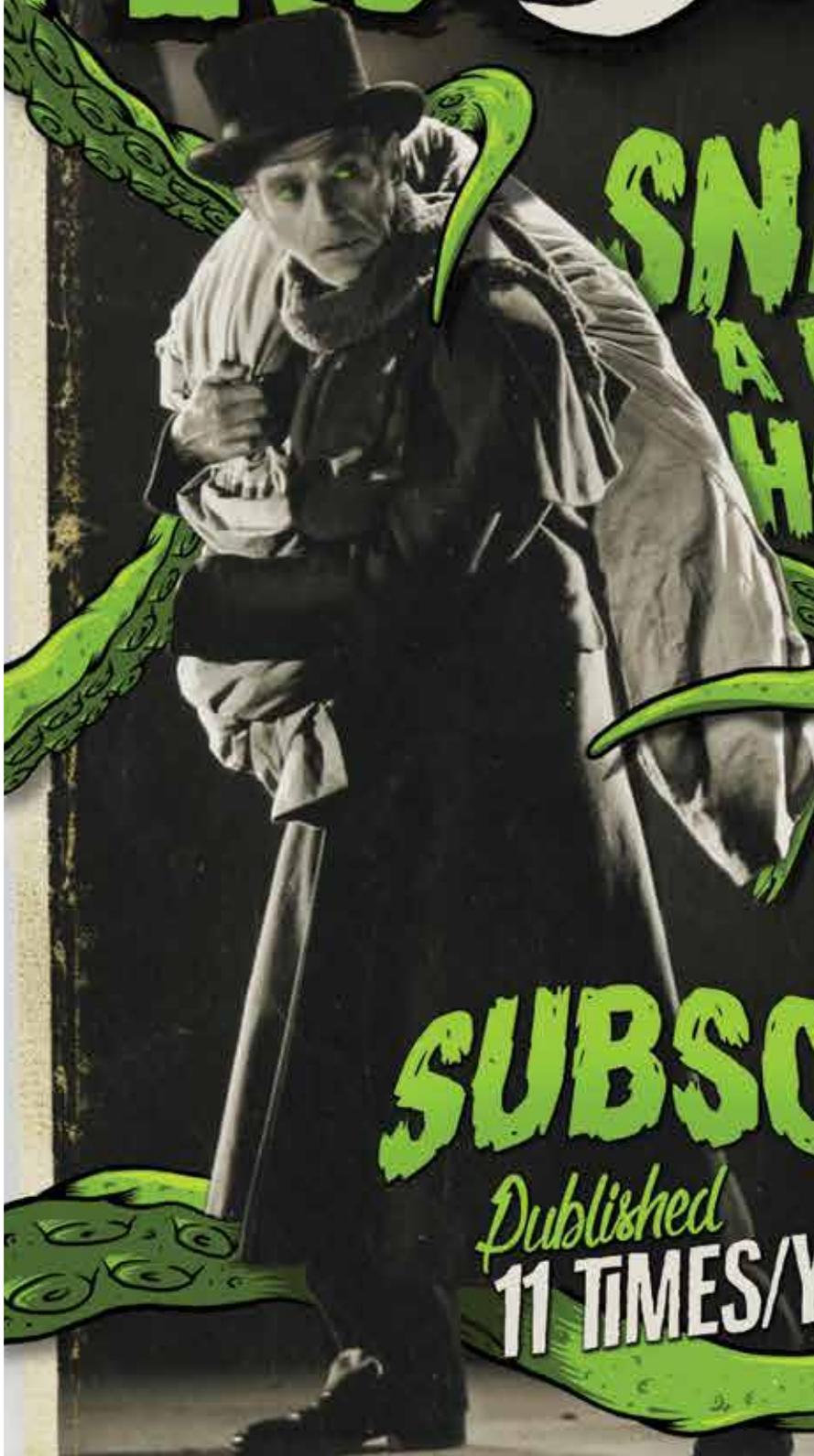
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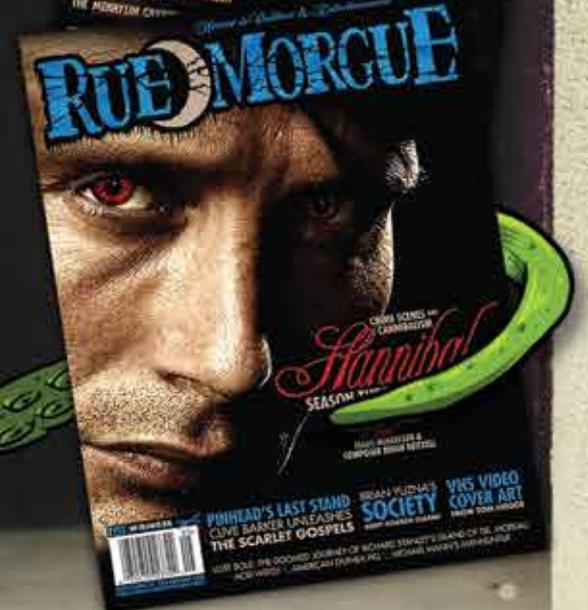
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