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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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HELLFEST



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The Helletones

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Sandy Munns: Sandy Munns, vocalist and rhythm guitarist for The Helletones. I guess I'm infamous for wearing a suit and tie on stage at punk shows, and singing like I'm choking on a mouthful of gravel and bourbon.

AU: Tell us about the Helletones – how did you form, what are you all about as a band? How would you describe your sound, for those of us who've never heard you before?

SM: I searched Victoria for a year or two for people who could tolerate my style of songwriting and who weren't hung up on belonging to any one genre. The Helletones are all about writing fun songs that incorporate all the things we love about rock and roll, and combining them in odd and unusual ways. We like to mix a classic 50s rock and roll vibe into grungy punk-type songs with lots of attitude and swagger. Add some horns into that mix, and you get The Helletones sound. I often refer to it



as a punk rock big band. At present we're a six-piece; Ian Olsen on drums, Rae Anne Henwood on bass, Jareth Whitney on lead guitar, Shauna Littlewood on trombone and Hannah Snider on sax.

AU: You've got a new release coming up, tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

SM: It's a self-titled, six-song EP that includes some of our older stuff that we still play live, as well as a couple newer ones that we really love. We originally recorded ten tracks, but decided to save a few for the next release.

AU: Do you explore any particular themes or topics on it? What inspired the music?

SM: Most of my lyrics are about women, or cars, or monsters, or all of the above. At first glance, they seem fun and frivolous, but songs like "Boogiemán" have alternate themes that are a bit more personal and often a bit darker. That one in particular is actually about a brain tumour I had removed in 2014.

AU: What does a live show by the Helletones look like?

SM: Aside from me wearing a suit and tie? Well the first thing you'll notice is that half of our band is female! Sonically, you can expect an aural assault from Ian, Rae Anne laying down some badass bass, smooth and sultry trombone and sax from Shauna and Hannah, and some killer lead guitar from Jareth to tie it all together.

AU: Will you be playing an album release show this summer? Got any tours in the works?

SM: We are really busy working on some new material right now, but are hoping to make the album release party happen in September. We will probably put the album on our Bandcamp page before that though, so stay tuned.

AU: Any long term goals as a band? What does

your dream show bill look like?

SM: I think the next step is to get another album recorded – we are writing some exciting new stuff now that is a bit more unified as a "Helletones" sound, so an LP could be on the way!

My dream show would be opening for either The Creepshow or Rocket from the Crypt. Or both. With The Mants, too. I love those guys.

AU: Any final words for the readers of Absolute Underground?

SM: Just keep on supporting your local music scene, and help the little guys like us keep on doing what we love to do – make music and play live. There is no money out there for the little bands like us: we just do this for fun and the love of the game! Hopefully we see you at a show!

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2016

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1 MONDAY	2 TUESDAY	3 WEDNESDAY	4 THURSDAY	5 FRIDAY	6 SATURDAY
 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm/Free	 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm/Free	 CRAWSON WALKER'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT VIDEOS 33 Chapters of R. Kelly's 'Trapped in the Closet' 10pm / Free	 TRIAL BY STONE ALTERED DEAD ATOMIC CHOCOLATE QASM + DUME 9pm / \$10	 REGGAE PATIO PARTY 4pm COUCH THIEVES RADco 9pm / \$10	 SUMMER CHILL OUT 9pm
 7 SUNDAY CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4pm - 8pm Free	 8 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm/Free	 10 CRAWSON WALKER'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT VIDEOS Shockwave Flash Animation An Historical Overview 10pm / Free	 11 Action Index Presents DEAD RANCH (Winnipeg, No List Records) AMNESIAN LEGIT HEAT 9pm / \$10	 12 REGGAE PATIO PARTY 4pm DOWNTOWN MISCHIEF 9pm	 13 FIFTY FIFTY ARTS COLLECTIVE ROCK LOTTERY 9pm
 14 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4pm - 8pm Free	 15 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm/Free	 17 CRAWSON WALKER'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT VIDEOS Totally and Completely? Unwatchable? 10pm / Free	 18 MINI MADDNESS MARKET 5:30pm / By Donation	 19 REGGAE PATIO PARTY 4pm JADED • DU NUIT TIMING X SCHOOLGIRL CONSUMER REPORT 9pm / \$10	 20 SKELETONWITCH (Athens, Ohio / Prosthetic Records) SKULL VULTURES CROSS MISCONDUCT TORREFFY 8pm / \$23 Tickets
 21 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4pm - 8pm Free	 22 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm/Free	 23 CRAWSON WALKER'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT VIDEOS Mystery Guest Curator(s) 10pm / Free	 25 SOFT ALARM SHIRLEY MOON DRY WILLIAMS DEATH KART 9pm / \$10	 26 REGGAE PATIO PARTY 4pm THE ORPHANS 9pm	 27 WAR BABY ELECTRIC CONDOR BLACK VALLEY GOSPEL 8pm / \$12
 28 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4pm - 8pm Free	 29 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm/Free	 30 CRAWSON WALKER'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT VIDEOS Notable Videos Round-Up 10pm / Free	 <p>PHILLIPS WWW.LOGANSPUB.COM 1821 COOK STREET (250) 368-2711</p> <p>MON-FRI: 3PM - 1AM SAT: 11AM - 1AM SUN: 11AM - 12AM</p>		

THE Tubuloids

Interview by Stepan Soroka

East Vancouver's The Tubuloids have been steadily delivering surf-inspired punk rock to the masses since their 2013 debut, #Surf Fukushima#. Since then, the band has toured extensively, released a seven inch and a split LP, and has even been added to the roster of legendary Milwaukee-based record label Beer City. Their raucous live show, big personalities and infectious guitar grooves make them a live force to be reckoned with. Not only that, but the boys know how to skate, too. I met up with them at Hastings Bowl, where they probably would have been hanging out anyways, to chat over a couple of beers. Among other things, we discussed their upcoming full length, *It's Getting Weird*. You can scan the QR code below to check out the music video for the album's title track – it lives up to its name.

AU: Absolute Underground: Who are you and why are we here?

Rob: We're The Tubuloids, and you are interviewing us.

AU: Can you explain the significance of where we are right now?

Baxter: Hastings is where me and Dols always skate and hang out. It's our home away from home. It's Mother.

Dusty Dave Dolan: It influences our music a lot.

B: It's the gnarliest, deepest, most bad ass-est place in all of Vancouver.

R: Much love for Mother Hastings.

D: We're her children.

AU: You guys play very surf-influenced music, but I know you better as skateboarders. Can you talk about the connection between surfing, skating and music?

Teddy: I saw Bax at a Night Birds show at the old Iron Rails, and he told me he'd been working on his surf stuff. I'm big into old instrumental 60s surf – Dick Dale, Ventures, Safaris, Trash Men. So we started a band with Dolan, then Rob joined. I bought him a Tank to get that surf sound. I dialed up his cab to get that surf sound.

R: Momma takes care of poppa.

T: I'm the tone Nazi.

D: Surf rock pioneered punk rock and skate rock. Fast and different.

AU: You guys design your own merch and album covers, as well as booking and promoting your own shows. How important is the DIY ethic to your band?

R: It means everything.

T: It's all Baxter. He does everything.

R: We just show up and play. Baxter really spearheads everything creative about the whole band.

T: I'd be playing to no one without Baxter. He's probably the best bandmate I've had in my life.

R: Great guy, but behind the scenes, he cracks the whip. He is a slave driver, that man. He's either the Bax-man or the Bax-hole.

B: You can't rely on other people to do stuff for you. You want something done, you've gotta do it yourself. The main thing I find about putting on shows is you've gotta poster. Nobody posters anymore. If you want your friends to come, sure, make an internet post and maybe you'll get half your friends. Something like 400 people move to Vancouver every day. Some of them must be into punk rock, and they're not your friend online. They might see a poster and want to go to your show. I want people who have never seen us before to come to our shows. Every time we play a show, I see new faces. It's also fun: make a stupid little drawing and post it all over town, man. You might piss somebody off.

D: They might laugh at it,

and then it's embedded in their memory.

AU: Tell us a little bit about your relationship with Beer City Records and what we can expect from your upcoming album?

B: When we put out our seven-inch, we mailed them out to record labels to see if anybody wanted to pick us up. I mailed them to all the independent record labels in Canada and a few select ones in the States, and I remember specifically when I was going to the post office, the Beer City one fell out of the pile. And I was like, "Beer City... are they even gonna want us?" Sure enough, we got an email in a couple of days from Mike, and he was stoked and wanted to put something out.

T: When you told us the news that Beer City wanted to do something, it was like "Whhaooooaaa!"

D: Our favourite bands are on that label, and they deal with skateboarding too.

R: Beer City has a lot of bands that I idolized growing up. MDC, DRI, Verbal Abuse, The Faction. All classics. For them to even take a wink at us...

T: When you're writing DRI and MDC in paint marker on your leather jacket, these bands that mean so much to you, and all of a sudden "Hey, you're part of it," that's pretty fuckin' cool. That is beyond my expectations. It's amazing.

B: So we put out a split with Bronxxx from Osaka, Japan to test the waters. The split did good, so they signed us up for another release. It comes out October 14th. It has eight songs.

AU: In a match between all four of you, who would win in a game of SKATE?

R: Oh, fuck. Dolan.

D: Baxter can beat me at add-a-trick, but I think got him on flatground SKATE.

T: It's Dols.

R: For the record, I could beat all of you in a game of drink.

T: You think you can outdrink Dolan? Holy, you are dreaming. Dolan's not going to bed. He's got the expertise and the experience.

AU: For someone who has never seen you play, what should be expected at a Tubuloids show?

R: Volume. A good time. A lot of dancing.

D: A forty-shot shot-ski.

R: Some crowd surfing on a surfboard.

T: We're not standing still. We're here to entertain

and put on a good show.

AU: Favourite Vancouver venue to play and why?

R: SBC. You've got a skate ramp, you've got a great sound system, a great sound guy. Cecil English is the fucking man. You've got Malcolm and Andrew – great guys and they always treat us well.

T: I like Pat's, too.

B: My favourite venue is any bar that understands that a band is there to bring in people that would not be there otherwise. Any bar that treats



the bands right.

AU: Thanks boys. Last words?

B: It's a poster-eat-poster world out there, so get



out there and poster! Just don't poster over our posters.

R: Where's the afterparty?

[facebook.com/TheTubuloids/tubuloids.com/](https://www.facebook.com/TheTubuloids/tubuloids.com/)

PHOTO CREDIT: Out of Step Productions



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Pale Lips

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Ilona: Ilona (guitar) and Jamie (bass) reportin' for duty! I'm infamous for cruelly subjecting our audiences to my horrible kazoo solos! Bring earplugs.

Jamie: Sparkling.

AU: Can you describe your sound for those of us who have never heard you?

Ilona: It's unlike a lot of bands today. We want

YOU to be the ones having the most fun, so we make sure rock 'n roll is the number one element in our sound. Think Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Little Richard, and the Ramones, with lots of classic power pop influences, like Nikki and the Corvettes, and The Incredible Kiddy Band!

AU: How did Pale Lips form?

Ilona: Our drummer, Lynn, was eager to hone her skills and drum in an all-girl band! After meeting Jamie at a party, she and her bass were on board right away, but it took a few months for [me] to take the offer seriously. Local Karaoke Queen

Jackie was an obvious choice for a singer, et voilà!

AU: You gals channel some old-school girl punk... what is your philosophy when it comes to making music? Do you explore any particular themes or topics?

Ilona: I mostly write about personal aspects in my life I find amusing, or other funny things in everyday life. I'll probably never write a "heavy" tune. It ain't me!

Jamie: All of the songs that I write are about boys. I try to channel Magic Jake from King Tuff when slingin' out bass lines.

AU: Do you face any particular challenges as an all-female group in the music scene?

Ilona: Naaah, not at all, actually.

AU: Any gigs coming up that you're particularly stoked for?

Ilona: We're doing an Oktoberfest this September! Nothing else too marvellous has come our way yet. We opened for The Kids back in 2015, and Paul Collins Beat earlier this year. So the bar has been set pretty high for Pale Lips in terms of froth-at-the-mouth excitement levels about shows.

AU: You just released two songs in June, is that correct? Tell us about it! When can we expect to hear the rest?

Jamie: Those are from our album, *Wanna Be Bad*. There are ten more tunes to come from that one, very soon!

AU: Do you have any plans for further releases in the near future? Any tours?

Jamie: Our *Wanna Be Bad* LP should be out any time now on Hosehead Records. If you like cassettes, you can already order it through Shake! Records. CDs are available online through Waterslide Records in Japan. A two-track 7-inch release might be in our future on an Italian label, but nothing yet is set in stone.

AU: You just played Victoria earlier this year, did you hit up any other West Coast towns? How does the west coast scene compare to playing in Montreal? Any favourite Canadian cities?

Ilona: We also did Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, and

Vancouver... [we] really dug the enthusiasm and hospitality of you Western Canadians! Jamie is from Regina, so we had the most fun playing for all her crazy friends there.

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

Ilona: We've each full-on burped into the



microphone live on stage, probably more than once, and not at all by accident.

AU: Final words for our readers?

Ilona: Keep on reading *Absolute Underground*! The future of punk rock depends on YOU!

facebook.com/palelips
palelips.bandcamp.com

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Adolyne

Interview by Willow Gamberg

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

Skot Hamilton: Skot Hamilton, I do the lion's share of the screaming and am the lesser guitarist in Adolyne. I'm arguably more visible as the bassist for KEN mode, and also have a record coming out later this year with a third band called Grey Light District. I spend the majority of my life with my head rammed into a speaker, trying to go deaf.

AU: Describe your music, for those of us who've never heard it.

SH: That's the million-dollar-question. I've noticed that, between album reviews, promoter one-liners, and occasional in-person insistence, that no two people ever seem to walk away having heard the same band. We're a moody noise-metal band that gets a constant torrent of disparate comparison points, one of the latest being somewhere between The Melvins and Dr. Arthur Yanov. I think that might mean that we're loud and weird, as well as hopelessly earnest and potentially certifiable.

AU: You've been on tour over the last month, do you have any favourite cities you've played? Any places you're looking forward to playing in particular?

SH: Due to our ties with No List records, and my own through playing with KEN mode, I've always loved playing in Winnipeg. They have a heritage of left-field thinking when it comes to heavy music, and it's been a real honour to be treated inclusively by their scene. Calgary probably has our largest concentration of kindred spirits, we have a pocket of people who really seem to love us for all of our faults there. We haven't been out to BC in years, and this will be our first time in Victoria, so we're really excited to make good on the reoccurring promise we've made to finally get our there.

AU: What's life on the road like for Adolyne?

AU: Tell us about your most recent album, *Of Ash/Of Shit/Of Shame*, it's been getting some great reviews? What was the writing process like?

SH: The writing process for our latest record was a bit of a mixed bag. It was our first record with Brett Graham on drums, and breaking in a new member with a vastly different skillset took some time. He's such a unique player, and we wanted to make sure he was locked in to our wavelength before we barrelled in to a new record, and not just to maintain the quality of the band, but to make sure he was relaxed enough to really paint himself in without reservation. By the time we were past that and some financial trouble, I was getting precious about all of the material because I was trying to harness the fevered pitch of a full existential crisis and if a song wasn't emotionally out of control enough that I was thinking about hanging from the rafters when it was over, then I needed to beat on it for months until it felt volatile enough.

AU: Does the record explore any particular themes or topics, lyrically or musically? Are there any influences of yours that might surprise us?

SH: It's an extremely selfish, bitter animal. I was being governed almost entirely by self-doubt at the time and was getting lost in futility as a philosophical inevitability and was feeling overwhelmed by that notion. I value integrity and honesty to a fault, and that ugly morass was the only real constant during that period, so as embarrassingly self-involved as all of that is, I'm satisfied to have bottled all of those bad vibes.

The only moment of overt influence that steered a song was on a B-side that we haven't released yet. I was giving in to my hopeless dedication to Greg Dulli and the Afghan Whigs when I wrote it, and it doesn't sound anything like Adolyne at all. Anyone who doesn't know us personally might be surprised by that, I suppose.

AU: We caught your set at The Palomino during Sled Island, and it was quite the show. What is the importance of a live performance to

you as a band? What is your philosophy when it comes to playing your music for an audience?

SH: Thanks for saying so! That Palomino bill was really weird for us, we were really excited that so many people came out that early for us, we were prepared for the worst. We're really strict with ourselves about spilling our guts every night. I feel a responsibility to the songs, promoters, and audience to execute a full exorcism every show, I can only imagine feeling like a fraud if I was only partially engaged. It takes a lot of effort to promote a show, and the bulk of our audience don't tend to be well-to-do, so I take their time and money very seriously. If a single person pays admission, they're getting everything we have.

AU: You're based in Saskatoon - what is the metal scene like there? How has the city shaped you as a group - have the bleak prairie winters contributed to the development of your sound?

SH: The best music coming out of Saskatoon are groups not relying on the scene at large to keep them motivated. We have a bunch of really great "capital M" metal bands in this city, but we have virtually no cross-over with their crowds on the general whole, and have been politely reminded that we aren't a "real" metal band a number of times, which suits us just fine. Our audience has had a tendency to be a patchwork of people from all over the show-going map, rather than one uniform group. I think that the notion of fixation and aforementioned futility can be traced back to scenes from a prairie upbringing. If Nietzsche's abyss isn't twenty feet into an endless snowy expanse from a broken down car in the dead of February, then I don't know where the fuck it is.

AU: What's next for you after this tour? Will you be going back into the studio?

SH: Adolyne lost a ton of road time to KEN mode's demanding schedule over the last few years, so I'm doing my best to make it up to everyone right now. We will be doing our best to make it out

SASKATOON SLEAZE



east before the year is through, and have started plotting out some European dates for the new year.

We will be back in the studio in the fall to track some covers for a tribute record and a few splits we have lined up, and will also be looking to release a 19-minute B-side from the *Of Ash* sessions, if we can get the right split partner to commit. We've started working on new material over the last few months, and the results have been quite a bit more violent thus far, so unless the vibe around our office takes a serious left turn, our next batch of material should be mainly tooth and claw.

AU: Any final words for our readers? What should we know about Adolyne that we don't already?

SH: Thanks for your tolerance. If we missed your city this summer, lash out at us on social media and we'll try to come for a visit, as long as we can stay on your cramped apartment floor.

facebook.com/adolyneband
adolyne.bandcamp.com

PHOTO SOURCE: Adolyne

INK SLINGERS



Nessie Greenwiche

Interview by Billy Hopeless

Once again, I get tattooed and an artist gets interviewed. Today, I'm finally getting my Rocky Horror lips done, and who better to help me than the mythical horned beauty known as Nessie, who is wearing her sparkly Rocky Horror columbia shorts just for the occasion. When along time ally of mine asked me to find him a new artist, as he was reopening his tattoo shop on Granville and Nelson, I was pleased to say I found this wonderful monster of an artist. I'm pleased to now have the pleasure of saying, "Lets loch 'n roll... here's Nessie!"

Absolute Underground: What makes a good tattoo? What does tattooing mean to you ?

Nessie: Patience. And then, of course, a skilled hand. Tattooing is my world right now, it's pretty much all I got. I have always held it in very high regard, to be honest. A good tattoo is what the artist and client to create together with patience and trust.

AU: Did you create other art before you started tattooing?

Nessie: Yes! I've been an artist my whole life. I was mostly very timid and shy about it until I started tattooing. I still am, I suppose. I draw, paint, and silkscreen, among other crafty thangs.

AU: How long have you been tattooing?

Nessie: I have been tattooing for a little over four years now... I started out on the Sunshine Coast, where I lived and worked with some of BC's best artists. I have been getting tattooed for almost 20 years now, though... wow.

AU: Do you have a particular style you excel in, or does it change with each piece ?

Nessie: My work consists of strong, clean lines and bold colour. So, naturally, I love cartoons and graphic art, but I am pretty open to whatever. I love Japanese style. I like lettering too... kinda crazy.

AU: What's your favourite piece on your own body? What's your favourite that you've put onto someone else's?

Nessie: My fave tattoo on myself? Rose Tint My World, done by James Acrow many moons ago.

Hands down, the unicorn in the meat grinder with a rainbow



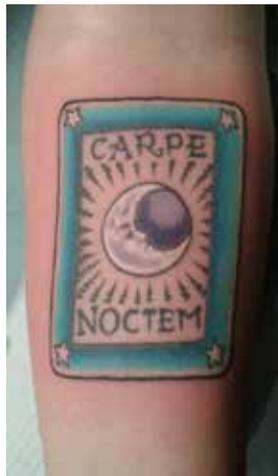
coming out of it is my favourite tattoo I have done to date. It was on my good pal Ben, who also got the Elephant Man skull that I drew up. Ben is rad. Alice Cooper once paid a lovely compliment to a skeleton family I did on my friend Mira. And I just tattooed Mark Stoermer from the Killers today... so that was kinda cool.

AU: For me, music plays a key element to the whole experience of getting tattooed. What's harmonizing in the background to the buzz of your gun?

Nessie: My machine is silent. I am listening to Gwar today... my favourite playlist on Google Play is, "I was a Teenage Werewolf"... so yeah, a lotta Ozzy lately, the Cramps, Guitar Wolf... 60s garage rock really gets me going... the Sonics, King Khan. Lotsa Bowie, Lou Reed... I'm all over the place. and Bear (our piercer) often rock out to the Polysics, Shonen Knife, and Deadbolt. We are eclectic, to say the least...

AU: Tell us about your current digs at Granville Tattoo, right in the drunken, stoned party hearty of downtown. Who is working there, and why should anyone go to get pierced and inked there, in a city where there are more tattoo shops than slice pizza joints, and all saying they're the best in town?

Nessie: I am new to Granville Street Tattoo, but these guys have been on Granville for over 20 years. Working in the heart of the entertainment district is interesting to say the least... The space we have is awesome, right



Rock n roll! Me

across the street from Adrenaline, haha! I love it! We have Bear (the piercer) who started piercing in 1992, (and Darryl (my comrade) has been tattooing for 32 years.

AU: I've known some tattoo artists who won't do things that they don't deem worthy or cool, and others who'll do anything for a buck. Where do you sit on the old fence of artistic integrity vs a job?

Nessie: Yeah... I don't do necks or hands or fingers (sorry babies), I just don't do 'em. I don't care how bad you want it. Nope. Other than that, I don't judge (for the most part). I just try to make whatever I get presented with into something tattoo-worthy. I tattooed 'Your Name' on this dude's ass one night. He is a local and a regular now.

AU: Finally, what words or thoughts do you wish you could telepathically put into anyone's head before they walk in to ask you about getting tattooed?

Nessie: Research. References. Respect.

[facebook.com/tattoosbynessie](https://www.facebook.com/tattoosbynessie)

PHOTO CREDIT: Cat Ashbee

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Legends Valley Music Festival

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your role within the Legends Valley Music Festival?

Matthew Harvey: Hi, great to talk to you guys. I'm Matthew Harvey, founder of the event and an executive producer. I'm also the CEO of BC Bud Depot, along with the rhythm guitar and lead vocals for Antipolitic, one of the bands playing at Legends Valley Music Festival.

AU: What is the Legends Valley Music Festival all about? How did it begin?

MH: It's a festival where legends come to play, and legends are created! This will be our first year, and to start things off with a bang, we selected an incredible venue, the biggest outdoor amphitheatre, Laketown Ranch, in the province near Duncan, Vancouver Island. We then teamed up with our new friends at John Donnelly and Associates — who are fast becoming legends in the event industry — to bring in the big headline acts like Sublime with Rome, Bif Naked and the Sheepdogs.

AU: What sets this festival apart from other BC music festivals? Can you describe the spirit of the fest?

MH: Our lineup and the location are beyond epic, really. The venue is the new Laketown Ranch in beautiful Lake Cowichan. It boasts 172 sprawling acres of complete awesomeness for camping and listening to bands rock out on multiple stages, all set amidst the mountains and forest. On top of that, we are officially cannabis friendly! We'll be hosting Bio Cup Canada, an international Cannabis Cup competition complete with a vendor expo showcasing the latest products and technologies. So we're combining BC's pristine beauty with great music and a chance to see what BC's craft cannabis industry has to offer. Good times all around.

AU: There is an incredibly varied lineup on offer this year, from Powerclown and the Forgotten Rebels to Bif Naked, The Boom Booms and The Sheepdogs. What do you look for when you build your lineup for this event? Is this sort of diversity integral to the Legends Valley Festival?

MH: Well I definitely had a major influence on this [lineup]. I grew up listening to the Sex Pistols, Ramones, Forgotten Rebels, Social Distortion, and all the other amazing punk bands of my era. I was a skateboarder and a cannabis grower and this was my music. I remember seeing Bif Naked play with Gorilla Gorilla at an all-ages show at PD's Hot Shop in downtown Vancouver when I was 14 — and she is such an amazing artist. The bassist of Powerclown is one of my oldest friends and they were a natural fit. Who doesn't want to smoke weed and see a bunch of clowns playing Iron Maiden?!

I have to give credit to Donnelly and Associates for expanding the lineup into something really special, though. They had the contacts to bring in some of the best acts in music today: The Sheepdogs, Sublime with Rome and Dirty Heads, plus local greats like Five Alarm Funk, the Boom Booms and Daniel Wesley. We've already mentioned Bif Naked. We're talking music royalty, here! For those who like electronic music, we have master DJs Mat The Alien and The Librarian on Friday and Saturday respectively, and we just added the Kottonmouth Kings and Funkdoobiest!

AU: Are there any acts you're particularly looking forward to catching? Who are you most excited to see perform this year?

MH: Other than my Antipolitic band mates? Well, I am super excited to see The Forgotten Rebels out here. They haven't been out this way or played in BC for 15 years! I saw them once at the Starfish Room way back in '96 — they put on an amazing show then, and I can't wait to see what they will do on our stage. It's an honour to open for them. Bif Naked is coming back from a musical hiatus, so she's sure to rock the house down. The Kottonmouth Kings always put on an amazing show. Of course, Sublime with Rome are the headliners for a reason, and it has been years since they've played in BC! People are in for a treat.

AU: The festival is also host to the Bio Cup Canada, can you tell us what this event is all about? What can we expect to see when we wander through the Expo? Why is this kind of event important, why does your festival choose to host it?

MH: We are all about the Bio Philosophy: the organic growing process and culture that is good for the earth, and ensures a reliable, safe medical cannabis product, as well as all the proper information for the recreational consumer. Our event brings

together cannabis professionals and enthusiasts from all over the world whose common objective is to exchange knowledge about the use, cultivation and the legalization of cannabis that is taking place around the globe. Festival-goers will have the chance to walk through cannabis

AU: Do you have any final words for potential attendees? What should we know about Legends Valley that we don't already?

MH: It's a piece of history in the making, really — a chance to rock out to Sublime with Rome and the Sheepdogs, Bif Naked, The Forgotten Rebels and the rest, all while being part of the cannabis revolution. We're turning a corner in Canadian cannabis history, and this festival gives people a fun way to take part.

legendsvalleymusicfestival.com/
facebook.com/LegendsValleyMusicFestival

pavilions and to meet the people behind the movement! The Bio Cup was conceptualized and started in Barcelona, and has gone off successfully for three years now, so it was only natural to bring such an awesome event to Canada.

AU: According to your website, Randy and Mr. Lahey of Trailer Park Boys will be in attendance — what will their role be at the festival? Will they be involved with the Bio Cup?

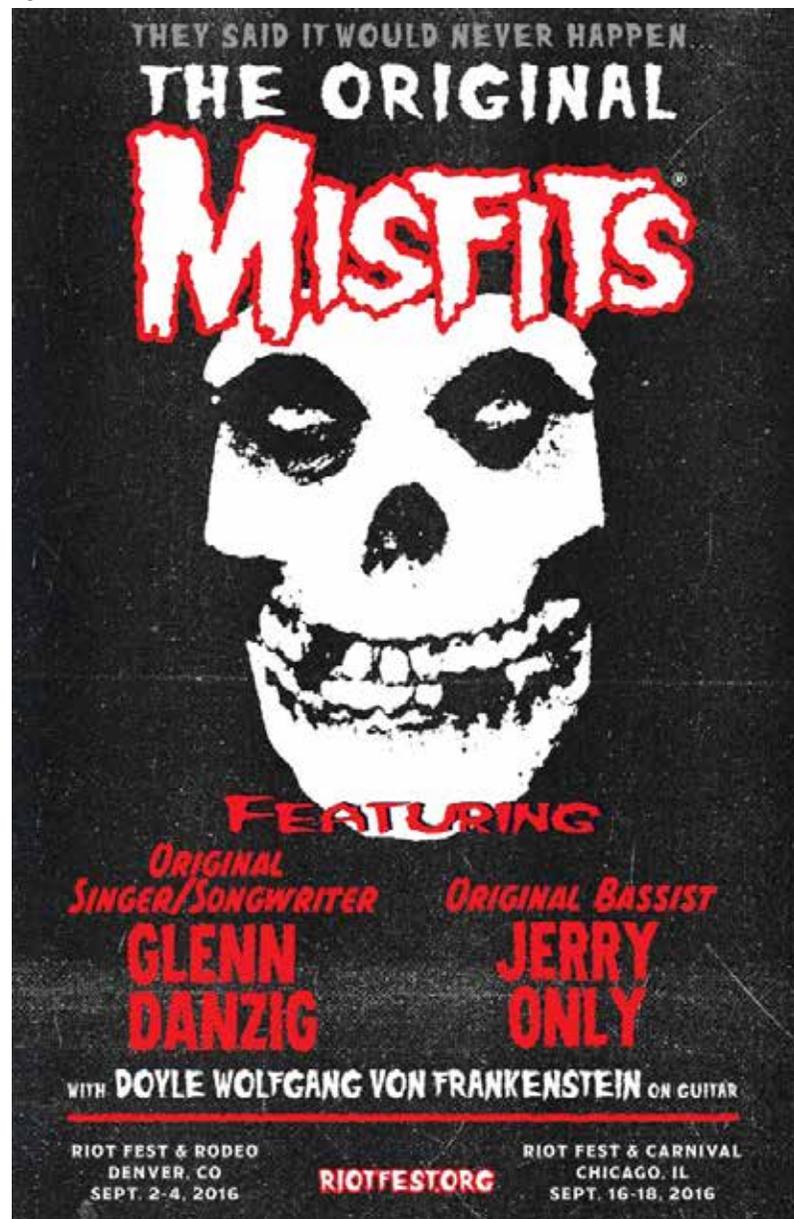
MH: Randy and Mr. Lahey will be handing out the awards to the cannabis industry. They're sure to make it a lot of fun! Although they're not on the judges panel, they both appreciate good cannabis and know how to make people laugh and smile, so they're in the spirit of the good time we're looking to have at this festival.

AU: What does the future of the festival hold? Do you have any long term plans or goals for this event? What can we look forward to in the future?

MH: We'll strive to improve every year, with more big-name musicians. We already have the best new venue on the coast. With legalization coming soon to Canada, we have to make sure that our bio philosophy is recognized, and that 'craft cannabis' has a place in the cannabis landscape. We'll continue to showcase where the innovators and pioneers of the cannabis industry are pushing cannabis into the future.

AU: What is your essential weekend supply kit for the Legends Valley Festival? Is there one essential item you recommend that all campers bring with them?

MH: Just yourselves. Everything you could need will be there. Just bring a throw-down blanket to lounge on the grass and watch the show. If you are a licensed medical marijuana user in Canada, you will definitely want to grab a judge's kit.





Valient Thorr

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Hello there! How's the tour circuit, and where are you at the moment?

Valient Himself: We actually finished our US/Canada tour a week and a half ago, and we took a much needed eight or nine-day break before gearing up for our European tour. As for me, I'm sitting in the airport at JFK in New York on a nine-hour layover, finishing up some interviews. My break was filled by meeting my brand new niece, binge-watching *Stranger Things*, doing massive amounts of yard work, having a cook-out with my buds, and getting my part of everything ready for the release of our seventh album, *Old Salt!*

AU: We caught your performance as part of Sled Island in Calgary, it was a wicked set! How was your Sled Island experience?

VH: Man, ever since we played that sold-out gig with Motorhead and Clutch at Flames Central by the Flame Dome back in 2011, Calgary has been nothing but completely amazing for us. The people are great, the city is great, the view from the tower is great, our hotel was great, the food at Palomino Smokehouse was great. Seeing our bands and friends was great. Needless to say, we had an awesome fucking time. I finally got to walk into a Tardis, Doctor Who-style (bigger on the inside), hung with New Bomb Turks for a minute, and even got to see a bit of Guided By Voices' set.

AU: What's the craziest experience you've had on tour so far? What is your essential road kit?

VH: Well, I don't know, that's always a hard one to answer. Especially when you have to think back on 15 years and over 2000 gigs. I think a recent one that comes to mind was in France at Calais, when some refugees broke into our trailer and hid in there trying to get into the UK via the ferry to Dover. That was pretty nuts, and happened so fast that we didn't really think about how heavy the situation was, and we weren't privy to how that was also driving politics over there as well, as we've seen played out recently with the Brexit.

My essential road kit now has changed over the years. I guess I always bring an iPod full of tunes, I bring shampoo, a book to read, some shades, my phone and passport. I think this trip is as light as I've ever packed.

AU: You've mentioned in other interviews that you believe that live performance trumps other forms of art - what goes into a live VT show? Is anything scripted or is it all just done on the fly?

VH: You are always on the fly, to a certain extent. We have some things, some bullet points if you will, that we like to talk about. We definitely change it up when people start expecting things. We haven't done the rowboat in a few tours now, because everyone was expecting us to do that. It's a bummer because I love to do that, but I don't ever want people to come and see the same old thing and be like, "Well, that was exactly like it was last year, I don't need to see it again." I'd like them to be excited or wary, or scared or pumped or anything but complacent. Scripted,

never, but I do have a lot of things I try to express, and sometimes I have time to ramble, and sometime I don't get nearly enough off my chest. And sometimes I have too much time, and don't even get to the stuff I wanna say. It's all about where your head is at, and I think staying current and informed helps you stay relevant.

AU: In today's age of digital downloads and crowdsourcing albums, would you say that live performance has become even more essential for a band to sell their music?

VH: Well, whether you are talking about heavy metal or bluegrass or electronic stuff or whatever, good live music has no equal. Good live performance only adds to that feeling and excitement. The reason that it has that power is that it hits many of your senses at once. I could fill this paper talking about how things have changed with music and the production and manufacturing and the purchasing and consumption of it just since WE'VE been in the business, which is a mere 15 years. One quick anecdote is that I was looking at these huge boxes of CDs that I have at my Earth mother's house and I was lamenting why I didn't buy them as vinyl, and my Earth girlfriend said, "Well you know, we didn't even have a way to have portable music until after college." And she's right. I personally bought cassettes at least five years longer than any of my buddies, and when I switched over to CDs, I continued buying those (as well as taped and vinyl) well into the early 2000s. That is why our first few albums sold so many copies back then, as well. Only then, maybe 2002-ish, were people getting iPods and other mp3 devices. But yes, beyond playing live and staying in front of the people, the way social media works today as opposed to even five years ago, there are SO many people on it and connected, that most stuff gets covered up within the hour. You have to really try hard to stay in front of folks, and if you're not out there doing it, you will be forgotten.

AU: Do you guys all have day jobs as well or is Valient Thorr a full-time commitment? What do you guys do with your meagre days off?

VH: We didn't have day jobs for maybe 10-12 years. I recently purchased a house, so I have bills for the first time since 2005. I used to be a sixth grade teacher. I've always made art along the way, and now I drive a cab in Richmond, VA to offset the bills. Some of the guys teach music. Eidan is recording bands now at his studio, Palm Reader Recording.

AU: Tell us about your new release, *Old Salt*. How does it compare to your previous albums? What can we expect to hear on it?

VH: It's our seventh album, our first with Napalm Records, and our first with this particular lineup. The bulk of it was written by Eidan and Storm Thorr, and Iggy, Daimos and I came in and added our parts. It was recorded down in Wilmington NC, our first time recording sort of at home in five records, so it was very comfortable. We didn't record it all together like [we] usually [do], which is biting us in the ass for using up so much time, but we got a real feel for the place and once the groove was locked in, we started writing some killer jams. I believe we stepped up once again



in the process. See, I find significance in the fact that we keep learning during each recording. In that way, I view each release so far as a success, and each one better than the last. Other folks will tell you they like this one or that because of these songs and that era, and I do that to a certain extent with artists that I love, but being a part of this group, I can't help but think about how much I know now, and what we've learned compared to when we began. When we just started out, we didn't know anything. I think you can tell, ha! I mean, we were lucky that people dug it and everything and it's always fun to revisit the records when we make another one to see if it still sounds like "Valient Thorr." Does it have that VT sound? Does it have the meanings buried within, will it have that staying power that will last beyond our own lifetime? And I think very much that this one does.

AU: Are there any cities coming up that you're particularly stoked to play? Do you have a favourite Canadian city on your tour circuit?

VH: Aw man, we always love coming to Canada. We were excited to hit Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Calgary up again, because we don't get to hit them as much as Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. But every single one of them was

awesome. As far as coming up, we have some really killer festivals in Europe we are about to hit. Ieper Fest in Belgium is gonna be great, as well as Sonic Blast in Portugal, Disintegrate Your Ignorance in Italy, and Motocultor in France.

AU: What's next for Valient Thorr? Touring for the rest of the year? Any festivals? New material?

VH: More tours, but none that I can announce yet! Stay tuned though, 'cause at least one is gonna be fantastic!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Final words for your Canadian audiences?

VH: I don't know! Maybe check out a rad comic series by Brian K. Vaughn called *Paper Girls*. There are seven issues out, and I'm currently enjoying that. Cheers boys! See ya again soon!

www.valientthorr.com/

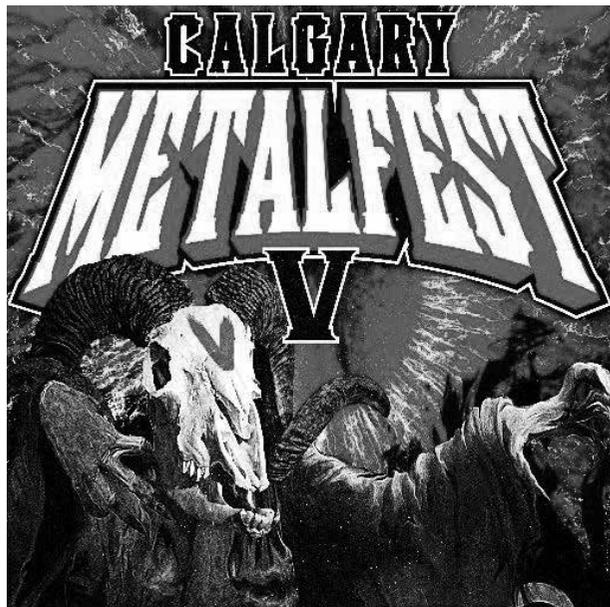
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Calgary Metal Fest

Interview with Nate Reno
By Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Give us some history on the fest, for those who've never heard about it. How did it start? How long has it been around, what year are we in now?

Nate Reno: CMF started as a celebration of my 30th birthday, and to give a good show to working bands that I've met on tour with Kyoktys. This is the fifth year.

AU: What sets Calgary Metal Fest apart from other Western Canadian metal festivals? What makes this fest special to you?

NR: CMF is an indoor fest, so there's no camping. It's also right downtown Calgary. Lots of the other fests are outdoor, and maybe a bit away from a city. CMF [takes place] at three different venues during the fest, but only one per night. In past years, we've had multiple venues running at the same time, but not this year. CMF is special to me because of the quality of bands and the friendships that are made by doing it.

AU: Are there any major changes to this year's festival in comparison to previous years? What can attendees expect to experience there?

NR: This is the first year we've done any of CMF at Flames Central. This being an old theatre, it will make for great sightlines and great sound. They have a giant screen there, and we will be utilizing it as much as possible. Should make for a great show!

AU: Tell us about this year's lineup! Are there any bands you're particularly looking forward to seeing?

NR: Yes there are. We have gone out of our way to choose some of the finest local talent Calgary and Alberta have to offer. Disciples of Power is one of my favourite bands of all time. The Order of Chaos are killer and have just come off of tours in Europe and China! Fornication, Black Pestilence and Concrete Funeral are all top-notch local talent, check them out if you haven't. I've been trying to book Toxic Holocaust since CMF II, super pumped to see them. The Exalted Piledriver has

never played in Western Canada! The support for that night is crazy too; Crystal Mess, Savage Streets and Profits of Crime are killer old-school punk/thrash crossover stuff and Accostal are a new band I mixed recently, really talented young guys.

AU: Tell us about the Historic Night of Canadian Metal you have planned! How did this come about? Why will this be a special event?

NR: This idea has been knocked around for years and I wasn't sure if it was going to happen at all. When I got ahold of the bands, they caught on instantly and were down. I was surprised really, I didn't think they'd all be available but I think moving the date from June to September really helped with all of that. If you're into these bands, you'll

know why this is historic. These four bands are the godfathers of Canadian thrash metal. As far as I can tell, this bill has never happened anywhere in the world, EVER! And who knows, it may never happen again.

AU: Are there any other special features or events to be included in this year's Calgary Metal Fest?

NR: We have arranged for VIP access to this event, so those that do know can see some soundchecks, meet and greet the bands and get some autographs. There is also access to a special VIP viewing area. This is our first time doing this and we're excited to do it!

AU: What should people know about the fest? What would a survival kit for the average attendee include? Is there one item we should not be without?

NR: We will have our website set up with a schedule on the day of the show, so you will be able to see who is on, and when. We have secured group rates at The Hyatt and Sandman Hotels in Calgary should you be coming in from out of town. Just bring a sweater, you never know what the weather will do in Calgary! Bring shorts for the same reason.

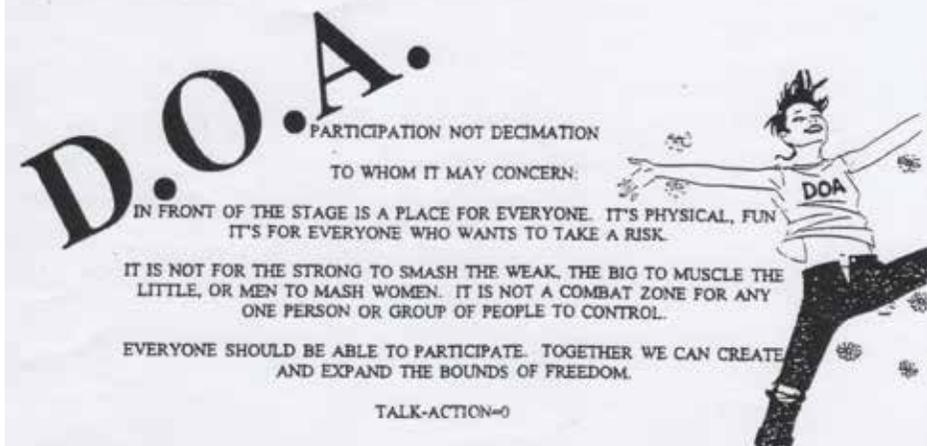
AU: What are your hopes for the future of the fest? Any dream headliners? Venues?

NR: I'm excited at the prospect of the festival continuing to grow. It was a big step to get the fest to where it is this year, and I can't imagine where it will go next. Headliners are a funny thing because if they aren't available, they are simply not available. There are a million variables like that in something like this.

AU: Do you have any final words for potential attendees? What should we know about CMF that we don't already?

NR: Tickets are not sold out. They are available from calgarymetalfest.com and Sloth Records. Nancy and I have physical tickets too, so hit us up at a show if you wanna save a couple bucks on service fees. Other than that, show up being ready to have a good time, and have government issued ID as all the shows are 18+. Thanks everybody! See you there!

Calgary Metal Fest takes place Sept 14 - Sept 17.
Tickets at <https://calgarymetalfest.com/>



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Lita Ford

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Rock 'n roll pioneer Lita Ford started her career alongside Joan Jett in the controversial, all-girl teenage rock group The Runaways, in the 1970s. After a fame catapult launched her across the world, she shifted gears and went solo – writing material, playing guitar and singing across world stages in the 1980s, to this day. *Time Capsule* is a series of unearthed recordings from the Los Angeles studios Lita once frequented. They evoke a chill studio atmosphere, where she and stars like Dave Navarro, Gene Simmons, Billy Sheehan, and many more got together to jam and relax on some tracks with no goal in mind. Lita found this series of tapes at her island home in the Caribbean, brought them back to LA, and decided to take them off the reel and onto digital to release them. This album is some captured history from a golden time and place in rock – Los Angeles in the 80s.

Absolute Underground: Good afternoon, how are you and where are you now?

Lita Ford: Los Angeles, in my house, I just woke up. Drinking coffee, Newmans Organic.

AU: The new record, *Time Capsule*, is aptly named: a series of recordings with fellow stars from the LA Sunset Strip glory days. Can you share how these recordings originally took place, and the attitude around them? Were they all recorded at the same studio?

LF: No, they were not recorded at the same time, but at two different studios in Los Angeles. We were holding onto these recordings for a later date, to give a little something to the fans of the 80s for memorabilia. *Time Capsule* is just that, a little piece of rock history in time.

AU: Why release *Time Capsule* now? Why was the time right to share those recordings?

LF: It seemed a lot of people were missing the 80s and the people who played on 80s tunes... I was one. So I thought, let's release this as a gift to the fans who missed the 80s because they were too



young or because they just plain ol' missed the 80s. No particular reason, really. It just seemed like the right timing.

AU: On a time-related note, you've been in the music industry for four decades. There have been so many changes, in terms of how this industry works. What hasn't changed?

LF: Nothing hasn't changed, except some old friends... Thank God for them. I still use my 80s-made BC Rich guitars, and early 80s-made Marshall amps, JCM 800s, plus the DSL HD 100s, which are fairly new.

AU: In other interviews, you've announced some new original material coming soon. Tell us about your upcoming songs and the inspiration for them!

LF: Riffs, and some intricate guitar playing. I want this next album to attract attention from everyone who plays an instrument or doesn't play an instrument with its catchy hooks. It's a dark album, but I've always liked dark.

AU: The 2016 biography *Living Like A Runaway* was a candid look back at your life, which intertwined with so many huge stars. What kind of feedback did you get from people you wrote about?

AU: Too much to answer in one email question, haha! But I've gotta say, if you are a doctor and

work with the nurses, you are going to end up looking to the nurses for help. Same goes with musicians.

AU: Your book detailed sharing love with the most famous acts in rock. What makes a good lover?

LF: If I were a man, would you ask that question? No! The stories weren't about sharing love so much, or how good they were or weren't, but more about the mischievous stories that surround the fun, music, and love. The 80s were sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll. I was one of the only single females. What would one expect? No one was married with children during those years.

AU: You are an undisputed hero of rock 'n roll. You've had so many adventures and tours and forgot more lessons than the average person will ever remember. Do you take a mentorship role for new musicians? Are you seeking to manage/coach new bands and pass on guidance?

LF: No, I am not seeking them. But, if they should seek me out, or if I find a band I love, I would approach them, yes.

AU: Is there a band you're following right now, who has music you really enjoy? What is on your playlist?

LF: I did record with a band I know from Edmonton, called Savage Playground, talented young musicians... I'm proud to help them! This time I had some downtime while they were in Hollywood, so we recorded their demos in The DogHouse Studio in Woodland Hills, California. Great, talented musicians, and wonderful, focused people. I wish them the very best, and they will



always have me to back them up.

AU: Thank you for your time! Last words to the faithful rockers in Canada?

LF: Enjoy *Time Capsule*!

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PHOTO CREDIT: Mark Weiss

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The Flatliners

Interview by Michael Luis

Over the past decade or so, Toronto's The Flatliners have proven themselves to be an unstoppable force in Canadian punk. Whether it be as teenage ska-punk darlings or the melodic-hardcore hit-machine they are today, they've assembled an army of passionate fans, both domestically and abroad. *Absolute Underground's* Michael Luis sat down with frontman Chris Cresswell this past June in Vancouver, during the city's iteration of the Levitation festival.

Absolute Underground: Pretty simple starter question, how's the tour been so far?

Chris Cresswell: The tour's been great. We started last week in Edmonton with two shows. We have a lot of great friends in Edmonton showing a lot of love there. It was cool, we kicked off the tour with four solid days in Edmonton just hanging out, but when we left... we felt like fucking zombies – party zombies. But it's great, man.

AU: So, you guys are on Fat Wreck Chords, and they've been making a documentary. What was it like being a part of it?

CC: I did two interviews, because [during] the first interview I was too drunk.

AU: Which is almost more appropriate for Fat.

CC: (Laughs) I haven't seen it yet, but the guy Shaun – there's Shaun and Chris that were making it – they told me that there's still a bit of the first interview in there and I think I'm just yelling and

so fucking wasted. I'm kind of terrified to see it for that (laughs). But it was truly an honour. I'm 28 years old and grew up on NOFX, Lagwagon, No Use For a Name, Propagandhi and Good Riddance. Being a part of that family for almost ten years now, it leaves an impression on you. I think it was only a matter of time until somebody told that story. I'm glad they are, because it

could've been done in a really cheesy way. I haven't seen it yet, but I know these dudes and that they're going to do it real well. It's not all sunshine, either. There's got to be some fucking darkness in that story. I'm excited to see it.

AU: I don't think it would be a Flatliners interview if I didn't ask you a bit about ska...

CC: Sure, man, let's do it.

AU: You guys ever still hang with some ska, in the van or whatever?

CC: Fuck yeah, man. Suicide Machines, Operation Ivy, Assorted Jelly Beans, yeah, we still

rock that shit all of the time. The Slackers, Toots, The Specials. Those are our roots, and we've never forgotten them, and it was just a thing that we were so young when we started, and that was solely what we were listening to, those bands... Leftover Crack, Choking Victim, I still love. It's such a supportive scene.

AU: When can we expect new Flatliners material?

CC: We always take our sweet-ass time working on a record. I believe we're going to try our best to put something out before the end of the year. Hopefully we can make that happen. If not, it'll



be early next year. Last year, our plan was to not really tour at all and work on this record, [but] then we ended up doing a few tours, because we just can't not; it's just in your bones eventually, and you feel weird being at home for a while.

AU: With every record, there's always a slight change in your sound. Is that the case with this one?

CC: I think it's the next logical step, you know what I mean? It's not crazy different, I don't think. It's always tough to describe it, because it's more different to us than it would be to anyone else. It's always hard to gauge, but the best way I could put it is that it's the next logical step. [We're] always trying to be better.

Theflatliners.com

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GORGUTS

Gorguts

Interview with Luc Lemay

By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Good day sir, where are you now? Set the scene for us.

Luc Lemay: Since the album was released, I've been doing a lot of interviews. I actually started jamming again to write some new music, though I don't know what project it will be for. Also, we came back from a great tour three weeks ago in Europe, with Psycroptic, Dysrhythmia, and Nero Di Marte.

AU: In this performance, did you focus strictly on the new record?

LL: Of course, the new record was the focus of the set because of the length of the songs. That was the main reason for the tour, to promote the record. The record wasn't out yet, as we left the third week of March, and toured 'til April 17th. It was great to play the record without having [released it] yet – the first impression people have is the live situation. Of course, people have heard one single, but getting the whole picture is another story.

AU: It is quite a record, I'm floored by it. You elevated the art form bigtime with the last release, *Coloured Sands*, exploring Tibetan history, and now *Pleiades Dust*, with a Baghdad history focus. You're giving death metal the space to be political, and intellectual... How refreshing!

LL: I'm not too political with music, there are plenty of styles to do that. Me, I don't want to get into finger-pointing with music. Like, "Bad Chinese people, killing the Tibetan people," I don't want to get into that. People can add one-plus-one, no problem; listeners can draw their own conclusions. I don't want to do that. I'm more interested in talking about the beauty of the country and philosophy and then, the very sad fate they had with the Chinese invasion. Now, it is the same thing with the library. First things first, I was really fascinated with that place. When I first discovered the story about it, there was no question, that was going to be the topic of the lyrics. When I get that feeling, like a sledgehammer hit in the forehead, [when I discover] a topic and it is like opening Pandora's Box! Wow, I just want to learn more about it, you know? So for me, I want to share about something that really [makes me passionate]. It is a story I want to share, and music is a great excuse to talk about those amazing stories. I feel that death metal, depending on what angle you bring it, through our experience with this Tibet topic, and now the Near East library topic, I feel I can talk about any story now. It doesn't lack any heaviness or dark ambiance or whatever. I think it came out really good. The topic is just great. It is a beautiful story.

AU: I had never heard of this library before this interview, what kinds of research did you do when you heard of the topic? What books did you read, or places did you visit?

LL: I discovered the topic and story by reading a book review in a magazine, the book was called *The House of Wisdom* by Jonathan Lyons, and on the cover it had the astrolabe. It was that image that caught my attention. That tool, you see on our cover as well, on the main head in the center. The astrolabe was a tool to orientate oneself in the desert... All those sharp points that you see, those are very specific stars; by turning it, you orient yourself to the Universe. Then I got this book, the Lyons book, but the narrative angle he had did not really hook me. I did more research and discovered another book called *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance* by Jim Al-Khalili. This author did a three-part documentary for the BBC. It's called *The Science of Islam*. I watched it maybe twenty times, taking so many notes... I really like the approach Khalili took in the book. He explores the historical point of view... and explains scientific discoveries. It is written in a way everyone can understand,

it doesn't get ultra-scientific in description. This book and the documentary was the main source to write the lyrics. In the documentary he talks of the library, but I put more emphasis on the library, because that was the place that everything happened. They gathered from all over the East to share knowledge

and great discoveries were made, like algebra and astronomy. They embraced the Greek discoveries of astronomy and brought it to the next level. Very inspiring!

AU: It is powerful to consider the album, what it describes, is a period where Middle Eastern culture was so far ahead of the West in terms of Europe in terms of science. And now, in modern day times, there is a popular opinion that these roles have reversed. At the same time the period of enlightenment is taking place in Baghdad, the history of Europe points to a dark age of repression. How does the past relate to today, with regards to making this record?

LL: Actually, I'm very happy that this topic found me, because with all the political situations and terrorist attacks, that is not a place in the world that is having very good press, you know? And people, that is all they know of the Middle East. They kind of like being angry at this place in the world. So, that was not a problem for me, like, "I won't talk about this wonderful library in Baghdad because now in the world, it is not going well there, and I don't want to do good press for them." I find it sad what is happening there, [caused] by a little group of people. I don't want to put all the Middle East in the same basket, because of a group of threatening people. I found it interesting to go against the current popular opinion about this place. We are releasing this record and all I do is praise everything about this place and how wonderful it was. Ask anybody today of Baghdad, and they will say, "It is a crazy place, bombing, poverty..." but it was so much more. That was not the mission I had, I was fascinated about this place, about books, and thinkers, and wanted to pay homage to this group of people that pushed knowledge forward. It is an ode to curiosity.

AU: In Canadian history, the idea of a 500-year-old library is hard to grasp. That is longer than the European concept of Canada as nation, has existed.

LL: What fascinates me with the Islamic golden age was that, just with papyrus and quills and ink, these people would push their concepts so far and discover about all these things that we still use to this day... That makes my jaw drop to the floor. Of course, we still have people that push their curiosity. When you learn about this library, learning was very valued in society. In the documentary, in Southern Spain, the Abbasid empire, they made it that far, there were social rules created then. If you couldn't read or write, you couldn't get a job. It was important. They kind of raised the bar to make it an important and intellectual society. It was in fashion, if you wanted to be part of society, and work, be a part of the community, you had to be educated. It instilled a performance-based society. They valued education, bottom line.

AU: This encouragement to study, and participate.

LL: If you have an uneducated society, you can't push the boundaries for innovation and research. Even then, very early in the A.D. age, they understood this was important in a society, to be educated. This really struck me as beautiful.

AU: It is a lot to chew on to think how important it was at time.

LL: Isn't it inspiring to imagine it? To think of all the scrolls and books, filled with concepts and information and philosophy! It is wonderful.

AU: Have you gotten feedback from Iraqi Gorguts fans, or Iraqi people? Maybe it is too early in the release for it to travel that far?

LL: No, but maybe it's gonna find its way. I'm going to make a parallel with *Coloured Sands*. One day, I was looking on the web for articles about the record, reviews and such, and I found a site made by the Tibetan community. It wasn't about western people talking about Tibet, but more about Tibetan people living in America, and the record had made its way there. There were no people who were metal fans on this website, but they posted a big photo of the album cover and

talked about Gorguts and the release. They spoke about how we devoted a record to their culture. They said, "I don't know if this kind of music is your thing," but they were very flattered that someone devoted some time to this place in the world, their philosophy and the sad fate about these people. It made its way to the community. Maybe in time, it will reach the Iraq community.

AU: To change gears, there is incredible atmosphere and flow on this recording. Did you use sampling in this process? Is it all live?

LL: On the record and live, is the same... even on the record, bass and drums were live. We kept those takes as they are. There are a few edits, but it was all live. Colin didn't change the tone, we wanted the live energy. We overdubbed the guitars... there are no tricks or processing. You get the same when it is live. There is one part that sounds like metal sheets, like a mini-industrial beat, around the seven-minute mark... It is a recording sample we had to use. We recorded our own sounds in the studio to capture them. For the live show, we have to compromise with different symbol sounds. There is no different picture. Sometimes with records that are overproduced and over-layered, when they're played live there is something missing, something lacking. That is not what happened here.

AU: The press release had a video of you playing a guitar from Marc Chicoine in the style from Death, Chuck's style. In this video you're employing tapping and bends in atypical ways. Did you take on lessons, or a new regime of practice and techniques for this recording? Some new inspiration?

LL: Actually as far as this new record, and my parts are concerned, it is the easiest Gorguts material for me. The layers are coming from Colin and Kevin, and that is producing the complexity. The riffs I am playing are simple; open strings and dissonance and all that. It is not that tricky. The intricate result is from the arrangements and the layers working together. I'm always trying to write



different types of riffs and not repeat myself too much from previous records, but it is there, it is there within you. There is nothing wrong with being in the previous recording, that is my style. I'm always trying to bring something new, like here we did ambient swells inspired from dark ambient music. That is a new character in the music, for sure.

AU: A common complaint of death metal is it one theme all the time, with no contrast or space. It's inspiring to see these tempo and sound changes... You don't have to play full speed all the time.

LL: No, no! If you want to do a song for half an hour, you can't be on blast beats and distortion for 30 minutes. I mean, you're gonna lose 99% of the people in five minutes! You need to have dynamics and change tones, that is how sonically, you create a story.

AU: Last words to metalheads across Canada:

LL: Stay strong, especially with the Fort McMurray fires... Check out the record and we look forward to coming out West again!

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PHOTO SOURCE: seasonofmist.com

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Megadeth

Transcribed from the Hellfest 2016 Press Conference in Clisson, France

AU: There was a very sad event, the death of Nick Mezna, and I heard about a charity... can you talk more about what you organized for him, for his family?

Dave Mustaine: About Nick passing away, we're not going to use that for publicity or anything like that, it was a feeling of wanting to do something for Nick's family, for his legacy. We found out that they were already doing something, so then I said, great, if they want our help great, if they don't need our help, we're here. If they change their minds... Nick meant a lot to us. He meant a lot to everybody that's a Megadeth fan too, a lot of metal drummers were influenced by Nick. He is sorely missed.

AU: With so much touring, how do you manage to keep such energy and in such great shape?

Kiko Loureiro: We have Ellefson coffee.

showed up and he had a bunch of beer, but he had eyeliner all over his eyes, and we said we can't have a guy with a bunch of eyeliner in the band, so we drank his beer and said, "Get out." Who knows? If he hadn't been wearing eyeliner, maybe he'd be in Megadeth!

AU: What was your goal when making the new record?

DM: I guess the goal when you're making a new record is to outdo the last one and every time we've done a record it's been kind of a picture of our lives at the time. During that period, there was a lot of bad stuff going on, my mother-in-law was dying from Alzheimer's and we had a lot of problems with our crew, our management, our



David Ellefson: Yes, good clean living, and a lot of coffee.

AU: Did you ever think about getting a different vocalist?

DM: Oh yeah, I didn't want to sing, the last singer we auditioned, Dave and I, the guy

lineup, a lot of stuff. And I've always shared that stuff because I don't want our fans to not know how to deal with stuff. If I can share how I've dealt with stuff.. so during this record, once my mother-in-law died, it was time to get back to work, and I think that's happened. We got back in the studio and I said, "Fuck it, I'm just going for it."

AU: You've been in Megadeth now for 35+ years, you've achieved so much, what do you feel is Megadeth's greatest achievement so far?

DM: Having you guys here today. You showing up after 35 years, just the fact that we still matter. When we first started playing music, I never thought that it would be something that I would enjoy this much, or something that would last this long. I think the greatest payoff for all of this is when we get to look off the stage into the audience and see people smiling... we know that we're making people happy. So that's probably the greatest achievement I think we've accomplished.

AU: What does Kiko bring to the table for Megadeth's music, and have you heard Angra?

DM: Yes I have heard Angra's music, that's how I came to fall in love with Kiko's performances and playing... it was really great when we first got together, too. He came out to Tennessee and he didn't even play guitar, we just spent time together, because knowing how good he is, and thinking about my capability, it was more about how we worked together, how we blended as people, not how we worked as guitar players, because I knew we both were capable guitar players, but we had to get along.

AU: What is the deep message behind your music?

DE: I think hearing every night when we play, "The Threat is Real," when we play "Post-American World," those songs feel very much to me like 1986, "Peace Sells." So to me, the message hasn't changed. It's been the same message, because people don't really change. And it's been the same message for those three decades that we've been together, and it's pretty cool that we have that same thing to draw from for every record that we want to go down this road on.

AU: Have you got advice for young people who want to start a thrash metal band?

DM: We don't have enough time for me to give all that advice, 'cause there's a lot. I guess the most important thing is, just be careful. Don't sign anything unless you have an attorney read it. This is a talent pool where there are so many people in motion as heavy metal fans and people at levels so high, higher than other musicians, and I think that because of that there's a lot of people that prey on us, that see the heavy metal talent pool as people who are the salt of the earth and I think people get taken advantage of a lot, especially in the heavy metal world. I would just say to be careful.

AU: Your lyrics from the 80s and 90s seem to fit perfectly in today's world. How do you feel about that? Do you have the same things to say in today's world as opposed to 25 years ago?

DM: I don't know, because if you read some of the things people say about me, they say the things I write are stupid. If I wrote something in 1985 and it's still as relevant today as it was back then, I kind of think that's not stupid, I think that's intelligent. For me, I don't take credit for what I wrote about, I read something and I just repeated it. So I don't take credit for anything I've learned, because someone else wrote it. I like to read, I encourage anybody who is a metal fan to learn as much as they can about their country, what they like, if it's sports or mystical stuff, if it's writing fictional stuff, if it's writing love songs. You can be in a metal band and write love songs, believe it or not... "Loved to Death," one of our first songs, was a love song. My version was, boy loves girl, girl doesn't love boy, so boy kills girl, but you know, it was a love song. So I think that's just a matter of who it is, what they're writing, and if they really believe what they're writing.

Thank you guys!

www.megadeth.com/

PHOTO SOURCE: megadeth.com



The Shrine

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what's going on?

Josh: I'm Josh from the Shrine, we're at Hellfest in France.

O: I'm Orland from The Shrine, I am also in France, a long way from California.

AU: Are you guys playing a bunch of the European festivals?

J: Yeah we're over here driving around in the rain, 'cause Europe doesn't really know that it's summertime yet, but it's cool. We played a bunch of crazy big festivals.

AU: What do you see over there?

J: Oh my goodness, I see someone that needs to go jogging a little more.

O: We got ourselves a meatball.

AU: What's The Shrine all about, for those that have no idea?

J: California rock and roll, skate punk, thrash, psychedelic rock put in to a blender, shoved into a syringe, and stabbed into your eye.

AU: Would you say playing the main stage at Hellfest is a career highlight at this moment?

J: Hell yeah. Hellfest, we played with Beb from Soggy, that was a highlight of my life, check out Soggy, the French rock band, the greatest French rock band ever.

AU: That buddy wants his tits signed.

J: I don't know if I've ever signed human tits before, let alone a dude's... human dude tits.

AU: Tell us what just happened.

J: Well we just signed a man's breasts. They're full sized French man tits. Thank you man, that was my first time.

AU: What do we need to know

about The Shrine?

J: I'm half mathematician, half librarian, mostly rabbi.

AU: Drugs of choice?

J: Judaism.

AU: Do you guys care about politics or Bernie Sanders?

O: Yeah, way into Bernie Sanders, that chick's cool.

AU: What are your songs about?

O: Our songs are about the time Bernie Sanders took too much acid and accidentally ended up at the wrong protest in the 60s.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've seen at Hellfest?

J: Well that dude's tits I just signed, that was fun and exciting and new. And I guess, travelling and touring Europe, it's all about new experiences.

AU: What are your next festivals?

J: Grasspop tomorrow. We're going to drive overnight.

AU: So you're going to Belgium tomorrow?

J: We were in Belgium yesterday, we're going to go back to Belgium tomorrow.

AU: Have you been to Amsterdam yet?

J: We're going to go there on Sunday, we got a lot of friends there, it's pretty cool.

AU: What are you going to do there?

O: Meeting with a bunch of rabbis there for a ceremony.

AU: Is The Shrine religious?

J: Yeah, it's rock and roll.

AU: What about The Shriners, they're the highest level of Freemasonry...

O: Yeah, sick. They have those sweet little cars and those hats, I'm into it.

AU: Are you going to come back to Canada?

J: Yeah we like Canada, Canada's fucking cool. Canada likes rock and roll. We like food. We've got some really awesome friends in Vancouver, too.

AU: Yeah you guys would fit right in there.

O: Yeah we have a blast every time we come to Vancouver, definitely.

AU: Are you guys still skating?

J: Yeah there's a good skate scene up there, bunch of crazy parks, it's sick.

O: Vancouver and Victoria are usually the best stops on the tour when we go up and down the West Coast.

AU: Shamelessly promote something that's coming up.

O: We have a new Torah edition of our record, it comes with a piece of Moses' toenail.

J: We have a new record out, it's called *Rare Breed*, it's sick.

AU: How do we get it?

J: You've gotta call my mom and ask her for it.

O: The sleeve is actually made out of matzo, you can dip it in your gefilte fish.

AU: It's kosher.

O: Yeah, it's rock and roll kosher.

AU: How would you describe Hellfest?

O: Wet and chubby.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

J: Bless off.

AU: You missed out on everything, you signed man tits, who are you?

Jeff: My name's Jeff, I play drums for The Shrine. I left my belt in a hotel room.

AU: Your belt?

Jeff: Yeah I was trying to tie myself off, some sexual asphyxiation-type shit.

AU: Your pants were falling down during the show.

Jeff: My pants were totally off during the show.

AU: What do you think about France and this festival?

Jeff: I love France, every time we come to pretty much anywhere in France, especially Paris, we have a great time.



AU: You look kind of French.

Jeff: I look French? I smell French.

AU: What's your favourite cheese?

Jeff: Whatever cheese was in the backstage was pretty good.

AU: Do you drink the red wine?

Jeff: I actually don't drink, so no. I just eat cheese and smoke cigarettes, which I guess is fairly French.

AU: Your political views from America? We're from Canada.

Jeff: My political views are that Canada is always correct, and that Bernie Sanders should probably win.

AU: You missed it when they signed the man boobs. Are you jealous?

Jeff: I am jealous, yeah. I'll have to sign Court's boobs later.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

Jeff: Rush is the best.

AU: Why is Rush not playing this festival?

Jeff: I guess Neil Peart's taking a break. But that's okay, he's done enough for rock and roll.

AU: Is he your inspiration?

Jeff: Yeah, my mom actually worked with a guy who wrote a running article with Neil Peart. Jogging was something he got into at a point in his life when the chicks were down a little

bit, and I think they also rode motorcycles together in West Virginia. So yeah, there's a little bit of a connection between my mom and Neil Peart.

AU: Were they banging?

Jeff: No, but they did have a mutual friend.

AU: You are Neil Peart's lovechild.

Jeff: I wish!

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Hellfest 2016

By Insaniac

It was Monday the 13th of June when we boarded the plane for Amsterdam. It might as well have been a Friday, because our true destination was Hell... Hellfest, to be precise. This will be my first time

touching European soil, not to mention my first mega-festival. The excitement, adrenaline, and a misguided drink cart, prevented much-needed sleep on this eleven-hour flight. After several movies, a few beers, and dealing with nicotine withdrawals, we touched down in Holland. It was now Tuesday, June 14th. We grabbed our

bags and made our way through customs. There were no incidents, even with the heightened security. I have never seen so many assault rifles in a single airport! Finally, time for a cigarette.

We needed to be in Clisson France, Home of Hellfest, on Thursday the 16th, so there was no time for a nap. Amsterdam

offers a lot of recreational activities that I can appreciate; we rented bikes and hit the streets to take in much of what the city has to offer... canals and coffee shops, red lights and Heinekens, not to mention more bicycles than I have ever seen in my life. I have never been to China, but I can imagine Amsterdam is giving them a run for their money.

Wednesday June 15th: We had way too much fun last night... Who knew a coffee shop had so much more to offer than coffee? Except coffee, was exactly what this old broken traveler needed. A Starbucks appeared, over the crowd in the train station... a beacon of caffeine for all of us zombie commuters. I grabbed the biggest cup of

black gold they had and then headed to the platform to catch our train to Paris.

Paris was the last stop before Hellfest, and our primary mission was the catacombs; the perfect landmark on our metal pilgrimage. Nothing prepares you more for a metal festival than six million skeletons. Once we re-surfaced from the land of C.H.U.D.S., we hit up the closest place for some wine and fine French cuisine. With bellies full, we made our way to the heart of the French capital to see what we could. Notre Dame, the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, and of course, the Arc de Triomphe were on the list. Unfortunately, they were also on the military's lockdown list. Soccer fans celebrating a tie filled the streets as we headed back to

our hotel. Tomorrow would be the last leg of our journey to Hell.

Thursday June 16th: We were at Paris Montparnasse train station, and the public appeared to be transforming. The crowd was littered with

metal shirts and back patches... we shared the same goal, to go to Hell! The train to Clisson was packed with eager fans, ready for their metal fix, a fix guaranteed to last three days. Our journey was nearing completion, one more police checkpoint, then we were on the shuttle to Hell! First impressions say it all, and I will tell you mine once I have



picked my jaw up off the floor. A giant statue of a Gibson Guitar marked the entrance to Hellfest, signaling the end to our metal pilgrimage; we had made it! We checked in at the press

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centre to get our wristbands and photo passes. With our mission accomplished, we dragged our luggage through Hell City, Metal Corner, and into the vast wasteland that would be our home for the next four nights. After setting up in Green Camp, we headed to the local grocery store to stock up on beer and supplies. Every patch of grass in Clisson had a tent, every parking spot had a camper. It was like a metal occupation force had taken the city. This was just a sign of how big Hellfest has grown since 2006. Beers in hand, supplies gathered, it was back to camp to party with the neighbours, for tomorrow would be my first day in Hell.

Friday June 17th, Hellfest – Day 1.

With approximately 50,000 metalheads from all over the globe in attendance, Hellfest is the biggest festival this old Slayer dude has ever experienced, not to mention the coolest. The Gates of Hell stood two stories tall, and looked like a castle that Vlad the Impaler would have been proud of. Once through security, you enter a whole new world, a world of twisted, rusting metal; a world of thrashing guitars and double bass; a



world of brotherhood and beer, of fire and leather. This is world where there is something for everyone. I was going to start my first Hellfest with a little Nashville Pussy!

The main festival grounds had six stages; main stages one and two, the Warzone, the Temple, the Altar, and the Valley. With 150 bands on the bill, I knew I would be faced with some hard choices. Still, you can't be in six places at once. We got the lay of the V.I.P. Land, then headed out to get our metal fix. Anthrax assaulted the Main Stage while Vision of Disorder waged war in the Warzone. Up next in the afternoon was Turbo Negro, Vader, Earth, and Bullet For My Valentine. I caught the grand finale of Killswitch Engage while trying to decide between Hatebreed, Sacred Reich, and The Melvins. I decide on the Melvins and headed to the Valley to check out the set. Playing my favorites like "Revolve" and "Queen," King Buzzo and crew got me fired up for what was to be an incredible opening night. I grabbed some dinner and refilled my beer, and then it was time for some Overkill. The Dropkick Murphys were blasting their pipes as the crowd started forming for the evening's big event, Rammstein. Opening the show with a barrage of fireworks, they took the stage and immediately got us jumping. Songs like "Ich Will," "Du Hast," and "Reise" had the crowd singing along and every head banging. They didn't cheap out on the stage show, either, with everything from metal angel wings to fireworks flying over the crowd. Rammstein delivered an orgy

of the senses that left me shellshocked and begging for more. We caught a few songs of Testament's set, to come down from the Rammstein blitzkrieg. Finishing our beers to some Offspring, we called it an end to our first night in Hell.

Saturday June 18th, Hellfest – Day 2.

Croissants, bananas, and Guinness was breakfast of this champion. With my hangover at a tolerable level, we packed up our gear and headed to the press tent to catch the Sixx A.M. press conference. I don't mean 6:00 a.m. but Nikki Sixx's new project. Questions asked and photos taken, I got a beer and sought out a hammock. Another great day of music awaited, and I needed to recharge my batteries. I rose in time to hear what Henry Rollins had to say about *Gutterdammerung*, the loudest silent movie on earth. After the press conference and a quick



picture with the punk legend, I hastily made my way to the Warzone to check out Bad Religion.



Sounding as great as always, they played the crowdpleasers like "21st Century Digital Boy," and a slew of other classic skate punk jams. Closing down the Main stages for Day Two in Hell were classic rockers Twisted Sister and prog metal giants Korn. I found a place in the Twisted Sister crowd where I could check out the eighties superstars. Missing a pound or two of make-up and significantly lower hair, a more modest band got the crowd off their feet, and reminded us all that "We're Not Going To Take It." With the crowd belting out the lyrics, Dee Snider could have taken the night off. "I Wanna Rock" and "Burn In Hell" got this fan's head banging and horns flying. Saturday night was also filled with tributes to our fallen metal brothers; Dee Snider gave a warm speech in dedication to the band's late drummer, A.J. Pero, then dedicated the performance of "The Price" to him. Lemmy Kilmister was remembered with a video biography and a few words from Motorhead's Philthy Animal. What seemed like a never-ending fireworks

show ended with the words "RIP Lemmy" written with pyrotechnics. I still don't know how they did it, but Lemmy would have been proud. The last band on my list for Saturday was British blast beaters Napalm Death. After several failed attempts at getting a photo of the constantly moving frontman, Barney Greenway, and a very sore neck from all the day's headbanging, I headed back to camp for a beer and my bed. Day two, done.

Sunday June 19th, Hellfest Day 3

The final day in Hell. Fighting a hangover, we left the Green Camp to regroup in the VIP area. Lucky winners of The Descent in to Hell Red Bull contest were zip-lining above the main stage crowds. The lineups were already huge for Hellfest and band merch, not to mention the Hellbank lineup for recharging your cashless card. You can't get a beer without it! My day would start with another pint of Kronenbourg and the French metal masters Gojira. I was stoked to see these guys for the first time, and what a venue. They pummeled the crowd with "From The Sky" and "L'Enfant Sauvage." Joe got the crowd singing "Happy Birthday" to drummer Mario, then continued to assault our senses with their killer set. Gojira had just released their new album, *Magma*, on June 17th, and were beginning their World Tour. Thrash gods Slayer were next on my metal dance card. These guys never fail to get a pit going with epic tunes like "War Ensemble" and "Angel of Death". Slayer's show drove a bolt through my skull so my brains could ooze out. I have never headbanged harder! Awestruck, I scooped up what I could of my liquefied grey matter and hobbled back to the Megadeth press



conference. If continuing to release thrash albums is Dave Mustaine's business, then business is good! Touring in support of *Dystopia*,

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Megadeth's fifteenth studio album, the band stunned the crowd with their insanely fast riffs, delivered with precision and intensity. Next, I was off to the Valley to see the reunion of Jane's Addiction, complete with guitarist Dave Navarro. Perry opened the show with "Stop" and "Three Days." They played all the greats for the ocean of Jane's fans. "Been Caught Stealing" would be the crowdpleaser of the show. Once my first Jane's Addiction show was over, I prepared myself for the Swedish metal band Ghost. Donning masks and accompanied by a child choir, Ghost created an eerie atmosphere that set the stage for the founders of heavy metal, Black Sabbath. Ozzy, Tony, and Geezer, three of the four original members, are on the band's final tour, *The End*. The show opened with a crazy mini movie filled with skulls and demons. They played "Beyond The Wall Of Sleep" and "Fairies Wear Boots," along with the classic hits like "Paranoid" and "Snowblind." What a treat to see the legends of metal for the first and last time. Once again, decisions, decisions. King Diamond or Deicide... Who would be my last show of Hellfest 2016? Deicide, it is! I was ecstatic for the opportunity to see the masters of



evil. Opening with "Dead By Dawn," Deicide delivered an unrelenting set. "Sacrificial Suicide" was another of my favorites from this band of demons. With my metal fix indulged,



and the moon getting low, we trekked back to camp. My body aching, my head spinning, I had survived my first Hellfest, barely!

Despite all the chaos, the festival was managed extremely well and had a lot to offer the ticket-holder. Everything from food to showers, and even a Doc Martens barber shop! Hell City offered the Extreme and Metal markets, as well as a plethora of beer dispensaries. With a cool statue or a building shooting fire out



its roof at every turn, Hellfest is a sight to behold. Don't forget your Hellfest Wine! Hellfest is making a huge name for themselves on the European Festival circuit; it's a must-do on any metalhead's bucket list.

Huge thanks go out to the festival coordinators and crews, and not to



mention all the support staff. Thank you Clisson, and thank you Hellfest for another killer year!

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ARTIST PROFILE



Warren Smith

Interview by Teagan Taylor

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself!

Warren Smith: I'm a Victoria-based portrait artist, tattooer on hiatus, toy collector and lover of heavy music.

AU: What made you start drawing?

WS: I think every kid sorta just picks up the crayon, and they either put it down or they don't, and I just... didn't.

AU: How did being a tattooist influence your current style?

WS: How I developed my portrait style is actually through what I learned in tattooing. Through the years, some of the most influential tattooers that I followed were those doing realism and portrait tattoos, specifically black and grey... I think that's sort of where I wanted to go with tattooing, and I picked up skills within that

which I was able to apply to paper.

AU: What mediums do you work in now?

WS: I work best with pencil, specifically 8B pencil. I will use 2B and HB pencils, and white jelly roll pens for details. I also do colour portraits using Prismacolor and Derwent Watercolour pencil crayons.

AU: How would you describe your style of work?

WS: Realism.

Portraiture. I like the idea of trying to put so much information into a piece, and have it be so refined that it actually fools people into looking at it and thinking it's a photograph.

AU: Tell us about what you're working on.

WS: I spend the majority of my time artistically, working on commissioned pieces. When I'm asked to recreate a photograph of somebody's pets, or family members, there's a ton of pressure there. All of my focus goes into it, lots of hours, and I'm really picky and meticulous about the information that goes into each piece.

I'm also working on a one-hour sketch series where I take what

I know and challenge myself to apply as much of



that as I can to paper within a one-hour time frame. It allows me to shut my brain off, rather than hyper-focusing on little tiny details everywhere.

AU: What's your favourite type of piece to produce?

WS: I recently drew a portrait of General Kale from *Willow*. There were certain aspects of the photograph that was submitted to me that were mazy, blurry and out of focus.

Because of that, I had to hone in on what was sharp and what was soft a lot more in that image. There was also a bit more artistic freedom within it, with the texture, the rain and all the drips coming off the side of the armor. I think

that that piece was the closest thing to a hybrid between being hired to draw a portrait and the one-hour sketches that I'm doing.

AU: Any artists that have inspired you?

WS: Wow, there are a lot. Pushead, Julie Bell, HR Giger, Frank Fretzta, Banksy, Johannes Vermeer, Dan Seagrave, J Scott Campbell...



AU: What music fuels your work?

WS: I listen to all kinds of different stuff when I'm drawing, anything from Gorguts to Wardruna - the spectrum is huge. So it really just depends on my mood, and the vibe that I want to put into the piece.

AU: How would one be able to get a piece of their own?

WS: I regularly post progress shots of the pieces I'm working on on Facebook, I'll put it out there and give people all the information required to be able to order prints of the pieces. For the last couple years, I've regularly had a table at Cherry Bomb Toys' Ultimate Hobby and Toy Fair.

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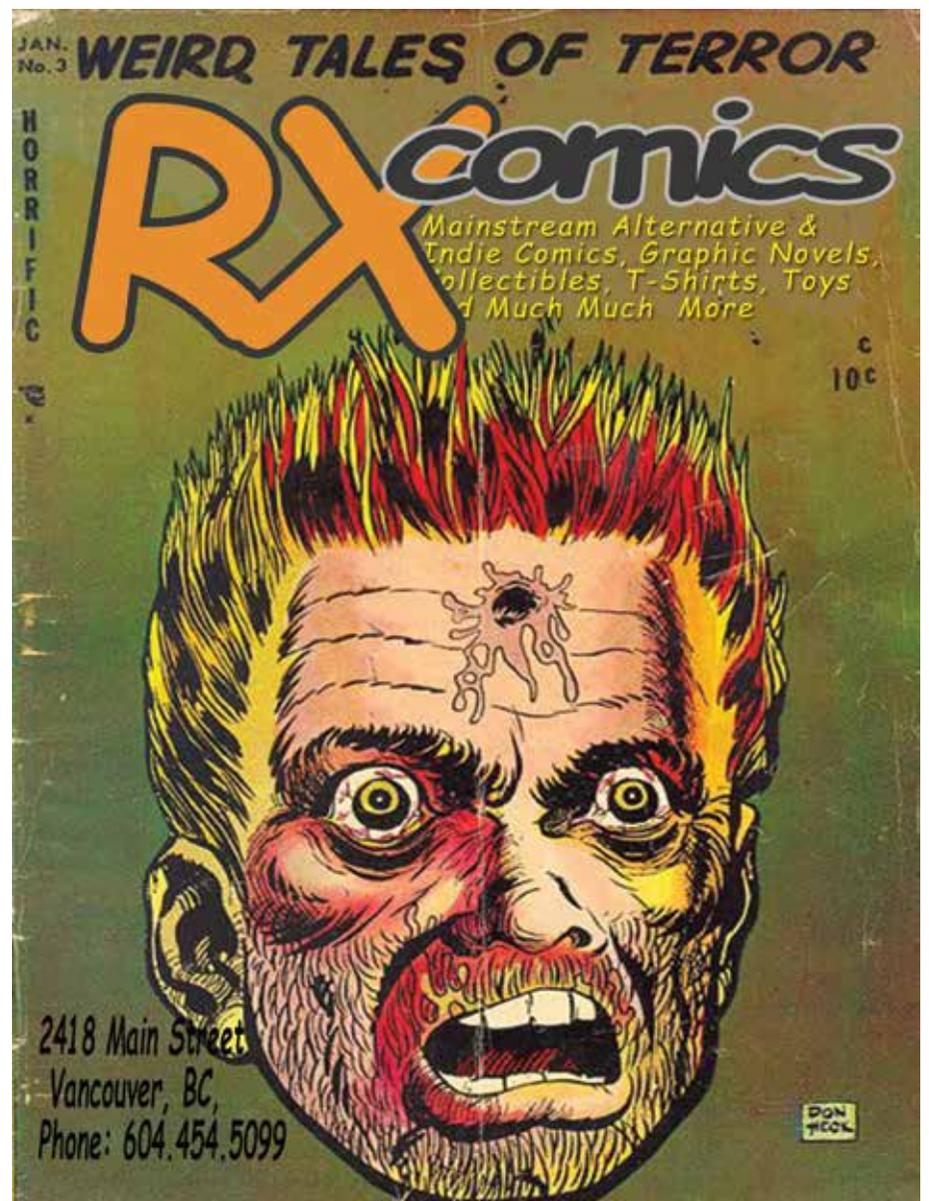
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Cauldron

Interview with Jason Decay
By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Greetings sir! Where are you now and what is going on?

Jason Decay: We are all back in Toronto, and back to work with the exception of Ian. Gonna sink back into home life for the time being until Ian is all healed up, and we can go back out on tour.

AU: We heard throughout the internet about the van accident in Texas in February! How is guitarist Ian Chains doing, how are you all doing?

JD: We feel very fortunate, very lucky to be alive. You see the severity of the wreck and that everyone is alive – we feel fortunate in that sense. We are doing fine. Ian is in good spirits about it, and so are me and Myles. We are glad we did not die. Ian is slowly doing better. His type of injuries take a while to recover from. If it is done properly, he will make a full recovery. Every time I see him, every week or two, I notice improvements, he is doing better and better.

AU: What has been the response to the new record, *In Ruin* so far? What did you learn from making it?

JD: The response has been great. We are really happy with that, people get what we are doing. We kinda knew as the record was progressing that we were onto something special, and that this could be “the one.” For learning process, it

can always be better. It comes down to time and budget. I guess we get older and wiser and we hear the mistakes we made on the previous records and with each new recording we improve, and get a little closer to our version of a perfect record. *In Ruin* is the closest we have so far.

AU: The video for “No Return” is tight; you’re in the jam spot, then a grocery shop, and a short roadtrip to a backyard stage with fireworks blowing up and candles. Can you tell the tale of the video?

JD: Ahhh. There are no candles. Those are Christmas lights! [laughs] When we saw the video, I thought, “I hope no one thinks those are candles! I hope no one thinks we are jumping on the Swedish bandwagon.” The whole video is basically a day in the life of Cauldron. We had a friend follow us around with a camera, and we were going to our friend’s annual backyard jam which we were to play. So it is a day in the life, when we are not on tour, playing a show, and can afford to build a stage and have full pyrotechnics. It basically us documenting our life and mixing it with rehearsal footage. We thought after making the last few videos as concepts, we would strip it back down and make it a hangout video.

AU: Is there a song you are most proud of on the newest record, and why?

JD: Immediately, [I’d say] “Empress” or “No Return.” But I like the ones that have a bit more replay value, you know? That you have to listen to a few times to get into them. So I would say, “Corridors of Dust.” The ones on the B-side, they take you on a bit of a journey.

AU: What keeps you busy off stage and away from music? After watching the video for “All or Nothing,” where you quit the day jobs, we wonder what your day-to-day is when you’re off tour.

JD: Well, we all work – we have no choice. We have

to make a living, that keeps us pretty busy. On the weekends, we get together and jam. For the most part – it’s work. Me and Myles have been doing landscaping for years, and Ian works at a button-making machine shipping and receiving facility. I’ve recently switched to plumbing... I mean, music is fun and all, but it doesn’t pay the bills. And we do it because it is fun. You can’t look at it as a career. We do it as a hobby. That is the reality of it. I’m not complaining!

AU: Your style is classic metal – what is a record which you come back to, year after year, as one that does it right and inspires you?

JD: To narrow it down is too difficult. Early Metallica records, the first three. Second and third Dokken ones. All the AC/DC, in particular the 80s stuff... *Flick of the Switch* and *Fly on the Wall*. Judas Priest *Defenders of the Faith*. Early 80s Rush... There is something new to be heard in Rush every time.

AU: What is the integral piece of music instrument gear for you, to create your bass sound?

JD: My gear is unique in that you can’t find it. My bass is a copy of a Rickenbacker from the late 70s known as the “lawsuit edition.” It’s quite rare, a copy made by Ibanez. It’s much harder to find than the original. My head is a solid-state guitar head by Yamaha from the early 80s, called a G-100. I’ve only ever seen two, and I bought them both. I play that stuff because I’m used to it and I’ve played it a long time. I am a fan first, and eventually you find your way with the gear. It’s more important to be a fan first and be positive about what you are playing and the gear will follow. You need to have passion.

AU: You guys explore an 80s-influenced sound... how do you keep it fresh and respect both the classic sound and find new creativity?

JD: It helps that we aren’t from the 80s, and this isn’t the 80s. We just want to create the stuff, that we ourselves, as fans, want to listen to. If we feel when we are coming up with something, or someone feels that it has been heard before, we need to put a new twist on it, make it our own. We’ll put it away until we can do something unique with it.

AU: Good place to get records/merch in Toronto? Where do you hit up?

JD: My general opinion is Toronto is pretty picked over these last five years, at least. There are new stores popping up, but they get picked over quickly. The best way is to be a regular and hit the “new arrival” sections before anyone else does. My go-to was Sonic Boom, they always have the new stuff coming in. There are so many shops, and not for rock or metal only. Another one is Rotare This, really good place to see, those specialty shops that don’t do only music. The basement of an antique store, those places. My friend runs the Hard and Heavy Records distribution shop via website and at local shows.

AU: Best touring tip for survival on the road:

JD: If you can’t drive to the next show, in daylight and make it there on time – day off. None of this leaving the venue at one a.m. after packing out and driving straight to the next show, and arriving the next afternoon. You’re gonna get sick and burnt out. [laughs] Pace yourself and pick quality shows over quantity of shows, if you have the option. I know a lot of new bands don’t have that option. Get rest, eat well. Be healthy. Don’t party too hard! Take care of yourself in every aspect. You know what is right and wrong, pick the right!

AU: What is next for Cauldron in 2016?

JD: We are out of commission until July, we have some shows booked in July we are planning on keeping in the Maritimes; Fredricton, Halifax, Moncton. We also have a festival booked in Lithuania, but beyond that our plans are tentative. We are waiting for something to come along, and to confirm. Stay tuned!

AU: Last words to the faithful rockers across Canada!

JD: Stay hard! Check out basementmetal.com to get Cauldron merch... that goes to getting Ian back on his feet. We are really overwhelmed by the support. Thank you!

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Absolute Business Profile

DV8

Still Going Strong

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Give us a brief history of the DV8... how did it all begin?

Rod Gillis: Jodie, the owner of DV8, was already in business when I met her in 2009. My band had three Alberta dates with the phenomenal U.K.

Subs, and one of them was at DV8 here in Edmonton. I had already been putting on shows in Red Deer (My first ever show was for the great Spredaeagle, and from there I worked with Andrew W.K., Big John Bates, Nomeansno and a lot of other bands passing through Alberta) so naturally, when we finally got to chat she was all about

getting some more bands playing the bar and I was all about getting the fuck out of Red Deer and putting on shows full time. I'd say it was a pretty dramatic move on both of our parts, and unfortunately not everybody involved with DV8 at the time thought it was a good idea. Jodie and I made a pact to give it our best shot and hopefully last long enough to prove that we were serious about making an impact on the Edmonton scene... whether the scene accepted us or not. One of the quotes that always seems to make sense to me,

and has kind of been my motto all these years is, "When your friends stop supporting you, it's time to make new friends." We have made hundreds of new friends since then.

AU: How many locations have you had over the years? What's your newest like?

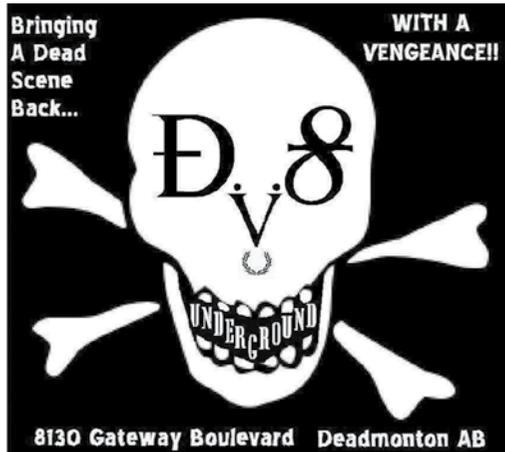
RG: This one at DV8 / Mama's Pizza is our third room we have had to work with. Pound for pound, it's got more to offer than the other two spots... The owner, Terry, can afford to run his bar with a few perks which we could never afford to give our customers. This place has cozy places to

sit on one side of the bar, and decent food, so if you were at a show and wanted to chill out and have something to eat, you don't have to leave the place to do it. It's a good ten minutes away from Whyte Ave, and the area is nice and quiet, so no more of that yucky, crowded feeling Whyte Ave gives you.

AU: You've been in business for seven years now, congratulations! As one of Edmonton's go-to heavy music bars,

what are some of the highlight acts you've seen play your stage?

RG: The UK Subs played our first stage on 99th. The Restarts played there, The Unwanted, Oil Polloi, S.N.F.U. played there and Chi Pig recorded at least some of the vocals for their last album there, we had Dayglos there, the Mudmen played there...The Brains and The Matadors played there, Scythia did a few shows, The Piss Offs, The Motherfuckers... so many bands. The



second location we were cranking out a lot more metal, so in addition to locals like Begrime Exemious and Bleed, we

had guys like Crimson Shadows, Vesperia, Chapel, The Golvers... and a few killer punk bands too, like Bunchofuckingoofs, The Ripcordz, Bishop's Green, Randy Rampage. Then I started to open up to the Edmonton hip-hop scene... namely Brothers Grim, Doom Squad, Konzept and guys like that, who started bringing in some heavy hitters from out of town like Snak The Ripper, Merkules, Prevail, Afu-Ra... a lot of artists that are doing or have done some big things.

AU: What makes a good live show? Is there a certain set of criteria?

RG: A good turnout is number one, and number two would be that the bands have a good time. The sound is pretty important, and I do my best with what I have to work with, usually without too many complaints... we just got a new P.A. set up, and it's been really great to work with so far. It's nice when shows make a few bucks, but overall I enjoy seeing people having fun, and seeing people out to play or at least support the music they are into.

AU: What does the Edmonton alternative scene look like right now? How does the underground stay alive and flourishing?

RG: I imagine every city has a bit of the same stuff going on... you've got your media darlings (bands and venues) that get tons of press but never seem to be doing anything all that interesting, and then you have The Underground scene... where new things are always happening and surprisingly awesome stuff goes on right under the expertly groomed facial hair of the unenlightened... the same cats that will show up once or twice a year and be like wow! Who IS this band? Our underground scene is pretty badass, bands that aren't getting milked by big venues or vice versa kinda just keep at it, writing new albums, starting new projects, getting hammered and having fun... even my band, 12 years in and still doing something at least, even if it's nothing big. It's fucked running a venue though, I mean I don't really get out much to other places on the weekends or see how the other half lives. I tend to sound a little bitter at times, and the scathing lack of success financially has taken a lot out of me. We have got a ton of amazing talent here in Edmonton, but as far as the general public goes, it's not easy getting people out to support every type of local music. The shows are mostly populated by people in bands and their friends... people who "Get It" if you can dig that. It also seems there is this huge chunk of the scene that only responds to hype... they only seem to react to front page news kinda stuff, be it venues or bands, and seemingly make an effort to distance themselves from the real underground, but at the end of the day they are missing out on a lot of

cool people and cool music.

AU: Do you have any shows or events coming up that you're particularly looking forward to?

RG: Cocaine Moustache has a couple of shows in July, The Golvers are going to play in August, Saints Of Death are going to be back, The Prowlers from Montreal are coming here, and another band called Out Of Order from out that way...those should be fun, it's always great to meet new bands, and with bands I have known for years, it's



great to know I will be seeing them soon.

AU: What can patrons expect to experience at a DV8 show?

RG: One thing any of our real supporters will tell you is that DV8 is more of a community than some place with a fancy stage and shit. Our crowd is really respectful no matter what people are into, and I'd like to think that I've had somewhat of an influence on some of the younger kids over the years... if anything, at least getting a few folks to open their ears to something new here and there and to be a little more tolerant of people repping music and mannerisms they might not be keen on. A mixed crowd is pretty much a given on most nights, and this new venue has a lot of its own regulars... some of them 60 and over, they get a kick out of all this new activity, though. On a weekend you might stroll into a hip-hop show, a punk show, a thrash or grindcore show, a pop punk show, a hardcore show, an acoustic show - you just never know. I have seen some long faces on a few young bucks that might have rolled in from out of town hoping to catch a heavy show, and there wasn't one going on, but I always make a point of saying hello if they look like nice kids and encourage them to check out our show listings on our Facebook page or at least come back another night and see what the place is capable of.

AU: What's the most valuable lesson you've learned in your seven years of operation? Do you have an overall DV8 philosophy?

RG: Always be prepared for everything to suck... then you will appreciate anything from "Not Bad" and "Sort of O.K." to "Super Awesome" even more.

AU: Do you have any final words of wisdom for our readers?

RG: Read more *Absolute Underground*... it'll do ya good!

[facebook.com/DV8Underground](https://www.facebook.com/DV8Underground)

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Absolute Live Reviews

Crypticon Seattle Convention May 27-29, 2016

Well folks, it was my third time at the Crypticon Seattle Convention. I had a fun time as usual, but it didn't seem as thrilling as beforehand. The con was held at the Hilton Hotel, but next year they're moving it to a building next door called the Double Tree, due to a better rental space fee.

I got to meet some celebrities that I really like; my favourite was Tony Todd. I interviewed him when I did my blogtalk radio show... it was short, but he wants to make up for it, so hopefully I will have it on my site at www.racksandrators.com. Not only that, but I dressed as Michael Myers for their costume contest, and he put in a vote for me. I didn't win unfortunately, but the people that did had amazing costumes that they worked hard on.

I also got to see Ginger Lynn Allen who I had met before in Burbank, CA at the Weekend of Horrors. She is a lovely lady who is working on a handful of horror projects since departing from the adult film industry, including *Buried Alive*, *Satan's Storybook*, *Mind Body & Soul* and *Evil Breed: The Legend of Samhain*. She will be in two upcoming flicks, the first being Rob Zombie's *31*. I asked her if her role as Cherry Bomb will be bigger than her cameo in Zombie's crime flick *The Devil's Rejects*, and she told me it was, plus it will have a theatrical release, which I was excited to hear. I also asked her about her lead role as Jocelyn Mathers in a low-budget horror flick, *House of Many Sorrows*. On the last day of the con, I said goodbye to her and she gave me a hug and told me she'd check out my site. I also got to chat with *Aliens* star Michael Biehn, and got into a discussion about the next sequel, which will be a direct sequel to *Aliens*. Personally, I felt that *Alien 3* was a sad sequel. Luckily, he plans to reprise his role in it. I believe he said that *Alien* creator Ridley Scott will have involvement with it, but first he's making a sequel to *Prometheus*. I told Michael to make sure this sequel isn't scrapped, 'cause Sigourney Weaver returns as Ripley, and the character Newt returns too, as a full-grown adult. I always hoped they'd do a sequel right for that one. After all, some sequels ignore previous ones, such as *Halloween H20*, which was a direct sequel to Part 2, and *Return to Sleepaway Camp*, which was a direct sequel to the first flick. So this just makes sense, as Ridley is a good filmmaker and will make sure that this one will be done right. I also met *Aliens* creature effects creator, Alec Gillis, who has a huge background of other creature feature effects that he created himself; he was a truly outgoing and sociable fellow. I even hung out with him a bit at an event there titled "Prom of the Dead," where there were dances. At first, the music was old school, which I loved, but then a new DJ came on playing current music, which I loathed. Also, they had an amazing cake maker, Barbarann Kym, making a monster cake which, though it looked like a prop made of paint and clay, was totally edible. There were even lights on it, and mist coming out of the monster cake's mouth. I had leftovers that I kept here to eat, and it's chocolate marble, which is one of my favourites. She's an amazing baker. She knew me from last year, and we had a great discussion.

Oh, I also forgot Cassandra Peterson was there, my favourite horror hostess as Elvira. I talked to her a little bit, but there was a large lineup for her. It was just an honour to meet her and tell her I remember her appearance in a funny show back in the late 80s/early 90s called *Totally Hidden Video*... I also told her I loved some bootlegs I have of her hosting Halloween shows on MTV, which I watch every October.

I have a page on my site for anyone who wants to send stills of horror events or anything else horror-related, which I will gladly put up. Email me at racksandrators@racksandrators.com or got to my site at www.racksandrators.com.

-Greg Russell Tiderington

Bell Witch Witchstone Anion Vaalt Chieftain Bamboo, Calgary AB June 24, 2016

The Friday Stoner Rock Guy showcase at Bamboo for Sled Island was full of stoner rock and its aromatic influences wafting in through the door of the venue. The moody atmosphere was enhanced further by the stormy and pouring rain outside. But it could not keep the deadheads out, and bamboo was packed to capacity for Witchstone and Bell Witch. The show kicked off with Calgary locals Chieftain, who brought the heaviness and the doom. Their crushing vocals and heavy riffs started the show off right, and preluded the next band perfectly. Vaalt had similar crushing vocals, and is also from Calgary, but that's where the similarities stopped. Their tempo changes brought the show back to its stoner roots, and long songs with tight changes and build-ups made for an excellent rocking, headbanging, set. Next up was Anion, who brought the show to its hardcore apex. This band from Vancouver was tight and fast, making for tasty riffs, tight drumming, and killer bass that all metal/hardcore fans crave. Local act Witchstone brought the doom and gloom, slowing the show down with a fuller sound and dreaded atmosphere. Bamboo was packed, but this was still an intimate show, and Witchstone made us feel like we were on a slow, headbanging journey with them, their music weaving us into a face-melting quest. Bell Witch were determined to keep the face-melting atmosphere going with slowed-down sludgy bass riffs and extra doom-y drums, transporting us to the darker side of humanity. This duo from Seattle ended the show with the sludge we had been craving.

-Savannah Lawless

Armstrong Metalfest July 15-16, 2016 Armstrong, BC

Armstrong, BC, is a small community located about 480 km northeast of Vancouver in the Spallumcheen Valley. Best known for its agriculture and cheese production, it is also home to Armstrong Metal Festival, one of Western Canada's largest metal festivals. What started off in 2009 as a backyard party, featuring eleven local Okanagan bands, has, over the last seven years, turned into a legitimate cultural gathering: a weekend of heavy music and rebellious celebration. It has become an annual tradition for many diehards who make the sacred pilgrimage from all over BC, Alberta and the USA.

Armstrong Metal Fest, or AMF for short, has been an outstanding platform for up-and-coming metal bands and has been host to many well-known international acts, such as Suffocation, Cattle Decapitation, Cryptopsy, and many more. With Vancouver's own Unleash The Archers and Montreal shredders Beyond Creation as this year's headliners, we were very optimistic about the weekend ahead of us as we rolled out of Vancouver on Thursday

morning.

After a beautiful drive through the mountainous highways of British Columbia, we arrived at the Hassan Arena grounds in the early evening to find fellow headbangers setting up their tent homes for the weekend. Excitement was in the air as people made their rounds of the campsite, meeting new friends and reuniting with past festivalgoers. The night was filled with sounds of laughter, singing and good cheer, as well as distant thunderstorms, which fortunately kept at bay.

I awoke the next day to the enthusiastic voices of our neighbours discussing their favourite metal bands. After a trip into town for some breakfast and, of course, a mandatory liquor run, we returned to the bustling campgrounds to prepare our necks (and livers) for two days of thrashing.

Day One of music kicked off with some very strong opening performances. The Mountain Man was a dynamic pulsation of modern metal, and proved themselves the worthy winners of the Broken Neck Radio People's Choice Award, which saw them clinch the final spot on the festival's lineup.

Other highlights of Day One were AMF veterans XUL from Vernon, BC. This band consistently performs an electrifying blend of black and death metal, with a charismatic and engaging stage presence. West of Hell showed an incredible display of thrashing heavy metal. Their stage antics and special effects, including an endless amount of foam, made their set an unforgettable experience.

Unleash The Archers finished the night off with a triumphant and inspiring performance of epic power metal. Despite having some technical issues during the set, I was truly mesmerized by their overall musicianship, and vocalist Brittney Slayes' dynamic vocal range.

Day Two started with Armstrong's very own Odinfest, featuring the mastermind and creator of AMF, Jesse Valstar, on bass guitar. Winnipeg's Noire, being the only black metal band of the weekend, brought some much-needed darkness to the stage, in contrast to the mostly death metal-oriented festival. Rock 'n roll powerhouse Black Wizard from Vancouver, and Victoria punk rock legends Dayglo Abortions, also brought some spicy variety to the day's lineup. The night finished off with technical death metallers Archspire and Montreal decimators Beyond Creation offering relentless performances that would make most guitar players and musicians question their worth. Both these bands have pushed the boundaries of what is humanly possible in terms of musicianship, and their sets left me astonished and incredibly jealous of their technical prowess.

The sense of community I felt this year was truly inspiring. I was happy to hear from many people that they felt a very welcoming and safe atmosphere while attending the festival. I commend the organizers, volunteers and fans of Armstrong Metalfest for making this festival a memorable experience that all who attended will be talking about for a long time to come.

Until next year, Metal Warriors! Hail!

- Luke Olson

Debutant The Rumble The Bosses Daughters July 16, 2016 DV8, Edmonton AB

Attendance was pretty good for this one, and it was a fun night. The Bosses Daughters (which has no girls in the lineup) played a rockin' set; they are just starting to play shows but the project has been in the works for close to a year, with a few changes in the lineup along the way. The guitarist / frontman Rahil has been in tons of bands over the years, and has a knack for writing catchy tunes... he's just an all around rock n' roll guy. The band is very 80s-influenced and their sound fluctuates between

scrappy garage punk and hair metal, which is a fun mix. The bass player, Drew, also has a few songs he sings, some of which remind me of stuff like the Kinks and The Cars... at a punk rock pace. The Rumble was down from Calgary, and I really like those guys. They have played all three DV8 locations, and their sound gives a bit of a nod to cool 60s garage rock bands like The Sonics, etc. Stuff like that is always cool to see live. They had a keyboard for this set, but unfortunately it wasn't in the mood to work, so they soldiered on as any rock band would, and put on a kick-ass set anyway. They have fast stuff, slow stuff and some in the middle, but it's all good. Debutant was the final band of the night, and they kicked things into high gear. They lean more towards 70s bubblegum pop and punk stuff, with an prominent influence from The Ramones. A bit of fast, toe-tapping, riff-driven rock always wins me over, and this band has a couple of former members of The Patterns, who are both great guitar slingers, on board. These guys should be a hit around town once a few more people get to check them out.

-Rod Gillis

Entity Inverted Serenity Phylactery July 17, 2016 DV8, Edmonton, AB

This was a pretty heavy show set up by Derek Orthner from Begrime Exemious. Entity and Inverted Serenity are both from Winnipeg; it seems we have been getting quite a few bands in Alberta this year from the 'Peg, which is pretty cool.

Phylactery kicked off the show, and they were great. The band features two members of Edmonton's Dire Omen, who just returned from a three-week tour with a few dates in the U.S. I thought their set was pretty intense. The drummer does the majority of the singing, which is quite a workout for anybody - especially in a fast-paced metal band. They had some great stuff, plenty of rocking riffs in there, and a lot of sharp precision stops. I'll be looking forward to doing more with this band.

Inverted Serenity was up next and treated the crowd to another heavy dose of metal. This was the only band of the night using drum triggers, so it gave them a distinctive sound. Triggers are fun to work with; they don't work for every band, but they worked for these guys. The band was a really nice bunch of fellas, too. Entity took the stage last, and most of their stuff was pretty fast. It's an interesting development with a lot of metal bands these days, where you have one vocalist that can belt out growls and screeches, making it sound like there are two vocalists trading off on the mic.

The only downside to this show was that there was another metal show or two going on in the city, which is not unusual, but pound for pound everybody that showed up had a good time. One of my friends from the hip hop scene commented that it was cool to see everybody right up front, taking in the show, instead of wandering around the room or spending the majority of the night outside of the venue, which is pretty normal for most of the shows we do. That also says a bit about the bands; it's always a nice touch to see a band captivate the crowd - especially if they traveled to play a show abroad.

-Rod Gillis

Ne Obliviscaris Black Crown Initiate Starkill Divinity Dickens Pub, Calgary AB July 22nd, 2016

The instant I saw a lineup had wrapped itself around Dickens Pub, I knew something special was about to happen. This wasn't going to be just another metal show; this was going to be something else.

Local favorites Divinity started the night off with a short set of furious music and grabbed the room's immediate attention. Vocalists Sean Jenkins and Jeff Waite dominated the stage as the audience began the first of the evening's countless mosh pits. Divinity's brand of intense modern metal was the perfect fit in this stacked lineup of



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bands that just happen to feature two singers.

Starkill from Chicago were next up. The band, led by Parker Jameson and Tony Keathley on guitars and vocals, ripped through an entertaining set that included new music from the band's next release, due out in the fall. The new songs were great and, if the reception from the room was any indication, Starkill are on the rise.

I have to admit, I had not listened to Black Crown Initiate much before this show, and I'm pissed off about that now! This band from Pennsylvania had so many moods on the stage, I just couldn't pin them down. The different styles of vocals from James Dorton and Andy Thomas took the band on so many musical left turns, I never knew what was coming next - other than another mosh pit.

Then there was Ne Obliviscaris. When the band began their crowdfunding project to fund this tour, so many were hoping that this prodigious combination of Aussies and a Frenchman would somehow make it to Calgary. Some are still wondering how Tyson Cale Boyd from ConcertWorks made it happen... I just say thank the Metal Gods he did! The entire room was focused on the stage the instant the music faded; the lights dimmed, then Ne Obliviscaris walked on and began playing, "Devour Me, Colossus (Part I): Black Holes." I felt like I was being pulled into a black hole, as the music grew and swelled to fill the room. The crowd immediately began to swirl as the gravity of the first of a myriad of circle pits during Ne Obliviscaris' set took over the floor. The entire night was one of amazing contrast. The juxtaposition between the harsh lead vocals of Xen

versus Tim Charles' clean vocals was as if Satan himself was screaming bloody murder in your face, even as your guardian angel whispered prayers of salvation in your ear. The same would have to be said about France's Benjamin Baret shredding us to pieces with his ferocious lead guitar work, while Charles would counter with the sweetest melodies from his breathtaking violin parts. The beauty and brutality of the set mixed so perfectly together. At times, I have to admit the pure emotional power of the music of Ne Obliviscaris overtook me, and I found myself repeatedly wiping away tears as the band played the final two songs of the night, "Pyrrhic," and the encore, "And Plague Flowers the Kaleidoscope." A friend saw me and came over, hugged me, and said, "THAT is what music is all about!" Never has a statement been more correct.

Evidently Ne Obliviscaris felt the same as their fans on this night, and they rewarded us all with seven songs played for only the second time on this tour], and said on their Facebook page: "Calgary... Holy shit, that was incredible. One of the all-time best NeO crowds! Thank you!"

I say, thank you to Ne Obliviscaris, for what has to be the show of the year so far in Calgary!

- CC Getty

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Absolute Film Reviews



The Mutilator
Arrow Video

By 1985, the slasher genre was in full swing, with such titles as *Friday The 13th*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and of course, *The Mutilator* (a.k.a. *Fall Break*). Unlike some of the mainstream hits of this era, *Fall Break* flew somewhat under the radar until its later home video release, when it gained a lot of its notoriety. *Fall Break* is your typical 80s horror comedy, in the sense that it follows the formulaic structure of most slasher films. Although the story isn't very original and sometimes feels like it borrows from other similar films (*Silent Night*, *Deadly Night*, for example), it makes up for this with outrageous splatter gore effects and a very charming cast. The story goes as follows: Young Ed accidentally kills his mother while cleaning his father's guns, thus causing his father to have a nervous breakdown. Years later, it's Thanksgiving break, and Ed is tasked with closing up his father's beachfront condo. Catching wind of this, Ed's friends convince him to

take a road trip down to the beach for a much-needed vacation. The six horny kids are then hunted down and brutally murdered by Ed's deranged psycho father until it's up to Ed and his virgin girlfriend to stop him, once and for all. In typical 80s slasher fashion, there are some great kills and, thanks to the excellent effects team (Mark Shostrom of *Evil Dead II* and *Videodrome* fame), there is some outstanding gore in this film. One kill in particular that stands out is when a local police officer is stabbed in the face and then decapitated, the blood splashing out of the severed neck for all of us gore hounds to see! This is among a slew of onscreen kills that skyrocket *Fall Break* to the top of the genre. The film was originally released as a "cut" theatrical version, in which most of the blood and guts had to be removed for it to get an R rating, but thanks to the lovely folks at Arrow Video, Buddy Cooper's splatter classic can now be witnessed in all its gory glory. I enjoyed the upgraded

Blu-ray transfer, and the lost elements of the film that have been re-added are seamless. There are also a ton of supplements on the two-disc special edition, including a 2K transfer, audio commentary by director Cooper and co-director John Douglas, liner notes written by Ewan Cant and Tim Ferrante and a reversible cover, with the choice of displaying either "The Mutilator" or "Fall Break". This, like most Arrow releases, is chock-full of goodies that any hardcore collector will be drooling over. If you remember seeing *Fall Break* back in the day, or even if you've never had the opportunity to watch it, I recommend picking up this film!

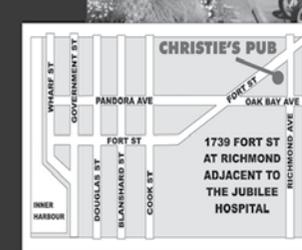
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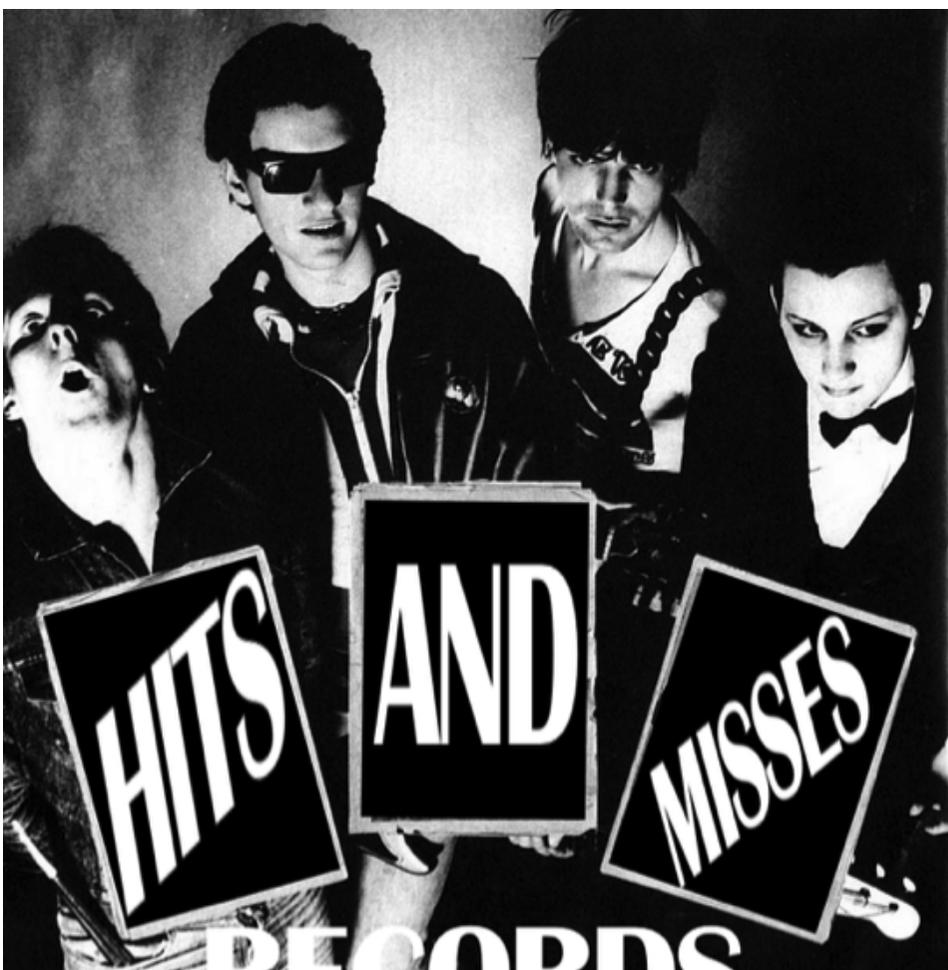
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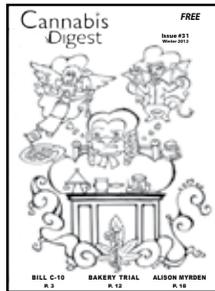
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Absolute Album Reviews

A Devils Din - Skylight Island Dive Records

This release from a Montreal-based trio is full of well-crafted songs that really show off the musical chops these guys have accumulated over the years. The track "Skylight" plays like a Lennon song being covered by Red Fang. The stoner rock vibe to many of the songs adds a great haze to the otherwise light singing styles and classic rock song craft being used throughout the nine tracks.



The early sixties psychedelic influence comes alive on "Phaze Ulysses" which really could transport listeners down the rabbit hole to where some shoe-gazer band is playing Zeppelin covers. They clearly want to be the first to write a mature-sounding neo-psychedelic album and the track "Bow to thee Absurde" really oozes maturity

with its impressive Rush-inspired prog-rock breakdowns. I'm so happy that someone finally gave Lucy in the Sky a distortion pedal.

-Dan Potter

Sludgehammer - The Fallen Sun Independent

Get ready for a blast of modern and old-school death metal with this release. I hear some classic Annihilator, some early Lamb of God, and I even detect some Demilich in the sludgy mix, for good measure. Yes, listening to this aptly-named band is like getting hit over the head with a torrent of extreme metal sludge the likes of which you've probably



never experienced before. These guys are super intense, and each track is an unstoppable abomination.

"The Black Abyss" has a really dark Maiden vibe to it, but just before you think a sing-along moment is going to materialize, the song detonates with extremist metal brutality. For those looking to take refuge in a sick thrash beast creation that knows no boundaries of metal fury, this band is quite possibly your future salvation. I love how the scorched yet still soaring vocals trade off with the cave troll bellows and the guitar riffs rip like machine guns firing off, yet spew a complexity bigger than their southern heritage lets on. Clearly on this debut album, these guys just want to tear shit up, but I do hear a depth to the chaos, which is a great sign for longevity.

-Dan Potter

Vow of Thorns - Farewell to the Sun Forest Dweller Inc.

This debut album is chock-full of doomed lurching tempos, it's like someone slowed down a Liturgy record to examine all the tragic filth spewed forth. These guys are definitely black metal fusionists that love Burzum, but also never grew out of their infatuation with Iron Maiden. That's an awesome thing, as "Meeting on the Astral Plain"

clearly displays, whilst combining the anthem-based elements of Maiden with the icy macabre spectrum of metal's darkest realms.

There is bleakness throughout, but in an epic sort of way, as the guitars lead the charge, going from a pitying smallness to a huge wash of mega-Satanic proportions. Each song is like liquid magma flowing from Mordor, as witches spin their spells just over the horizon. The three-part "Farewell to the Sun" really pushes the message of total doom home, with its Wolves in the Throne Room-style wickedness, and the wrenched-out lyrics that come at you as if you were standing too close to the frontman of Carcass. Vow of Thorns are definitely not afraid to commit some musical blasphemy, and that's what makes this new album a really interesting listen.

-Dan Potter





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Absolute Comic-Geddon

Killer Robots! Needs a Comic Book!

By Ed Sum

50s B-movie enthusiasts and *Robot Chicken* fans will have to love The Killer Robots! newest movie, *Crash & Burn*, which is now out on VOD. This product has action, comedy, science fiction and Max Headroom (well, sort of). To describe it on a different level, this movie has *Power Rangers*-style fights amped up to crazy 'toon levels, Hanna-Barbera style animation, and rock/metal aesthetics a la Michael Bay's *Transformers* (in a good way) — or should that be *Warhammer 40K*? This product looks like a movie Troma Entertainment would release.

Considering the fact that Lloyd Kaufman appeared in *The Killer Robots and the Battle for the Cosmic Potato* (2009), I'm not surprised that the creative mind behind the band, Sam Gaffin,

knows him personally. This latest flick does not feel like a sequel.

The Killer Robots! is a theatrical rock band based out Florida and they are known for their comic book-style antics on- and off-stage. They are just one of a handful of bands in this age performing space sock (think Syd Barrett's Pink Floyd), even though I think their signature sound is more like synth technopunk.

In this film, Trog (Charles Harris), Strobo (Samuel Williams), Auto (Sam Gaffin) and Max (Mike McGowan) are mechanical gladiators who met an untimely end, but are quickly rebuilt and turned into super soldiers for a mysterious organization of android adventurers. Although they are reluctant at first, the mercenaries agree to help out.

Watching this product is like viewing a long music video montage. The tale is broken into chapters, which also serve as titles to the soundscape. This group is like GWAR in respects to their impressive

costumes. While being at one of their concerts is even better, this film is designed to carry a story instead of being a rock opera, and fortunately, this band's sound permeates throughout. As background music, it works to convey the energy and enthusiasm put into the production. Although I'm more in tune with how KISS shows play out, I'm fairly sure Ace Frehley the Spaceman (I'm thinking of the original crew instead of the changed lineup), would feel at home in this world. It has a design and style that recalls the frantic style I love from Georges Méliès work, namely *A Trip to the Moon*.

Although the dialogue feels stilted and flat, the screenplay works in favour of everything this musical group represents. It's like bringing all the pulpy golden fun from comic books long ago to life! I really have to admire the work put into this product. Much of it was built perhaps out of an environmental concern: the costumes, giant monsters, buildings and spaceships in the film were created from recycled bottles, packaging, plasticware and toy parts! The greenscreen effects



work is obvious, and that does not detract from the overall presentation.

This movie belongs in a category of oddball cult fantasies where it deserves a look no matter what. I'm hoping the band's fame will expand beyond their home state, because here in Victoria, BC, they have won me over as an instant fan. I feel they deserve a comic book to further their adventures, Buckaroo Banzai-style. They deserve it.

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INTEGRITY

Integrity

Interview by Ted Reckoning

Today we're talking with Dwid Hellion, known best as the founding member of Integrity, a maelstrom of post-apocalyptic brutality that has terrified and fascinated listeners for 28 years. Integrity recently signed with Relapse Records, by and far the largest record label in the band's history.

Absolute Underground: Most of your albums have been on hardcore labels, despite your not really identifying as a hardcore band. Does this move feel like something you've been waiting for all these years?

Dwid Hellion: Yeah, it's a great opportunity to finally have our music on a label that I think can understand us a little better... I think that Relapse is going to be a great fit for us. I'm an old man now, they should have got me in the 90s, but we'll see what I can come up with, I suppose.

AU: That said, do you think if you had signed with a label like Relapse in the 90s, would that have changed the trajectory of Integrity's path at all?

DH: I don't really know, I'm just kind of fucking around with that stuff. But possibly, I mean, we always were in a situation where the hardcore people said that we were too metal, and the metal people said we were too hardcore or too punk, depending on where they saw it. But that's also funny for us; I always made music because

I liked it, [it was] what I wanted to hear. I didn't care. In fact, probably the reason that it wasn't so easily categorized was because I was making music that I wanted to hear, that wasn't necessarily available. So when you make something that's a little bit punk and a little bit metal, and a little bit whatever other things were thrown into the cauldron, it's not going to be easily categorized by people, so people are going to be freaked out and angry. At least in our case, they were usually angry. I'm used to it now, it's like, since the beginning we've had mostly negative critics and I'm used to that. I think if we started getting a lot of positive critics, I don't know what I'd do. We might have to break up or something.



AU: Integrity has a very unique sound that, even when bands are heavily influenced, you don't really hear it because there's a sound you just can't duplicate or replicate in an authentic way.

DH: It's like David Lee Roth once said, the best way to sound original is to rip off a little piece of everybody, instead of just ripping off one or two things. We have a lot of influences... the edges are a little bit softer, I think, when it comes to putting the pieces together... But I don't know, it isn't really the goal to be the most fuckin' original band in the world or anything, that's not it. It's just making songs that fit thematically to the way that the lyric goes and the artwork goes, and the whole, for lack of a better word, universe of Integrity goes, to try to create that seamless mood and theme. So the music, the theme, the writing, and all that stuff fits together because it's like a soundtrack or something.

AU: What sort of direction are you going to be taking with the new record on Relapse?

DH: It won't be too far from all the other ones as far as

dark themes and such. But Dom Romeo's playing lead guitar on this record, and he has brought a lot of his own interesting ideas

and his influences and guitar tricks and things like that. If you've heard that flexi that we just recorded, you can hear some of his chops in that, his skills... he's a pretty great solo guitarist as well, so that's a key part of what Integrity's about. It's always a funny thing that people seem to often miss, is that we have such an almost 80s cock-rock lead guitar thing going on, since the beginning, since we started in the 80s. It's always kind of been there for us, I think that's an important thing, and that's something I love, the solos. So like earlier, when we were talking about people hating the solos, I took that to heart, more than them saying I can't fucking sing... I never said I could fuckin' sing. Jesus Christ, does anybody think I can fuckin' sing?! I'm not fuckin' Celine Dion...

AU: You've been very open about your affection for blues music, and you've even played harmonica on a track... how much does it actually affect your songwriting? Are we going to be seeing more of that with the new record?

DH: It sounds weird to say it, but I think that from the beginning, we had a blues feel. Basically, my interpretation of the blues might be different than other peoples' because I think general population's gonna hear the word "blues" and immediately Eric Clapton pops into their head, that's not the way that I see the blues... I see it as, Robert Johnson, he's the first guy, long before Ozzy or Black Sabbath or Slayer or anybody, he fuckin' sold his soul to the Devil, he's playing the fucking Devil's music. People were pissed, hating him, churches were against him... The Delta Blues stuff was really wrong, it was like what metal used to be like, and that's kind of where I see the connection. And also the fact that they're very sincere about what they're saying, and what they're saying is often more a product of being fuckin' miserable and wanting to get the fuck out of this flesh and escape the confines of being a human and find some kind of release and some kind of peace in their life, and that's why they're making that kind of music. And I gravitate toward that kind of idea, about making music myself.

AU: You're also influenced by what you call horror-themed music. What do you mean by that, exactly?

DH: I've always been a fan of horror films as a child, I gravitated towards dark imagery and things like that, silent movies. Growing up, I spent a lot of time with my grandparents and they had the old-time radio shows that they'd play... so I would listen to this radio stuff, where

they would talk, mostly horror stories... the ones I liked the most were horror stories, where they would tell you the stories, and in your mind, you'd close your eyes... and give your imagination such free rein, and I loved that so much. I think that younger people now probably don't understand what that means or what that would be like, because we're all so overstimulated by visuals now, it's difficult to exercise your imagination that way. I'm not trying to be like, oh the good old days and shit, it's just more like that was a lucky opportunity for me as a kid, that we didn't have good technology. Although I love technology now and I wouldn't trade it for the world, but I'm also grateful that I grew up right on that edge, where you had to use your imagination to wonder what was going on.

AU: You are an artist as well, are you going to be involved with the artwork for the new album?

DH: Yeah, I'm doing most of the artwork on it. Because we have an opportunity with Relapse being such a great label, we can do more things that we could probably have done with our other labels in the past, resource-wise. So I'm going to try to make the most of that.

AU: What's the end goal of Integrity? Is there an end goal? As an artist, do you want to leave a legacy behind?

DH: It has to be lots of little pieces of me just trying to understand the way I see the world, the way the world reacts towards me, usually negatively... It's a real difficult question to answer. I mean, one thing that fuckin' tortures the shit out of me is that constantly I'm thinking about the origin of man, and also about when the Catholic church rose to power, they went throughout Europe, and they confiscated every kind of book that you can imagine, and they keep that shit, and nobody knows what your history is, you know. People say this, people say that, even archeologists say one thing, they say the other thing, but there is no real fact to know where we came from, or why we fucking came here, because we are a diseased animal, you know, this is not natural, what we are. So a big part of what I'm doing, is I'm trying to figure out things for myself, and that's what it is, it's selfish... I'm trying to open my own eyes, and then everybody else is just kind of eavesdropping on the conversation.

Read the full interview on absoluteunderground.tv

holyyterrorrecords.bigcartel.com/

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PHOTO SOURCE: deathwishinc.com



San Diego Comic Con

By Lawrence Denvir

Just as every comic book super hero has an origin story, so too does the San Diego Comic Con. The first three-day con took place in 1970, and had 300 attendees.

Now, 160,000-plus attendees flock to SDCC every year to catch a glimpse of celebrities, take a sneak peak at upcoming films and television series, get ahold of exclusive collectibles, or to just be a part of the mass media



mayhem. So how did room full of old books drawn by the likes of Jack Kirby, Neil Adams, and Jack Davis become the biggest pop-culture event each year? Was the convention centre bitten by a radio-active spider or blasted by gamma rays?

From comic collectors and creators to movie fans and actors...

A friend of mine blames Buffy; yes, Sarah Michelle Gellar. According to him, she showed up one year when *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was one of the popular shows on TV. It created a new means to promote television shows - networks had previously had little to no interest in any sort of thing comic-related.



But what really broke open the floodgates came a few years later, when the *Twilight* cast came to promote their film's release. Trust me when I say this created great animosity when people with absolutely no interest in

comic books were attending to see some glittery vampire. For better or for worse, it changed the landscape of the convention. A comic book can become stagnant or stale if there is no character development or plot twists, I guess.

When other movie studios started coming, it wasn't all bad. They were giving out so much promotional material that you could've brought no tops and still stay clothed the whole weekend. And although most of the movies had nothing to do with comic books, movie screenings were abundant; and I have to admit, it is pretty cool to see your favourite actor face-to-face.

In more recent years, the swag has been lighter, and there has been a bigger emphasis on 'experiences,' be it going through *The Game of Thrones* Hall of Faces, an *American Horror Story* Virtual Reality experience, live *Conan* taping, or a photo-op with *South Park* characters. Ironically,



(in an Alanis Morissette sort of way), the movies themselves are now mostly about comic book characters.

From movie fans and actors to press and marketing teams...

Make no mistake about it, the movie studios coming in knew it was all about promotion. If you get the fans worked up and excited about your upcoming film, they'll spread the word like wildfire through Twitter, Facebook, a blog, or podcast. It makes sense that those with more followers potentially have more influence. However, it has gotten to the point where SDCC should be called the San Diego Press Junket. If you are a member of the press (or have some sort of social media influence), you will receive special treatment - be it exclusive access to celebrity parties with open bars or fast-track lines to VR experiences.

I overheard some comic dealer tables complaining about the price increase of booths each year; how they're getting to the point where it's almost not worth it to come. Unfortunately for them, there is a long line of exhibitors vying to get in to showcase their stuff - which may not be comic-related. Sometimes comic books need a reboot to rediscover the core theme of what made the book special in the first place.

Some highlights of San Diego comic Con 2016, in no order at all:

- Slayer promoting their new comic book by doing multiple signings and an intimate concert at the House of Blues.
- Multiple offsites and Hall H panels made the convention floor somewhat manageable to navigate (the exception being Sunday).
- Will Smith high-fiving the crowd as he walked the convention floor to go to the *Suicide Squad* autograph session.
- Margot Robbie. 'Nuff said.
- The *Aliens* reunion and screening.
- An inflatable dinosaur in a *Deadpool* costume accessorized with robot claw hand grabbers.



-Elvira photoshoot (she's still hot!)

-Fandom party (powered by Wikia) - open bar, appetizers, live band.

-No lineup at Bill Sienkiewicz's table

If you're planning on attending SDCC (and are somehow lucky enough to get ahold of badges), here are some tips:

-Wear comfortable shoes. I cannot stress this enough; I recorded 72,000 steps from Wednesday (preview night) to Sunday. My feet were swollen, but luckily no blisters.

-Bring a large suitcase and leave room for swag. You will be handed things inside and outside the convention. That *Evil Dead* foam chainsaw isn't going to fit if you've only brought your small carry-on.

-Stay hydrated, bring a towel, and wear deodorant. For health, intergalactic travels, and common courtesies.

-Have a game plan and a contingency plan. That thing you really, really want to see? A lot of other people want to see it too, and have already been in line for two hours.

-Buy comics - especially small press. It's really what a comic convention is all about.



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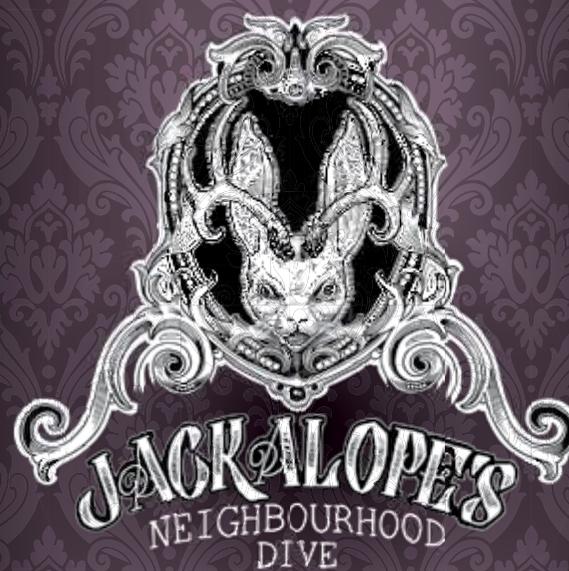
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going through it, or who know someone going through it. Fight and live your life, your life to remember, be alive.

That's why it was so easy to come up with the title for my annual fundraisers, "Kick Cancer's A\$\$" It's bold, tough, badass, inspiring, and makes you want to stomp down and kick cancer's ass, doesn't it?

Cancer is rude and in your face. It's like a body invasion, doesn't ask to come in, it just takes over our bodies, mentally and physically.

Cancer really pisses me off. I hate that it consumes you and everyone in your circle. I hate how it controls and affects so many, whether they're directly involved or not. It's truly a mindfuck! It doesn't own us, or define who we are. We own our souls, our thoughts.

Am I scared shitless, fuck yeah!

Of course, I'm human. But, for right now, I'm alive. I eat when I need to eat, puke when I need to puke, and sleep when I need to sleep. No crying, no sadness. Do that elsewhere, nothing negative. I demanded smiles only from the people who love and care about me. I could see it was hard, I couldn't bear looking at the pain my fuckin' cancer was causing them. It broke my heart in half, but they did it for me. Hugs, love, and just plain old normalcy. Come on over, smoke a joint, do tea, just like every other time we visit.

I had renal cancer. My bodyweight had dropped to 86 pounds. I was in constant pain, I was tired, vomited regularly, had fevers and wicked night sweats. My face looked skeleton-like. When walking in the street, I was looked down upon and got called an "AIDS-carrying, down-on-her-luck druggie." People have no fuckin' clue, and who the hell are they to judge? I never felt so dirty, ugly and sick in my entire life.

Time was going by when I was waiting for my

surgery date. My brother and buddy Lincoln and some other buddies, Mark and Quin, were talking about getting some bands together and doing a fundraiser to show support and help me.

Well, I'm one of the lucky ones! My kidney was removed and the cancer was gone. I still have yearly checkups and so far, so good! For my one-year cancer-free anniversary, I thought, well instead of my buddies doing me a fundraiser, I'd rather throw a huge party, celebrate, and pay it forward, and why not for cancer research? Science has come a long way in the last 20 years.

I was sitting at a table of eight people for my mom's 65th birthday dinner. Three of us had beaten cancer, one was still fighting the cancer in her blood (she is now cancer-free)... that's half the table that are survivors!

So fuck you, cancer! See? Stomp down and kick that cancer's ass!

If it weren't for my mom, family, buds, doctors, nurses, and Royal Jubilee staff, I certainly wouldn't be here today, and neither would so many others. For those that are gone, you will never be forgotten. They say when there's pain and suffering, there's a silver lining. My silver lining is being alive, and now, because of these events, I have met the coolest, most real people on this Earth! Within our music community, rock 'n roll, punk, heavy metal, and killah hip-hop have all come together to support, play, and join us in having a great

time rocking out at our events. We have silent auctions, raffles, door prizes, Wheel of Fortune... we are getting bigger and badder! We are going to stomp down and kick cancer's ass for so many more years to come!

Thank you to almost 100 sponsors throughout BC; all the way from Fort St. John to Tofino, companies and buddies donate their time, including the buddies who have just come out for a beer or to help. Thanks to everyone who comes out to play, dance, bid, and show their support. Lots of hugs and kisses to Logan's Pub on 1821 Cook St, for allowing us to host this amazing event every year, and supplying the best damn beer and food in town.

I'm so touched to have the full support of Colwood Carmart with us as one of our major sponsors. Last year they donated a car, which

was won by a Sooke local. And of course, a huge shout out and a thousand kisses to the Vancouver-based EPHIN Store for designing our inspiring and attitude-filled SDK, Stompdown and Kick Cancer's A\$\$ Logo for our tees and hoodies. They are the coolest, most badass and sexiest Kicking Cancer's A\$\$ clothing line you will ever see.

Between the compassion and the dopest people in BC, everything about these events rocks me hard from inside my whole heart. We raise funds for the BC Cancer Research Foundation. None of us survivors or our families would be here without cancer research.

Thanks so much for all that you do.

<http://www.bccancerresearchrocks.com/>



Sixth Annual

KICK Cancer's A\$\$!

By Carrie

The day the doctor told me I had renal (kidney) cancer, I stood right up and said, "Let's rock 'n roll, what do we do now?"

He said, "Did you hear me? You have cancer."

I said, "Yes, I did hear you. What do I do now, I'm gonna face this bitch head-on." My mom, doctor, and nurses were speechless.

I truly believe that reaction helped me in my fight; my attitude and strength surprised a lot of people, even myself. Some people even thought I was in denial; I was not. I have cancer. I'm not dead yet, now let's move on. Straight up, no bullshit.

To this day, this is my attitude to others who are

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Maddy Sephton

Interview by AU Editorial

Maddy Sephton is a representative of Pole Dance Awards, which is the #1 Pole Media since 2010. She has been training for five years, performing, and is considered the next generation of exotic floor work and pole dance. Maddy is passionate about inspiring ladies and teaching classes in floorwork and pole dance. She is available for booking inquiries for live shows, music videos, photoshoots, and live dance, stunt, and contortion pole art, featuring futuristic costumes and different themes.

Absolute Underground: What initially drew you to the art of exotic floor work and pole dancing?

Maddy Sephton: I was always intrigued with dance and art, however, seeing as my mom was a pro dancer, she purchased me a pole to get me active and fit. I soon discovered my hidden passion for this lifestyle. I researched and researched until I found that my style is Russian-influenced; later on in my hard road of training, my favourite pole media (Pole Dance Awards) contacted me, saying I was the next generation of top ten pole dancers. From there on, everything became extremely real and my journey really started.

AU: What makes this kind of dance different from say, other burlesque-related types of dancing?

MS: This type of dance is a lot different from burlesque because it requires a lot of fluidity and diverse movements. It takes extra caution to train, not only the body, but the mind, as well.

AU: What kinds of music do you prefer for your routines?

MS: I prefer slinky trance, dubstep, all the way to heavy metal and hip-hop for my routines. It depends on the emotion and soul demonstrated in the piece.

AU: How has this dance benefited you since you began practicing? Should everyone try this type of dance at some time in their lives?

MS: Dancing has benefited me in such a way where I feel like I'm becoming a better version of myself each day. I have found peace and happiness in myself. I want to help people find that hidden passion, and get over the fear of the unknown.

AU: Do you have any particular goals as a dancer? Any cities or stages you'd like to perform at?

MS: My goal as a dancer is to live up to my idols, and create new exotic movements. I hope one day to perform at Pole Theatre, and tell my story through exotic pole dance.

AU: What should we know about pole and exotic dancing that we don't already?

MS: What you may not know about exotic floorwork and pole dance is, some people are uneducated about the "strip" factor, it is much more than just that. It is form of art, and is also a gender-friendly sport. Pole dance has evolved over the years - there are now competitions, and maybe one day it will become an Olympic sport.

AU: When and

where can we see you perform?

MS: I am doing a tour right now, different spots along Vancouver Island. Then I will be heading down to coast to California, Miami, and Florida to perform my pole stunts and follow my dreams.

AU: How can readers get involved with this type of dance if they want to try it out? Do you offer beginner classes?

MS: If the readers want to get involved with this type of dance, I would say come to me! I look forward to furthering your education and confidence with the beautiful movement of exotic floorwork and pole dance. I offer beginner workshops, Level One and Level Two workshops. It's two to a pole, so I encourage you to bring a friend, as it is super fun to learn the basics with someone you know. Or come alone and have fun while learning!

AU: Any final words for readers?

MS: Don't let others get in the way of your dreams, even if they don't understand them. You can accomplish anything you want! Go and get it!

For more information, contact: its-maddy-licious@hotmail.com



Absolute Horror

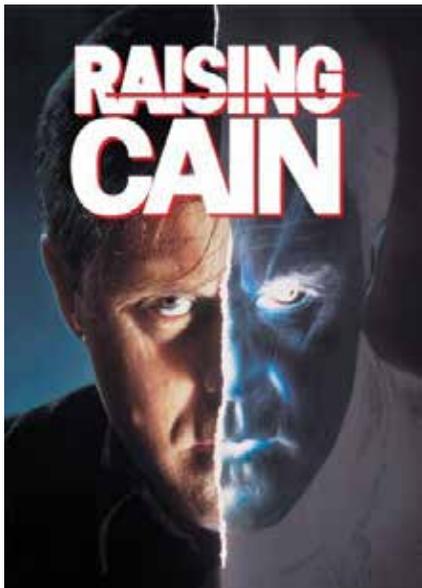
Brian DePalma and Raising Cain

By Vince D'Amato

This summer, DVD/Blu-Ray retro-release masters Scream Factory finally released a long-overdue remastering of one of Brian DePalma's lesser-appreciated horror/thriller masterpieces. Thinking of Brian DePalma is to think of *Dressed to Kill*, *BlowOut*, *Carlito's Way*, and *Body Double*. Lesser so (but no less importantly), fans will then think, on the coattails of these seminal thrillers, *Sisters*, *The Fury*, *Femme Fatale*, *Obsession*, and *Raising Cain*.

Brian DePalma, who is being appreciated in a summer-long retrospective at the Vancity Theatre this summer in Vancouver (operated by VIFF), is something of an anomaly in the history of the Hollywood murder-mystery thriller. DePalma's films are part thriller, part giallo, part horror-slasher, part eroticism, and even partly experimental, yet fully celebratory in the homage department (harkening back to Argento, Hitchcock, Lenzi, and Michelangelo Antonioni).

DePalma, in turn, is celebrated in his own right within all of these sub-genres, and also in the far broader horror genre. He was one of the first film directors to bring Stephen King to the big screen, after all; a film he followed up by adapting the works of fellow horror novelist John Farris, in the 1970s. And let's not forget the brilliantly



hyper-pop-culture cult horror/musical *The Phantom of the Paradise*. Many of these horror endeavours were the experimental playground in which DePalma would practice the provocative stylistic ideas and cinematic chops that would be fully executed and utilized in his famous 1980s slasher-thrillers and erotic mystery-thrillers. *Dressed to Kill*, *BlowOut* and *Body Double* are celebrated for exceedingly good reason. Here, in the early-to-mid-eighties, DePalma was unparalleled in his stylistic influence on cinema. Even now, his influence can be overtly seen on and heard in the films of Quentin Tarantino (and others), specifically *Inglourious Basterds*, *Death Proof*, and the *Kill Bill* saga. As much as DePalma took from the Italian giallo films of the 70s, his films gave back to that same genre, in turn influencing the style of Argento's later films (Opera and beyond) with their intricately clever camera work.

On the 2004 *Pulp Fiction* special edition DVD release, there is a special feature where Quentin Tarantino tells us he once spoke directly to Brian DePalma about the total absence of cathartic release at the climax of *Raising Cain*. At the end of this short regalement, Tarantino says that DePalma, when confronted with this, completely agreed. Well, I don't agree. I think what DePalma did (and if Tarantino is to be believed, he'd somehow subsequently forgot), was to subvert the traditional Hollywood idea of catharsis and to provide us, the audience, with a cathartic treat

in and of itself – something purely visual, which is also something of a very striking technique that DePalma would then explore further in the likes of the opening sequence of *Snake Eyes* and the ultra-daring second half of his 2001 film, *Femme Fatale*. Catharsis in its purely visual form, without the aid of exposition or any real dialogue whatsoever, is something DePalma has been practicing to perfect since *Raising Cain* – it's something that became fully realized in his latest psycho-sexual thriller, *Passion*, a heartbreakingly under-seen culmination of a career's-worth of visual and psychological experimentation in cinema.

One of the key stylistic aspects of *Raising Cain* that keeps this film in its own category outside the rest of DePalma's works is the strategically intentional lack of exterior shots. As an audience, we are never privy to the outer aesthetics of anyone's houses, stores, hotels or any other places of work or residences. In fact, this holds true even in the "exterior" locations of the park, the outlying woods and the lake where the car is dumped (in a purely golden, darkly-comedic flip of the *Psycho* car-dumping scene). This lack of exterior does what it sets out to do: lets us experience the story solely in the psychology and emotions of the leading characters, and in particular, the dual characters of Carter and Cain, both played cleverly and with wicked wit by long-time actor John Lithgow. We feel and react to the madness, the eroticism, the kinetic dreams and subsequent violence, on a purely emotional level; which is, in fact, what makes the visual aspect of the film work so well. Cinematically, *Raising Cain* is as close to a masterpiece as any one filmmaker can ever hope to achieve – the caveat is that in doing this, one loses the "logical"



part of the audience. Hence, *Raising Cain* was never a theatrical "hit." In this sense, the film was a couple of decades ahead of its time – released when thrillers (and horror-thrillers) were generally over-talky and the popular opinion of the day was that a film would always have to explain every detail to the audience. DePalma cleverly turned this whole idea on its head by giving us a film that didn't actually end, and yet, nobody seemed to notice this – except for Tarantino. He noticed, but deeply speaking, misinterpreted this as the film having no catharsis. *Raising Cain* does give us a catharsis, but it's one we can enjoy visually, and emotionally, without getting tied up in the explanatory details of plot and a traditional Hollywood "ending."

Wrapping up the finale of *Raising Cain* brings us to one of the most amusing cinematic/Hollywood urban legends: that Italian film director Dario Argento called up Brian DePalma after seeing the film, and said to him, "You stole my shot!" I was hoping to have this confirmed in the Brian DePalma documentary that was playing in Vancouver as part of the DePalma retrospective, but alas, confirmation of this little tidbit of horror history is to remain elusive. Or, a mystery, if you will.

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SHRED SESSION



Jeff Cole

Interview by Malcolm Eric Hassin

Absolute Underground: What's your name?

Jeff Cole: My name is Jeff Cole, president of the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition (VSBC).

AU: What's the history of the VSBC?

JC: Quite a long time ago, a bunch of people got together and decided they were going to form some sort of group to try and advocate for indoor skateboarding spaces in Vancouver. Over time, that has morphed into being a liaison group that works with the COV and different groups to try and be that voice of skateboarders to the powers that be, to the media and to anyone who has questions for us. We try to represent the need of the community.

AU: What's on the current agenda for the VSBC?

JC: Currently, a couple things. For one, we're headed into a pretty heavy time with the possibility of losing... the Georgia Viaduct is coming down, and the plaza beneath [may have] to be moved. We just found out today that one of our members, professional skateboarder Spencer Hamilton, is going to be on the design committee, so we're very optimistic that we will have a voice with in that. We are also currently trying to rally support for people to write letters and call the city Parks Board commissioners to say that we are skateboarders, and we deserve more. There was a skateboard strategy that was in place from 2005-2015 that just expired; that strategy was basically a document created by the Parks Board that stated there are not enough spaces for the user group. Unfortunately, [since] it expired, the Parks Board is not so interested in renewing that, so we're trying to put a lot of pressure on them in a nice, friendly political way, by saying, "Look, you need to renew this. You need to start backing skateboarders, you need to start building spaces and start maintaining those spaces, and creating a new skateboard strategy to look into the future."

AU: What do you think about the importance of an indoor spot here in Vancouver, and why do you think that the city doesn't subsidize the creation of such things, or the ones that are already around?

JC: I think it's really important to have an indoor space... We don't have the luxury of being California, [but] skateboarders come from all over Canada... this is the place the come to if they want to skateboard. Unfortunately, come wintertime, rain starts falling and there are not a lot of spaces [to skate]. The city's answer to that would be Leeside, or allowing the skateboarders to build

a DIY space in Leeside... thankfully that is something they have allowed us to do. But the need for an indoor space and the need for somewhere to go that's a safe space to skateboard and not worry about putting yourself at risk, all these outside things are highly important. I feel that the city doesn't see the importance of skateboarding as something for youth and people of all ages to do. [We are] kind of

one of the head people who also works with VSBC, and an amazing skateboarder, she came in the shop just to say hi on her lunch break. She was introduced to somebody else in the shop, a girl visiting from Melbourne, and they started networking in a way that the guys just don't do. I think it's really cool to see, and I think it's a really awesome part of our culture to see the women start to support themselves and build their own scene up.

AU: Most underrated skaters in the city?

JC: Brandon Cotton, absolutely. I think there are so many rippers: Hopkins, Conlin, Jeff... it depends what you like to skate, but I am going with Cotton. The dude hypes the session, yells and screams and then rips it up, just destroys it. I've told him he's my favourite skater to watch and to skate with.

AU: Any closing comments?

JC: [My] mentors are PD at Skull Skates, all the guys I grew up with on Vancouver Island, the Uki

Tofino scene, I guess. Parting words: skateboard parks are an absolute gift. People work really hard to get those spots, whether you know it or not, they are not just handed to you. Every skateboard park in the city, [even if] it was built like China Creek, far before my time - the VSBC has been part of maintaining all those parks, and that only happens when people are willing to get involved. It's super easy to sit at home and hit "like," and bitch about some situation, but if you don't get out there and do something about it, nothing is going to happen. It's crazy that, in this day and age, skaters are politically involved, and that the city is listening to us and asking us to be part of these conversations. As much as it's awesome to see the older guys taking it on, I would like to see the kids doing it, too.

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www.vsbcc.ca/

PHOTO CREDIT: Engine Design Studios

a marginalized group, and people don't see that as something that they need to fund or back.

AU: Why is the longevity of indoor spaces so difficult to maintain, with such an established skateboard community here in Vancouver?

JC: People are generally down to support an indoor spot, and then the sunshine comes out so they don't worry about it, like, "That's not my problem, that's somebody else's problem." They don't see the need to continue to support those indoor spots through the good times and the bad times, the sunshine and the rain. So come sunshine, that's when it became really hard for places like this [SBC] to stay open. I think, as skateboarders, we kind of like to spend as little money as possible, but I definitely grew up in the Vancouver Island punk rock community, where supporting your scene and putting back into it is monumentally [important]. You support your community, you support things like this to stay alive, because one day it will be raining and you're not going to have it. It's great that people such as you guys are willing to put it all on the line and live it so people can come down any time they want and ride a ramp... that's absolutely amazing to me.

AU: Who should we interview next?

JC: I think right now, what comes to mind are the girls that are putting on the Chickflips thing - I think that's an absolute amazing kind of movement. I think the way that they're building their scene is awesome, and I think they would be really cool people to talk to. Even today in the Skull Skates shop, there was Mel (Mells Bells),

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Ask The Cretin

By Murray Acton

Holy crapcakes, time flies. It seems to crawl and slither when you're waiting for it, but when you look back at it, or if you have a looming deadline, you get a completely different view. To be honest, I wish things would slow down a bit. Well, some things anyway. The world seems to be in a, "Let's fuck up as much shit as we can all at once" cycle, and I think it would be a good time to calm down a little bit, be careful of what we say and be even more careful of what we do. We have the progressive liberal (commie-fascists, as I like to label them), and their "newspeak," confusing our already-confused language, and pushing their new brand of racism on the pliable minds of gullible sheeple, and it's hard to blame them, when every time you look at a newspaper there're more white cops shooting some innocent black dude for having a burnt-out taillight. Then there's Brexit or whatever they are calling it. It's pretty well looking like a knee-jerk reaction to the waves of immigrants into the UK and their seemingly complete refusal to have any respect for their host country. In fact, if you look at it, they seem to think that it's OK to bring their fucked-up war against everything everywhere they go. Don't get me wrong, I'm all over helping the women and children get out of the war zone, but let's be careful that we don't bring the war here with them. And speaking of war, what about Putin telling the European and American journalists that maybe they should start reporting the news instead of just spouting off government-supplied propaganda. He claims that Russia is being dragged closer and closer to a state of all-out war against the Americans and their UN allies, with the Americans arming the ISIS rebels to overthrow Syria and the UN deploying missile launchers along the Russian borders with Europe. This is madness. Our leaders are either retarded, insane or worse - completely evil. So this gets us to the big question: which of the two candidates running for President of the United States would be worst? I say worst because I don't think either one of them will do any of us any good. Let's start with Trump. Well, at first glance, he's a narcissistic bigot. I know that a lot of what he has said has been misrepresented by the media, but it seems that every time he is put under pressure he blurts out something racist, then later he tries to say that he really meant 'blah blah blah'... I'm sorry, but the stuff that comes out under pressure is usually closer to the heart than the edited version. He is full of big promises that he's going to bring back the jobs that the US lost to China (good luck on that one), and he's going to bring



the water back to California (I'm guessing he plans on using bottled water on the crops). Well, politicians are all about broken promises - that's not going to surprise anyone. The one thing that he wants to do that is dangerous is his approach to immigration: to build a wall. It's true that we need to be careful about immigration or we're going to import the mayhem that we are guilty of helping start, back into our fair country, but building walls and increasing segregation between countries, and races, and ideologies, is not going to help. It will complicate things even more, and one thing we can be sure of about Mr. Trump is that he won't do well if things get complicated. So the other choice is Hillary Clinton... now, Mrs. Clinton certainly is a piece of work. She's bad to the core, from her earliest cases as a lawyer where she elected to defend a child rapist and used intimidation tactics on the victim, to where she was fired as a lawyer for the House Judiciary Committee during the Watergate scandal for allegedly engaging in a variety of unethical, self-serving practices in violation of House Rules. The Chief of Staff of the House Judiciary Committee, Jeffery Zeifman, later said Clinton was ethically unfit for office, and he regretted not reporting her to the appropriate Bar Association. Her unsuitability runs the gamut, from unethical behaviour to a string of suspicious suicides, using the IRS to attack political opponents, funnelling money from hostile foreign governments (like China) through the Clinton Foundation into her personal and campaign accounts, acts of treason by arming the Sumi rebels (ISIS) to overthrow the governments of Libya and Syria, and possibly the stupidest and most reckless of all, her seemingly hell-bent on war attitude towards Vladimir Putin and the Russians. Putin is warning that war is becoming unavoidable, and I get the feeling that Clinton wants to be the one who starts a global thermonuclear war. That, I think, should be enough to launch her into first place as the worst of the two terrible choices that the American people have to pick their next President from. So, that's it for this month ... hopefully we'll still be here next month.

Don't be shy, send comments and or questions to askthecretin@outlook.com

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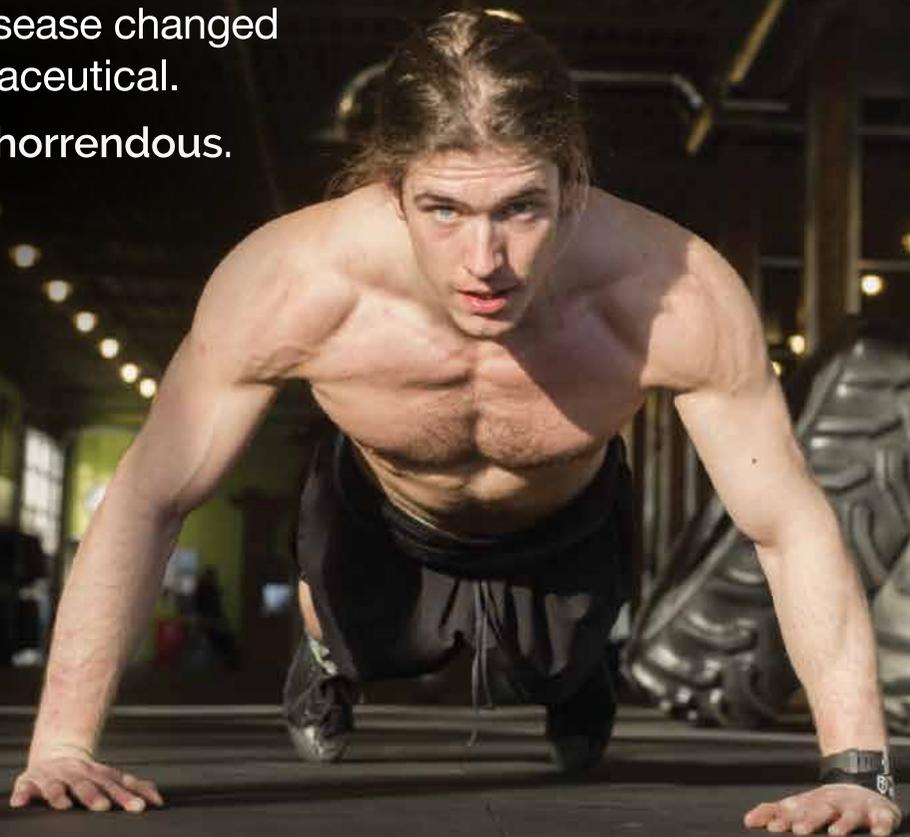


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