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Vol. 13-#2-Issue 74-February/March 2017

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INTERVIEW WITH TOM GREEN

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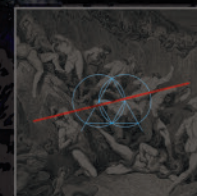
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**Web Masters** - Goatlord, Danny Deane,  
**Interns** Ryan Holmes, Myles Malloy,  
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**COVER ART** - Jesse Brigden  
**COVER DESIGN** - Chadsolute

**Writers** - Michael Luis, Erik Lindholm, Ira Hunter, Willow Gamberg, Dan Potter, Cody No Teeth, Ed Sum, Michael Carnage, Malcolm Hassin, Vince D'Amato, Stepan Soroka, Teagan Taylor, Billy Hopeless, Adam VanThiel, Rod Gillis, CC Getty, Hoon Trash, Dustin Jak, Vern Wembly, Gumpo Smith

**Photographers** - John Warnock, Chad Persley, Demonika, Ira Hunter, Jiles Barrett, Isha Barrett, Milton Stille, Dario Zuniga Marro, Gary Kuiper, Linus Ro, Andrew Gerard, Chris Robinson, Scott Fraser

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

**Transcription** - Erik Lindholm, Aeryn Shrapnel  
**Interns - Needed Desperately!!! Apply within to**  
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**Logo Design** - Dirty Donny

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Published by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground  
 PO Box 48076, Victoria, BC V8Z 7H5  
[info@absoluteunderground.ca](mailto:info@absoluteunderground.ca)  
[www.absoluteunderground.tv](http://www.absoluteunderground.tv)

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## Keg Killers

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

Photo by Scott Fraser

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

Dustin Schwam: This is Dustin Schwam, lead singer and founder of Keg Killers.

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, what**



**are you guys all about? What kind of music do you play?**

DS: We started in 2003 as a side project, because at that time all the bands in our scene were doing thrash or rock 'n roll, and we were huge

fans of newer Cali punk bands like The Stitches, Smogtown and Bonecrusher, as well as old-school shit like Pistols, Teenage Head, Ramones, plus we wanted some disgusting humour as well, due to our love of the Mentors, Fang and the Meatmen, and we grew up around Dayglos, man! We have all been in 30+ other bands over the years, Boozehounds, Shutdown, Pricks, Frostbacks, Drunk Tank, you name it. We are a punk rock band in every sense of the word, completely schooled by our surroundings.

**AU: What's going on in the world of Keg Killers? When is your next show? Got any new music in the works?**

DS: We just released our first EP in a decade, to let the folks know we plan on staying around awhile! We have a CD release April 1st at Logans with our bros Total Shit and Shit Talkers... and we have a new Pistols cover. Fuck any new shit... that's for Metallica.

**AU: What inspires the themes of your music? Any influences we might find surprising?**

DS: We are inspired by our city and our friends' bands, plus we like to piss around... if we aren't cracking up about something, then there is a problem. We stole vocal patterns from boy bands too, if anyone can ever figure out what.

**AU: Where's the best place to skate on the Island? Any favourite spots in Vancouver?**

DS: The best place to skate on the Island is Vee Dub, because it's central and big and dudes can't bullshit there. It's, "Drop in or go the fuck home." I also love Gordo Wave and UVic because I grew up in the Gordon Head area of Saanich. In Van, it's Selynn/Cheeno and fuckin' SBC... Hastings is too gnarly for me, but Bonsor is always a fuckin' hoot! Jak's Team!

**AU: Are you guys involved in any other musical**

**projects?**

DS: Absolutely (it gets confusing here). Harley, Merl, and Marc are all in Frostbacks, Marc is in the Dayglo Abortions and BLKR. Me and Merl also play in a skate rock band called Fully Crazyed, so we are always busy!

**AU: What's happening in Victoria right now? Any good up-and-coming bands we should check out?**

DS: Nothing is happening in Vic unless you play Rifflandia or own a craft brewery (perfect environment to hate on jack-offs).

Everyone is whining about their drug problems, or work, or lack of money, or they haven't seen their kid in nine years and have been sober for seven days... that kind of shit, we LOVE it... bring on the fuckin' drama!

Lots of great newer bands... Total Shit, No Hearts, Riffheist, BLKR... there's almost like a new spark going on in 2017! Could be a raging year!

**AU: What does 2017 hold for Keg Killers?**

**When can we expect world domination?**

DS: In 2017 we are going to get fucked up and have a good time. We are hitting SBC for a CD release in Vancouver this spring.

**AU: What's the craziest thing you've done as a band in**



# VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY



**the last five years? Tell us something you don't want your mother to know.**

DS: Every time we hang out, something crazy happens. We do NOT fuck around, and usually all need a month in a rehab facility after each show. This is rock and roll, not the fuckin' Brownies, people! My mom bought the farm in '93, so I have no one I need to behave for, but she still watches over us and cringes! She was a massive Bowie fan as well, so she is a big part of the party that is Keg Killers.

**AU: Any final words for the nice readers?**

DS: Buy our new CD on Absolute Underground Records, start a band with the fuckin' babysitter, and remember, the scene is as good as YOU make it... Cheers!

facebook.com/KEG-Killers-234622133233606



# FEBRUARY 2017

			1 WEDNESDAY RETROWAVE WEDNESDAYS VIDEO/BOARD GAMES NIGHT : music theme : CABAL DJ's ALL VINYL METAL + PUNK FREE : 8pm - Midnight	2 THURSDAY  To Be Announced STAY TUNED... Facebook.com/Loganspub	3 FRIDAY ROTTERDAM MECHANISM OF HATE SAINTS IN HELL Judas Priest tribute 9pm - \$10	4 SATURDAY FABLEWAY CONTRA CODE RIFFHEIST BAD BATCH 9pm - \$10		
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12 CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY 4pm - 8pm FREE	13 AUTHENTIC	14 GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE 9pm - 1am FREE	15 \$7 Menu 7pm RETROWAVE WEDNESDAYS VIDEO/BOARD GAMES NIGHT : music theme : 90s NIGHT GRUNGE & BEYOND FREE : 8pm - Midnight	16  To Be Announced STAY TUNED... Facebook.com/Loganspub	17 ACTION INDEX 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY WOOLWORM SIGHTLINES KRAXXA GLUM 9pm - \$10	18 737 Productions PRESENTS JAMES T. KIRKS 2018 ANNIVERSARY THE CORPS SADO MANNEQUIN 9pm - \$14		
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## The Shit Talkers

Interview by Willow Gamberg

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

Liz Mantle: This is Liz Mantle, lead singer/songwriter/guitarist for The Shit Talkers, Vancouver's stellar all-girl band.

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band. How/when did you form, what kind of music do you play?**

LM: In the late 80s I started playing music as a vehicle for my writing and poetry in the studios and warehouses of Gastown's thriving arts scene... Amidst the mostly male dominated scene, I resolved myself to have a girl band. My vision... became a reality when, in 2013, I met the very talented drummer Nadja Feutlinske. I had a jam space at the notorious Iron Road Studios and she was introduced to me. Crazy, even though we are both kinda tomboy, we squealed like little girls, thus solidifying our friendship and musical marriage. That night we actually wrote three Shit Talkers songs; I was playing bass with her drumming.

Nadja Feutlinske: At 13, I saw an ad in the front lobby at my school for drum lessons, so I took the number down and called the guy. He was a jazz drum teacher. I went for my "try out" to see if I even had the skills to pick up the drums. I learned a lot from him, rudiments being the main thing he taught me.

LM: We recruited the wonderful Ms. Michelle Duff, bass goddess from the all-girl band the Bombshells, and more recently, Crummy. When she joined, she had no idea her third practice was a recording session. Our band is now complete with the addition of kindred spirit, the audacious Brooke Fujiyama on guitar, who adds the perfect spark to our line-up.

**AU: You mentioned that you have received a bit of flak for the name... why are people getting so uppity about it? There are way worse band names in Vancouver alone.**

LM: Our name represents the idea of talking about shit, like a kitchen party; no subject is sacred. Totally freewheeling logger-mouth, mostly funny or outrageous hypothetical outcomes entertain our brains. As The Shit Talkers, we have encountered "profanity" blockers (There is 1 problem with this form: Custom ad title contains profanity). We've been blocked on social media, and encountered well-meaning volunteer advisors, and radio announcers who beep out shit from our name... the BEEEEEP Talkers, which seems hard to imagine in this day and age, with the proliferation of profanity on the airwaves.

When I was trolling for some bites on our demo, I thought Joey Shithead [would be approachable]... common ground, right? Apparently not, from the

postscript on his reply: "...PS, just a word of advice, maybe before you get too far along, you might consider a name change for the band. Yes I think the name is funny, but later on it will definitely be a barrier to wider success."

**AU: What kind of themes and topics do you explore with your music? Do you have a group philosophy?**

Michelle Duff: We explore different topics including women's rights, politics, gossip and personal experiences.

LM: When it comes to humans joining forces no matter how altruistic one may be, having a true democracy is a formidable task. Also finding an open mind free of judgment is rare. The ability to laugh at one's self is an important commodity if you want to be a "shit talker." As a band we make the most out of our group activities, they are bound to be full of shitloads of giggles, we all love to make art, travel, camp, enjoy nature and rock out, all the while easily and fluidly collaborating our thoughts and continually working on our newest musical offerings. We have become a thriving group determined to be prolific art producers. Interestingly, we have a member from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s, each giving their unique perspective on the state of the world. We are a fun band, into good times, but we also want to express our take on changing the world, creating social commentary in our lyrical content to dig a little deeper into society's shitty, puzzling ways of destruction and waste.

**AU: Are you involved in any other musical projects? What do The Shit Talkers do when they're not talkin' shit?**

LM: What I love about The Shit Talkers is that, while not making music and talking shit, we are all very artsy, more than most groups I think. We make all our own merch and designs.

**AU: What are your influences or inspirations? Anything we might find surprising?**

LM: As a musicaholic from a young age, I delved into anything not mainstream industrial, Whitehouse, Residents, Throbbing Gristle, Flipper, Nurse With Wound... still too much too love. Jazz, drum 'n bass, reggae, big band, house, hip-hop, country, on and on. I love music.

Brooke Fujiyama: SNFU, Red Hot Chili Peppers (the old stuff), Marilyn Manson, The Toy Dolls, and The Misfits. How could I forget the Ramones?

**AU: Favourite Vancouver venue? Any local bands we should be checking out?**

BF: My favourite local bands are Ford Pier and The Vengeance Trio, and Danny Echo.

MD: In Vancouver, The Smiling Buddha Cabaret is my favourite venue. Definitely check out local bands The Gagged and Shockload.

# VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

LM: My picks on local Vancouver bands to check out are The Furniture and Obscene Being. Probably our fave venue would be a toss-up between SBC and Rickshaw, though not far behind are the lovely ladies of Lanalou's.

**AU: What does the future hold for The Shit Talkers?**

LM: We have made three videos on YouTube with the help of the inspirational RD Cane, photographer, and our super rad rapper friend, Tyrow James, and we plan to make many more. Songs just need videos in our estimation, it's half the fun of the art right there. Tour, tour, tour, would be our goal as a band. Putting our efforts into crossing Canada and then across the BIG pond would be the "dream" tour.

**AU: What does this year have in store for The Shit Talkers? Any gigs coming up? Tours? Album releases?**

LM: March 12th at the Red Room Ultra Bar as part of Landmark Events Industry Showcase. We will be on the Basement Closet Sessions broadcasting live from UVic on Friday March 31st on CFUV 101.9 FM at 3 - 4:30pm. Finally on April 1st we'll hit Victoria to open for the Keg Killers release party at Logan's Pub with Total Shit and hopefully sew that into a little

island tour.

**AU: What should we know about The Shit Talkers that we don't already?**

LM: We are set to have our first official release, a 15-song album called *I Scream*, recorded old-school, live-off-the floor at Fiasco Brothers Studios in Burnaby with Randy Steffes. His resume is insane, just google him. [We are] super stoked to have him work with us.

At present, we are assembling the artwork and plan a release date for end of March.

Our mostly DIY merch is available online at [theshittalkers.com](http://theshittalkers.com) our social media is on [facetrash](http://facetrash.com) - YouTube channel, and @shittalkin777 on Instagram. Check out our songs on [ReverbNation](http://ReverbNation.com). Email is [shittalkin777@gmail.com](mailto:shittalkin777@gmail.com).

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PHOTO CREDIT: RD Cane

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# CALGARY CARNAGE



## BDFM

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Mark Russell: My name is Mark Russell, I'm not famous, but you may know me as co-founder of Calgary Beer Core, one of the singers in BDFM, a singer in Citizen Rage, and I play drums and vocals in Pelican Death Squad.

**AU: Give us a brief band history, when/how did you form? What's your music like?**

MR: BDFM was formed out of the ashes of a very bad local music scene, we just got tired of going to the same punk show. We never had any crazy shows going on in 2004, all the rad bands wanted to take breaks and any of the "newer punk" was all sounding the same. We wanted beer, we wanted aggressiveness in our pits, we wanted to just go

mental like back in the day. So we formed BDFM, the Beer Drinking Fighting Machine, and from that we started Calgary Beer Core, and searched for some of the hardest, angriest bands Calgary had to offer at that time to play shows with and help out our local scene. The music we wrote has a lot to do with living on the wrong side of the tracks, as a couple of us came from poverty and violence all around us. If you are looking to listen to nice calming music, or make flowers bloom, BDFM is not for you. We are aggressive and don't hold back.

**AU: Do you explore any particular themes or topics throughout your discography? What influences your music?**

MR: Well to start, drinking swearing and fighting, taking no shit from any one, that being the government or a school yard bully.



**AU: Your entire discography is available online for free download through Dropbox... What's the philosophy behind this? Do you not believe in charging money for music?**

MR: BDFM was not about money it was about the moment.

**AU: We understand you're reuniting for the Distortion 10 year anniversary... how long have you been on hiatus? What prompted you to get back together?**

MR: Our last show was in March 2013 at Dickens Pub. Getting us to come back for this one show and one show only has everything to do with Katie Bevan, the manager from Distortion. She contacted us separately, and each of us reacted the same when she messaged us; we all thought there was no way the next person can play it or

wants to, but I'll say yes for now, and all of a sudden we were all in. Now that we are headlining it, we are pumped. We have been playing shows at the Distillery since we started and now, 14 years later, we are rocking out with some of the cities raddest bands for team fucking D.

**AU: What has Distortion brought to the Calgary music scene over the last ten years? Why is it important?**

MR: Distortion is just the latest in our venues, it started with the Distillery, which went through two locations, then it got moved to a posh neighbourhood, that one was the D. After being asked politely to fuck off by the community, we decided on going with Distortion. I personally believe that all of these locations have had a great impact on the Calgary music scene, and not saying it wouldn't be where it is right now with out us, but I do believe we have helped provide a place for all musicians, from death metal all the way to the blues, to come and show Canada and the rest of the world that Calgary has the best of the best.

**AU: What are you most looking forward to about taking the stage again?**

MR: It's going to be fucking amazing looking out to the crowd and hearing everybody singing our songs again, screaming into the air with blood and sweat all around. And hanging with friends and family we haven't seen in a while. Friends for life, family forever.

**AU: Any other bands on the bill that you're particularly stoked to see? What can we expect from this 10-Year Anniversary Show?**

MR: All of them, they are all inspiring and great musicians. It rad being able to play an old-school show with these bands.

**AU: Any other new bands in Calgary that you're stoked on? Who should we be paying attention to?**

MR: Hazzerd, Terminal Human Condition,

Chaosbeing, The Electric Revival, Statue of Demur, WMD, Snakepit, False Flag, From Six Till Eight, WCWT, The Borderguards, Class Action, Meggido, Craic the Lens, Fall City Fall, Stab Twist Pull, so much awesome comes from Calgary, I suggest you look into it all.

**AU: You've been a band for 15 years or so... how have you seen the hardcore genre change over that time?**

MR: It always has the same heart, that's for sure, I guess the only thing that really changes is our age.

**AU: Will we ever see BDFM play again? What are your plans for the future as musicians? What are your hopes for the future of the Calgary music scene?**

MR: I can't say for sure as we thought we would never do this again, haha, but we have no plans, just this one show and that's that. Jamie (guitar) and Kristin (vocals), are working on Magdalene, a crossover hardcore band, Jdogg (drummer) and myself will keep going hard with Citizen Rage, Skidrow Scotty (guitar) has some serious health issues to take care of, and Matt (bass), well Matt will keep eating coffee tables and crunching numbers. My hopes for Calgary music community and its multiple sub-genred scenes, is just to work together and just support each other, no need to be assholes to each other.

**AU: Shamelessly promote whatever you want here:**

MR: Magdalene has a new disc out, and Citizen Rage has a show with DRI in September.

**AU: Final words?**

MR: Here's to a few more!

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SAT 11 DISTORTION   THE D   THE DISTILLERY 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY	SUPREME HUSTLE PRESENTS FRI 10
FEAT. BDFM, EXIT STRATEGY, HYPNOPILOT, BLOATED PIG, CAVEAT & GUESTS	LEFT HANDED WILLY / FORM 10 / GUESTS THU 16
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SAT 18 IN/VERTIGO / NIKKI VALENTINE & THE GYPSY RIDERS STATIC SHIFT / MIKE MACKENZIE / MAX MANN	TRUCKFIGHTERS THU 23
SUN 19 FREE SHOW JOHNNY 2 FINGERS & THE DEEFORMITIES THE ELECTRIC REVIVAL / FRANKY FROG LIQUOR 5PM START	WE HUNT BUFFALO / WOODHAWK FRI 24
FRI 24 SUPREME HUSTLE PRESENTS ILL GATES & KJ SAWKA	TBA SAT 25
SAT 25 CALGARY BEER CORE PRESENTS 3RD ANNUAL GHETTO GALA	WU TANGS CAPADONA KILLA PREIST WED 29
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## Montreal Massacre

By Andre "Rezine" Lanier

For this column, I will introduce a few bands that are street punk. I think Montreal has always had a tradition of bands that depicted the struggles of labourers. It started with the factory workers and shifted to the mass of the population that is just suffering from the corporation, banksters and their political accomplices.

### Out Of Order

They just released a new album in 2016, *Stuck In The Mud*, I was lucky enough to get to hear it before the release. They are on a war path with their songs, starting strong with one of my favourites, "Light A Fire." They have a good rock and roll sound, and they don't hesitate to add backing vocals to make the songs fun. You'll definitely want to see them play live. Scott Maracle, the singer of the band, has one of the best voices in Montreal.



### ShotCallers

ShotCallers have a new EP simply called *Montreal*. They are proud of the city and have a song called "Montreal Army" that is also a great song to put on when you support the local football (soccer) team. The music is great with guitar solos that give off rock vibes. I just love everything about their music; their musical experience shows, as they get better every album and single they release.



### King Cans

This band is fairly new to the scene; they released a demo in 2016 that I was happy to share through my webzine. They are angry and they get straight to the point. I don't think they want to know about you or where you are from, or that's what they say in their songs. That's what I like about them, and it's great to sing that song when you feel you don't really want to talk to someone.

### The Prowlers

This is a classic oil



band from Montréal.

They have a couple of albums and recently released a split album with The Oppressed, from Cardiff. They have been around since 1999 and they have toured all over America and Europe expressing their pride and love for a good time. You have to see them; they even have their own beer, which goes well with some of the songs that are about drinking. This is a solid band that makes Montreal proud.

## MONTREAL MASSACRE

This is a short list of bands, I'm aware that it's not all of them, but I don't have much space and time to write about everyone, check their Facebook and Bandcamps to learn more. If you come to Montreal, you might meet some of the guys at the Yer'mad Bar, nice place to drink pints, say hello to Francis behind the bar, if you go. Feel free to let me know about your band. morbleu1@gmail.com

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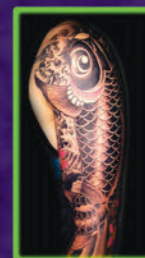
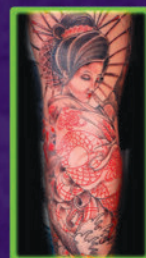
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# GREEN JELLY

and you have to change the name to Green Jelly?

RG: In 1981, at age 17, Bill Manspeaker and his friends were playing RISK in an attic while smoking weed. It was then he

decided to start the world's worst band, and found it appropriate to name the band after the world's worst food. Twelve years later, in 1992, when Green Jello got signed to a record deal, Kraft Foods pressured the band to change the name. They had to re-release their CD and a short time afterwards, were forced to re-release a third time when they were sued by Metallica.

**AU: Who's in the band? What other bands have the members been in?**

RG: Bill and his son, Damien, and literally about 1000 more by now, including Hulk Hogan, Maynard James Keenan, Matt Groopie, Danny Carey, your mom, Sebastian Bach, Anth Roppa, Gene Simmons, Paul Stanley, Tom and Annemarie Jefferys, Weird Al Yankovic, and Derek Nelson, to name a small few. No joke. Look it up.

**AU: Give us a brief band history.**

RG: They sold millions of albums, toured worldwide, got nominated for a Grammy, were in the soundtracks to many films like *The Flintstones*, *Dumb & Dumber*, *Reality Bites*, *Son in Law*, etc, they were inducted into the *Guinness Book of World Records*... and continue to suck. Since 2012 Bill Manspeaker has been recruiting fans to run local "franchise bands" throughout America, Canada, Mexico, and the UK. Now he simply flies himself and his puppets to shows and performs with the local franchise band. That way, every single show is different... and superfan, regular, nine-to-five joes like me get to be rockstars for a week while playing in our favourite childhood band.

**AU: What are some of your songs about?**

RG: Pigs, bears, toucans, cowgods, and a man

made of shit.

**AU: What are the biggest influences on your sound and the look of the band?**

RG: Bill used to listen to KISS and Alice Cooper as a teenager, but preferred comic books, cartoon, and cereal. The combination of the two can describe the band to this day.

**AU: Did you guys used to play shows with GWAR back in the day?**

RG: Sure!

**AU: Are you working on releasing a new album?**

RG: Yes. It's called *Nursery Crimes*. We also are working with producer Grendel Grimes to release a tribute album featuring Green Jello covers performed by fans. Most tracks feature members of Green Jello. And a live EP should be out next year also, which is the soundtrack to our upcoming film, *Green Jello Suxx Live*.

**AU: Does the band get many groupies looking for meaningless puppet porn after the shows?**

RG: Unfortunately the most nudity I've seen on tour was Bill's ass and the back of his balls when he flashed the audience his fruit bowl, then poured beer all over it. A couple more dudes have shown their junk. It's hilarious... but a boob here or there would be nice. Fuck!

**AU: Is it best to get drunk or stoned before taking in your show?**

RG: Bill warns the audience immediately that if they're not both drunk and high, they're in for the biggest waste of an evening ever!

**AU: Tell us about the documentary that is in the works.**

RG: It's titled *Green Jello Suxx Live*. I started a Kickstarter last year to film a live concert and interview the band. It ended up being a lot more



than that, in fact we filmed an entire five-day tour and then collected archival footage and conducted interviews for the full year. Here is the link to the official trailer: <http://bit.ly/2k4crKH>

**AU: What can the people expect from your live show?**

RG: Sore ears. Puppets. Nausea. Bad language.

**AU: Tell us something you don't want your mother to know.**

RG: My mother? She knows the worst about me anyway. I'm in the world's shittiest band and she still loves me... go figure...

**AU: If you were going to start a cover band, what band would you choose?**

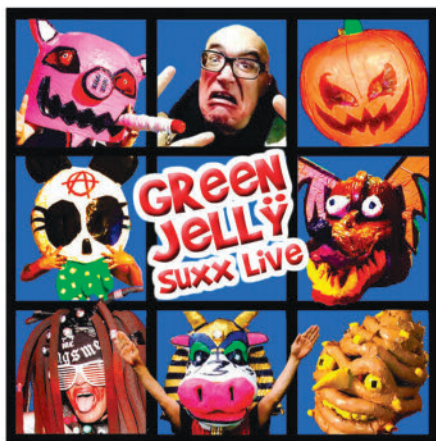
RG: Green Jello has covered many songs in the past. It has to be a song that requires little to no talent to pull off. Like anything by Yoko Ono. We rock that catalog.

**AU: Final words for Canadian fans?**

RG: Is that a threat?

**AU: Website?**

RG: [GreenJelloSuxx.com](http://GreenJelloSuxx.com)



## Green Jelly

Interview by Ira Hunter

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

Rob Gabriele: My elephantitis of the testicles. Other than that, I'm Rob Gabriele from the world's worst band, Green Jello.

**AU: Describe Green Jello's sound for someone who has never heard you?**

RG: Like a frozen turd tossed into a washing machine, strapped to the wing of a mid-flight Boeing 747. And a banjo.

**AU: What's the meaning behind the band's name? Is it true Jello issued a cease and desist**





## The Real McKenzies

### 25 Glorious Years With Paul McKenzie

By Chuck Andrews

**Absolute Underground:** When you started the Real McKenzies in 1992, did you have any idea how long the band would last? Have you ever pictured yourself doing anything else in the long term?

Paul McKenzie: In 1992, Chris Badgley saw us at the Crocodile Cafe, he set up a recording date in Seattle because nobody in Van wanted anything to do with us; the show was too outrageous. We planned on recording the first album and nothing more. It got a great response, a tour followed and one thing led to another. I never expected the

band to last 2.5 years, never mind 25.

**AU: Where hasn't the band toured in the world? Will the 25th Anniversary Tour see any new countries that haven't been embarked on before?**

PM: We haven't toured Africa, China, Indonesia, or Greenland. But we really want to play everywhere. South America would be great, it almost happened, but fell through.

**AU: Despite many lineup changes, the Real McKenzies have not only managed to stay together, but have also stayed very relevant. What is the secret?**

PM: It's an elephant with an "R" tattooed on the side of it. That's "R" elephant. The magnitude of Scottish Canadian music is so great that we are just minions in comparison. This is what gives us the drive to carry on. It is way bigger than we are.

**AU: I noticed that there were quite a few**

**official music videos for songs from the last album. Do you feel that making music videos in this digital age is more or less important, than say 20 years ago?**

PM: It's just as important except now, it's far more expensive and competitive in terms of our budget.

**AU: What can we expect from the new album? With such great records before it, such as Westwinds, Off the Leash and Rats in the Burlap, it has a lot to live up to!**

PM: We have a new lineup, a new perspective in terms of writing and performing. As for me, it's a breath of fresh air because the new lineup is just as excited to perform as I am.

**AU: Was the whole band involved in the writing process on Two Devils Will Talk?**

PM: Dan Garrison took the helm and we all rode the boat.

**AU: Does the title come from personal experiences with decision making, right, wrong, etc.?**

PM: Yes. Most definitely. It's the nature of the business.

**AU: Who did the amazing portrait of you for the new album cover?**

PM: My bassist Troy took a photo and Stephan Gauthier did the portrait. Stephan also did Westwinds. He's a glorious bastard.

**AU: For the 25th Anniversary Tour, can we expect to see anything out of the ordinary at the live shows, or any songs that aren't usually played?**

PM: Of course, we will be playing songs from the new album, plus an acoustic set in select cities which will have older songs we don't usually play. Aside from that, it will be Real McKenzies high energy, high quality performances as usual. Kick out the jams.

**AU: The lyrics to Real McKenzies songs cover a lot of different topics, and many different emotions. Can you let us in on any part of the lyric-writing process?**

PM: Personally, I hear the music and when I feel for it, the song sings the lyrics to me. Of course,

this is developed and processed over time, but none-the-less it is how it works for me.

**AU: The band continually travels the world and always has. Is it safe to say that other countries and cultures play a huge part in inspiring the music of the Real McKenzies?**

PM: Predominantly Scottish Canadian legend and tradition dominate the inspiration for our songs. But, of course when we travel and experience different cultures, they influence us as well.

**AU: On this note, would you care to share a couple songs that were inspired by places you traveled?**

PM: "St.Pauli," Hamburg Germany; "Kingdom of Fife," Scotland; "The Catalpa," Australia; "Midnight Train to Moscow," Russia; "Three Eyed Kitten," Finland; and the list goes on.

**AU: You are doing a bunch of the 25th Anniversary Tour dates with the Isotopes. What is your favourite thing about the Isotopes?**

PM: Ben Rad Stewart! The guy in the jock strap. Along with an excellent set, great songs and performance... and they're good guys.

**AU: There is a lyric on Westwinds where you mention both The Stooges and the MC5, two bands who were definitely powerful punk forefathers. Who else influenced you musically as a musician starting out?**

PM: Ian Dury, Richard Hell and the Voidoids, The Damned, Wilson Picket, The Coasters and so many more. Soul music, early punk rock and of course poet and lyricist Robert Burns.

**AU: Who are your favourite current artists, musicians, painters, sculptors, etc.?**

PM: That's a very difficult question, there are so many. I'll keep it short and name a great band we toured with in 2014, A. Tom Collins. A great band, check them out... a little bit Tom Waits, a little bit soul.

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

PHOTO SOURCE: Union Label Group

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- 04 CHOOSE LIFE A TRAINSPOTTING PARTY DEAD PRETTY + LONDON CALLING DJ BRITPOP - MANCHESTER - INDIE - NEW WAVE
- 11 SNOWFLAKE DAY CLONE HIGH MARATHON
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- 11 SWEATSHOP UNION KYPRIOS + DEF 3 + DRAGONFLI EMPIRE + MINO CEAZ + BROM + ODDER OTTER
- 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY THE REAL MCKENZIES + THE ISOTOPES + CRAIG THE LENS + THE TERRITORIES
- 18 BAT SABBATH CHRON GOBLIN + 7'S WILD
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## Protest The Hero

Interview by Stepan Soroka

Whitby, Ontario's Protest The Hero have been pushing the boundaries of punk and metal in front of a mass audience since their breakout concept album, 2005's incredibly dynamic *Kezia*. Since then, they have released three full-lengths and, most recently, a subscription-based digital EP titled *Pacific Myth*. We caught up with vocalist Rody Walker on the first night of a cross-Canada tour with A Wilhelm Scream.

**Absolute Underground:** You're about to jump into a fairly lengthy tour. 15+ years into the band, do you still get excited to hit the road? And what are you most looking forward to on the tour?

Rody Walker: I don't know that I get excited. I do enjoy it to some degree, but I never had any aspirations to travel when I was younger. I just sort of fell into this life, so it's an interesting scenario, to say the least. I do like going out and playing to kids and seeing them enjoy it. What I'm most excited for is probably when we get back to Toronto, The Flatliners are jumping on the Toronto date, and I love that band. We haven't played with them in like ten years.

**AU:** Your new EP, *Pacific Myth*, incorporated an innovative digital purchase method. Do you feel like physically releasing music is becoming obsolete?

Rody: No. I do think the times are changing and the climate is very different than it used to be. Records don't sell anymore for the most part, but bands can still make a living. That's one thing that is different from when we were coming up, because records weren't selling then and there was no fucking money to be made unless you're Justin Bieber or something like that. Everyday, there are certain innovative, new ways to circumnavigate the industry, and I think it's all about trying to take advantage of those things. It's fun. There are so many adventurous paths you can go on nowadays as long as you're an independent artist. So, I don't think physical is dead at all because vinyl is never going away. People love having big artwork, people love listening to it on a record player. It's a very interactive way to listen to music, and I don't think it will ever die.

**AU:** In an old interview you stated that many of your fans were, "14-year-old little girls with bad haircuts and boys that look like 14-year-old girls with bad haircuts." Do you feel like your fan base has matured over the years?

Rody: God damn it. [Laughs] Yeah, that was a really mean thing to say about our fan base. I've got a big mouth. At one point we had an appeal to the emo/screamo type of scene and I think that's sort of what I was trying to speak

to without any tact or eloquence whatsoever. But that scene has matured. Some of them are certainly still with us, some of them have moved on to different things, probably not even related to music. So I do think the fan base has matured but there is still a younger element to it. The reality is that if you want to grow your band in any way you have to attempt, in some way, to stay relevant to the younger generation. I'm not saying go out and do what Green Day did and start wearing eyeliner and write a song for



fucking children, but I think it's important to try and stay relevant to some degree.

**AU:** On the song "Unending Reign of Terror" you sing about "what it means to be a man and what it means to refuse it," which is a reference to Propagandhi. You have also collaborated with both Todd and Chris from Propagandhi on your albums. Can you elaborate on your relationship with Propagandhi and how they have influenced your band?

Rody: They are the best. That's my favourite band for as long as I can remember. We had an opportunity to tour with them in 2009. It was kind of hard for us to take that tour because they are very politically charged and we're not vegans, we're not vegetarians or anything like that and we were worried that we were going to offend them. You don't want to let your hero down. But we met them and they're the nicest, most relaxed guys on Earth. After that, we sort of became friends with them and it's really kind of weird for me still. They've been a huge influence over the band and they remain an influence. When we were out on that tour, it was funny because kids were coming up while they're playing, and we're standing out front watching and (it was in Europe) they would ask, "Why are you touring with this band? We don't see the connection." Well, you might not see it but we take a lot of fucking influence... well sometimes it's not even influence, we're blatantly ripping them off. Anytime you hear a punk beat in our set, that's Propagandhi.

**AU:** What's your favourite Propagandhi album?

Rody: *Supporting Caste*. I really loved *Failed*

States, but *Supporting Caste* has "Banger's Embrace" on it, and that song is just like... holy fuck, I love it. I love all the records for different reasons. They represent different places in my life. When *How To Clean Everything* came out I was this little punk kid loving every single little bit of it, mostly loving it because it was a big "fuck you." And then *Less Talk More Rock...* holy fucking shit. It's the refined skate punk record for them and then they went thrash as shit. Their evolution has been absolutely fantastic and I feel like I have grown at the same rate as them. Their adolescence as a band was my adolescence as a human being. I tie my entire fucking life to their



records.

**AU: After your cross-Canada run you are dipping into the States for several days. What are your thoughts on the recent election?**

Rody: I half just want to stay uninvolved. Everyone knows that Trump is a piece of shit. I don't like it. I think obviously the country has gone backwards. They showed that they hate women so much that they would elect a complete piece of shit. I think it's going to be a very interesting four years and obviously he deserves the benefit of the doubt, but I don't see anything good coming of this. Who knows, it might be the fall of the West, finally. And

they'll take us all with them.

**AU: You guys write a lot of issue-oriented songs. What role, if any, do you think heavy music plays in struggles for social change and social justice?**

Rody: It certainly has its place. I don't know that it's vocalized enough within heavy music, particularly progressive metal. That was a little bit of the purpose of *Pacific Myth*, to address this new trend of doing a concept record and the concept means nothing. Just a narrative without any underlying moral. What's the point? I shouldn't be criticizing people like that because it's not fair to categorize someone's art, but I don't think that there is enough vocalization of social injustice in the metal scene. But there is some of that. Look at Rob Flynn. He's out there and he's very vocal and it's fantastic. But obviously there is a lot more of it in punk. And as I'm getting older, I'm stopping listening to heavy metal, and I'm finding myself going back to my skate punk days. I just like it so much more.

**AU: What's next for you guys after this tour?**

Rody: We are doing a tour with August Burns Red, it's quite lengthy. Then we're hoping to get to Australia for some of the winter because, as you know, winter sucks and we want to get the fuck out of here. And then we're probably going to sit down and write some more.

**AU: Anything you want to add?**

Rody: It's been an absolute pleasure.

[www.protestthehero.ca/](http://www.protestthehero.ca/)

PHOTO CREDIT: Chris Preyer

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## Orchid

Interview by CC Getty and Celestia Scarlett

Ten years into their existence, San Francisco's Orchid finally brought their brand of doom to Canada by way of a one-off gig at the Palomino in Calgary, AB on October 5th. CC Getty and Celestia Scarlett from The Metalheads United Network were lucky enough to sit down with guitarist Mark Thomas and bassist Keith Nickel for *Absolute Underground*.

**Absolute Underground: This is your first show ever in Canada, correct?**

Mark Thomas: Yes!

**AU: What the fuck took so long?!**

MT: There are a lot of places we haven't been able to get to yet, but we are starting to get to a point where we are going to work more, so it probably won't be the last time and we hope to get to some other countries where people have been very vocal about getting us there as well!

**AU: Even in your own country, there have been people screaming for you to come see them, what's been preventing you from getting out on tour?**

Keith Nickel: I don't think Orchid started with any intention of touring, it was more just some bros getting together, playing some music for fun! Then we happened to end up on a small German label, started selling some records in Europe, and it was like come tour, and it just kept growing. We've toured there five times now.

MT: It just hasn't worked out timing-wise to tour [North America] yet. When we started this band, we didn't really have [the] lives that expected us to be touring musicians, this has happened quick and life has evolved around that. But I think after we do our next album, we are going to be working a lot more.

**AU: Being on Nuclear Blast now, that must play a big part in Orchid touring and doing more as a band, how did that all happen?**

KN: We weren't seeking this, we all have lives that are pretty demanding outside of Orchid, so now it's like we are stealing time from our normal lives in a way. It was Mark that reached out to them.

MT: I thought Nuclear Blast knew about the scene we were trying to be in, we talked for close to six months before signing. They understood what we were

about and they have been absolutely great for us. They love the music and they love us as people, and have been supportive and are just as eager to get another album from us as we are to get it done.

**AU: Maybe the secret is that as you said you just wanted to make music for fun, it's just**

**the pure passion for the music you play, that's what they and everyone else are picking up on...**

KN: I certainly feel that, and looking back to when I was trying to be on a record label and playing in lots of bands, I just want to tell all these young people, "Those things are a big mistake, don't pursue it for that. That energy is not going to take you there. Find something you really, really love, give it everything you've got and do it because you would do it. No matter what." I couldn't have it any other way in my life. If I was pursuing this, I don't think I'd be happy. To have these residual effects of coming to Canada, it's amazing.

MT: It's still surreal to me... I feel that way almost every time we go play somewhere, I have no idea what to expect. It still blows me away that we get to do this and we have albums out, and shit you know... Man, it's weird. I feel pretty lucky!

**AU: I love hearing that! Maybe that's the lesson, that the harder you try, the more difficult it is - do it because you love it! You have to love the music to in order to make music that people are going to feel.**

KN: The hard work is important, but it's putting the hard work in the right place. It's so easy to think, "I'm doing everything, but why is it not happening?" Sometimes you have to stop and think, "What am I working so hard on?"

MT: We've been more successful playing fewer gigs, to be honest.

KN: That builds the mystery.

**AU: What do your families think of all this?**

KN: Mine's super easy, I live by myself. I have a cat, but my dad and sister fill in. I have it pretty easy. My business demands my attention, but luckily it's my own, and I can buy myself some freedom and time.

MT: My kids secretly think it's pretty cool. They have nice Orchid posters and tour laminates hanging in their rooms. They've gone to a few all-ages shows here and there.

**AU: The San Francisco area is known for all kinds of amazing music, do you find it inspiring to be creating in that scene? Where do you find your inspiration?**

KN: As far as San Francisco, I love the ocean. I find the inspiration in different places than you would expect. The blues for me is maybe my favourite form of music. I look at Orchid as a blues band, when I am playing, I'm playing the goddamn blues. I'm playing deep roots blues, like Robert Johnson. I'm trying to bring in all that old myth of signing your soul to the Devil.

MT: I have a kind of a wide range of musical tastes, and even though (lead vocalist) Theo Mindell is the guy with the creative vision in this band, we all contribute in our own way and we all completely put our personalities into our playing, and that can be difficult when you're playing someone else's music because you are trying to support their vision of what it's supposed to be like and still be authentic.

**AU: You are going through some changes right now, have you nailed down your drummer?**

KN: It feels like Tommy is the right guy. Part of this trip is to see what it's like on a personal level. But the music, for me, is getting better than ever!

**AU: With that in mind, when can we expect to hear some new music from Orchid?**

MT: When we started playing with Tommy, right off the bat we started writing new music. He's very easy for us to work with. Theo and I have known Tommy for over twenty years, and he's (played) with Theo before so he's accustomed to his vision. Then we took this show, so we had a month to hone the set, so there wasn't any sitting around and writing new songs now! Once we are back home we will probably get right back to it. It's been almost four years since we released #The Mouths of Madness#, so there is a lot of music that's been floating around, it'll take a couple of months to put together and then we can get to tracking.

To hear the complete interview follow the Metalheads United podcast at [www.metalheadsunitednetwork.podomatic.com](http://www.metalheadsunitednetwork.podomatic.com)

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# Absolute sub-culture



## Subculture

By wendythirteen

Globally, one step forward, two steps back. Sometimes it seems like the world will never get to a sustainable equilibrium. Watching Trump attempting to undo years of progress within days of his inauguration brings great lamentation to the masses. It's like he's pulling all his toys into his fortified sandbox after years of American meddling around the global playground. How can you deny entry to refugees of a war torn country that America had a hand in creating with the unrest of the petroleum war games?

The sheer amount of miscreants that have come out of the woodwork since his ghastly spewing of xenophobic ideals and blatant sexist and racist overtone platform is mind boggling. Never has the unfriend and unfollow button on Facebook gotten such attention.

Sometimes you just need to wait for people to show you who they really are. Is this the clusterfuck decade?

Seeing all the anti-Women's March sentiments on Facebook was quite discouraging, especially the posts that were made by women. Women just need to be acknowledged as equal. It's as simple as that. All you can do is soldier on, fighting for that elusive fair standard. If any male-dominated government was trying to tell men what they could do with their cock and balls, it would be a whole different ball game. Shout out to all the men that actually understand the vileness that is the patriarchal attitude.

Why should Canadians care about the American political bullshit? I for one, refuse to live life with my head buried in the sand. Anyone suggesting that discussing world issues is a waste of time needs a reality check. That dismissive attitude is infectious. Left unchecked, it is a dangerous situation brewing in North America. Environmental dangers are being buried, as peoples' rights to life's simplicities are forever maimed by big business interests. It's not right to expect the First Nations people

to drink petroleum residue that will poison and destroy their ability to obtain healthy sustenance on their designated, minuscule, native lands.

Ok, music, right. What this column is supposed to be about. But seriously, some of the most concerned people about the state of the world are the creatives. Protest songs are a mainstay within music. Lyrical fodder is created by the missteps of the monetarily misguided politicians. Do we think differently? Is it because it isn't about money or having designer handbags or a gold shitter? When you're making art you aren't thinking about how much you can sell that song or painting for. Creative brains are wired differently. Creativity comes from a vibration within. I believe that vibration is well attuned with nature. Watching the earth being raped for gobs of phantom money is infuriating.

Locally, the B.C. Government finally took baby steps into the modern age of alcohol consumption. You can now pretty much drink in any business that chooses to apply to serve liquor. It almost seems that with the outrageous rents landlords are charging these days, that all businesses could use the extra income that the liquor sales lifeblood would bring. Would it have saved the rash of established mom and pop businesses that are closing their doors? Too little, too late? Better install more public washrooms. I still don't see the step to license all ages, shared space venues. You're in luck if you're a festival or a 'participating' corporate style venue. This business model works well in other parts of the world and gives youth more access to live music. This is a factor with the youth live music interest dying. There are no consistent, legal, established all ages venues in the lower mainland because it is not a money maker. You can't exist on pop and chips and pay the production costs of a live music space. All ages gigs only ever worked briefly in the past if it was a secondary business. The Java Joint was a coffee shop. Seylynn Hall rented mostly to mainstream group functions.

You can make entry free with various methods. Incentives like 'Two for One' door deals or musicians in for free and its still like pulling teeth to get Vancity out for the weekends plethora of shows that are littered with local bands. But the youngsters are heading to a DJ event or dance party. We are missing a link with the youth generation. Older music fans have families or two jobs just trying to pay rent in this jacked up city, so disposable income is nil. Not many people are going to spend what little they have to gamble on some unknown bands. I know a few promoters that have given up on the local scene because you can't make a living wage and refuse to gouge the bands. After 17 years, I feel like I'm on my last leg myself. Sad but true. The tech future times are here. Smart phones have become an appendage. Cyber gigging will be the new reality.

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## Gene Hoglan

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Gene Hoglan is known for playing drums in many noteworthy metal bands, and keeping a bright demeanor and smile throughout. He's released his second instructional DVD, *The Atomic Clock: The Clock Strikes 2* which shows more of how he does what he does... this is inspirational viewing to drummers and music fans of all descriptions.

### Absolute Underground: Where are you now?

Gene Hoglan: In San Diego; it's a rare nice day – lots of rain last few weeks.

### AU: Are you full time there?

GH: Yes, that's home.

### AU: Why enjoy SOCAL as a home base when you're a world traveller?

GH: It's where I grew up. I grew up Long Beach, born in Dallas. It's a nice hub between LA and Orange County. Lots of clubs to visit growing up. I've lived in Vancouver for a year, England, and the east coast. I got a nice condo here with my lady, and that is the place for me. I don't get to see much of it cause I'm on the road a lot, I learn about it everytime I come back.

### AU: Atomic Clock 2 has been released, lets talk about it!

GH: I'm stoked for its release, it's been an arduous task getting to the release. I couldn't be happier with the result. The only way I could be, is with a third release, where I get to expand even more on what got dished out on this one. There is always something you think of after you release a DVD, something you should have put in there. So we'll put in the next one down the road.

### AU: What was your goal with this release?

GH: I wanted to improve on the first one. With this one, *The Clock Strikes Two*, I tried to up every single ante. I wanted to improve the look – so we filmed in HD. I wanted to improve the sound – so Rob Shallcross engineered the sound quality. And there is a definite DIY aspect to everything that comes under the Hoglan Industries banner... this one is a little less DIY [though]. We made it look polished. On this latest one, I get to play along to the recorded tracks of these records I've been on. Testament's last record, *Dark Roots of Earth*, I got those guitar tracks and played over top of them. From Strapping Young Lad, "Skeksis" guitar tracks. For those fans of the *Alien* album, this is a completely different mix – no vocals or samples. Some Death *Individual Thought Patterns* songs, and some things I didn't even know. An unexpected part was when we filmed and played "The Philosopher," and there was an extra two minutes of jamming! In the album release it fades out, in this case it keeps going. And with no click track, that got challenging and got fun. I tried to show the aspects of those releases.

### AU: It shows the diversity of your career then. Is there a favourite part or story that came out of the recording at Warehouse in Vancouver?

GH: My favourite parts are the human parts – where I screw up and call myself on it – live on film! In a lot of the breakdown sections, that is

an aspect that was not present in the first DVD. I take a song and breakdown a few parts from them. And like I mention on the DVD, two nights before I recorded this, I was playing shows in Europe with Testament. I wasn't woodshedding and playing along – some of these tracks I hadn't played with in ages. The fun aspect in those breakdowns is when it is a challenge to me to play the song at a slow tempo. This is challenging! When you slow down – it's hard. The human elements brought out the humour. No serious scripting or prep for this one, I had a general idea of what I'd like to cover. I just do it off the top of my head. I also tried to encompass more viewers than drummers! I want this to excite drummers, sure, but how about guitarists? Or if you're a non-musician... but I tried to make it for everybody. It tries to encapsulate more than just instruction. For all viewers, hopefully after they've watched it, they can say, "Hey man, I don't play drums, but I enjoyed it – a couple hours well spent."

### AU: You're at the top of the game of metal drumming, you must get many project requests. Why do you take on, or not take on a project?

GH: Usually it comes down to the music involved. I get offered stuff, that I'm not the right guy for the job. I choose projects where the music is quality. Whether you are a Fear Factory fan or not, Testament, Dethklok – they are a great example, they could get anyone to play for them. I love playing with Brendon, and now the latest project Galaktikon we are working on. I try to have fun! When it comes to money – it will always be there. But it has to be fun. I've got to enjoy the bands music. That is what most excites me.

### AU: I love the emphasis on fun you have. Outsiders looking in may see [metal] as church-burning, candles, and battle axes. It can be so much fun, too. Heartening to hear it is part of your thought process.

GH: I can crack a joke when lighting a church on fire. Keep it lighthearted. I'm kidding, of course. There is a fun element to metal – Strapping was fun. Zimmers Hole is fun. Dethklok! It's fun. A quote from a friend I think of, "It's funny but it ain't no joke." You can mix humour with a bit of heart in there. We are not always grim and dour humans. We are humans! I try and bring some humour and fun to anything I do. If I can cross that with making heavy metal, super.

### AU: In the press release for this, you hinted third DVD might feature business advice for new drummers. Do you think there is a piece of gear that new drummers overlook? What do you recommend?

GH: That's a good question... a metronome! That takes me back to the last DVD. I used to carry around a blue earbud metronome, and that really helps your timing. If you start getting an internal clock feel, that will always help you with what you're doing. You can be as flashy and crazy, and tasty as possible. If your meter is all over the place – and within metal, there are tempo changes, I get it, that is cool – if your meter is fluctuating, then it's harder to be taken seriously as a musician. Young drummers, work on your clock soon as possible. I grew up in an era where AC/DC was huge, they were real solid. But I was not an appreciator of Bill Rudd's style

until I got a bit older. When I was kid I thought, "He could do so much more." I was on Neil Peart and prog drummers who were taking AC/DC style beats and flipping it up and making it exciting, for me.

Yet now I appreciate the solid time-keepers of the world... have the basics in place before you even start. Another thing I'd say is don't let anybody tell you "things are wrong." I am saying make sure your meter is solid. As for kit setups, or approaches, or playing style, make drums your own! Don't be afraid to think outside the box.

If you want to play a car door onstage, go for it! Play a car door! Just have a wide open mind and heart for your approach and that is only going to serve you well. Say all your favourite drummers right now are metal? That's awesome and great. But don't be afraid to listen to something that your metal friends might judge you for. I listen to Depeche Mode. Don't be afraid to utilize influences from other areas.

**AU: You've played with multiple bands concurrently, and with competent drummers, in hard rock, you're gonna be in demand. A lot of drummers are on multiple projects to keep busy. What is your advice for playing in multiple bands and how to keep your songs and priorities straight?**

Hoglan: On songs, that is easy. If I'm playing Testament tour and into a Death tour - I rarely confuse the two. The bands are so different in their style, that I'm not in danger of kicking into "Practice What You Preach" in the middle of "Leprosy." I do think Chuck Billy singing "Practice what you preachhhh!" in the middle of "Spiritual Healing," that would go well. To prioritize, you really have to live for this. You have to live for taking on every obstacle and task. Just absorbing the challenges. That creates a bigger character in yourself.

A couple years ago I had to do a double duty with Anthrax and Testament. Charlie Benante, the drummer, his mom was real sick and he had to clear out. He came to me on the second day of the tour and said, "I have to leave the tour. And if I leave the tour... we got no one else but you. Can I ask you to take over?" So I downloaded the songs and tried to learn the album versions. But with Anthrax, it wasn't like that. Their arrangements have drastically changed over the years, with their current lineup. I could have learned the album versions but the band would then get switched

around. So I sat behind Charlie for a few shows, and filmed him on my iPhone and three days later - I was onstage and in the role. I love being able to help people. I felt like Superman on that tour. A lot of people were impressed by that saying, "Wow! You're playing with two bands, for two hours, 45 minutes! Holy moly!" But when we are in the studio recording, I'll play ten hours a day for a week straight. What's the big deal of being on stage for that long? It wasn't that challenging from a physical standpoint compared to rehearsal for

an album. If this is something a drummer wants to do, it's physically possible.

Another thing that came out of that tour, was Anthrax said, "If you're more comfortable, play your drumset." That would have meant, Charlie's drum tech would have been out of a job. No reason to set up his kit. And my tech would do all the work. So I found a way to keep Charlie's tech working by playing two kits of drums. We were able to make the whole tour keep going by doing double duty. Otherwise 35, or 40, people would be off tour.



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**AU: Most people don't see the larger picture, they don't see the business. It's not all high kicks and wanky solos.**

GH: Fair enough. That is an unfortunate design of the industry. I've heard these stories where people meet musicians and say, "Man, I met this guy and he is being a dick." Well, actually, maybe he is a dick. But what if! If he just got a shit phone call from home, their kid is flunking out of school, or is sick. Maybe he's not in the mindspace to be met at that moment. Maybe he got yelled at. Who knows? Sometimes they aren't sparkly, there is a reason. None of us are rockstars. We play music for a living. I don't know if bands like the Rolling Stones exist anymore - driving around in Bentleys. We are all hard-working musicians.

**AU: Any other projects on the go?**

GH: We're working on the new Galaktikon with Brendon Small, it's kind of an extension of Dethklok. Dethklok at this time cannot exist. The rights were bought by the network. In that regard, instead of shoving it down, he decided to move forward with *Galaktikon 2* and for those who are Dethklok fans - there is a lot on this album for you.

**AU: What are you listening to that makes you excited about drums?**

GH: In terms of new metal drumming, Mario from Gojira has great patterns. Ash Pearson with Revocation, Eloy Castagrande from Sepultura has great feel, Byzantine is a solid band, everytime I think Canada I think: The Smalls. I love TJ, he is one of my all-time favourites. He has a great approach. If your personality comes out in your playing, you're doing it right. A new song by Sia is grabbing me, its called "Sweet Design," and what an incredible drum song. It was written for J-Lo back in the day, and she passed on it, so Sia recorded it. And that gets us out of the metal.

**AU: Last words to the community reading the magazine.**

GH: For those that have supported any of the bands I've been in, thank you! For those who are interested in picking up the *Clock Strikes 2* I hope you pick it up - not just the drummers out there! And we'll be in Vancouver with Prong, Sepultura and Testament in May. See ya!

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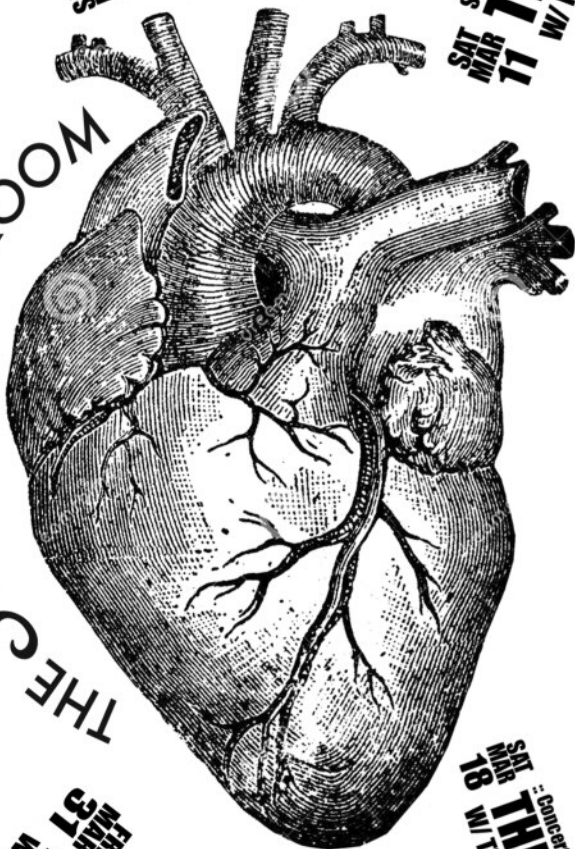
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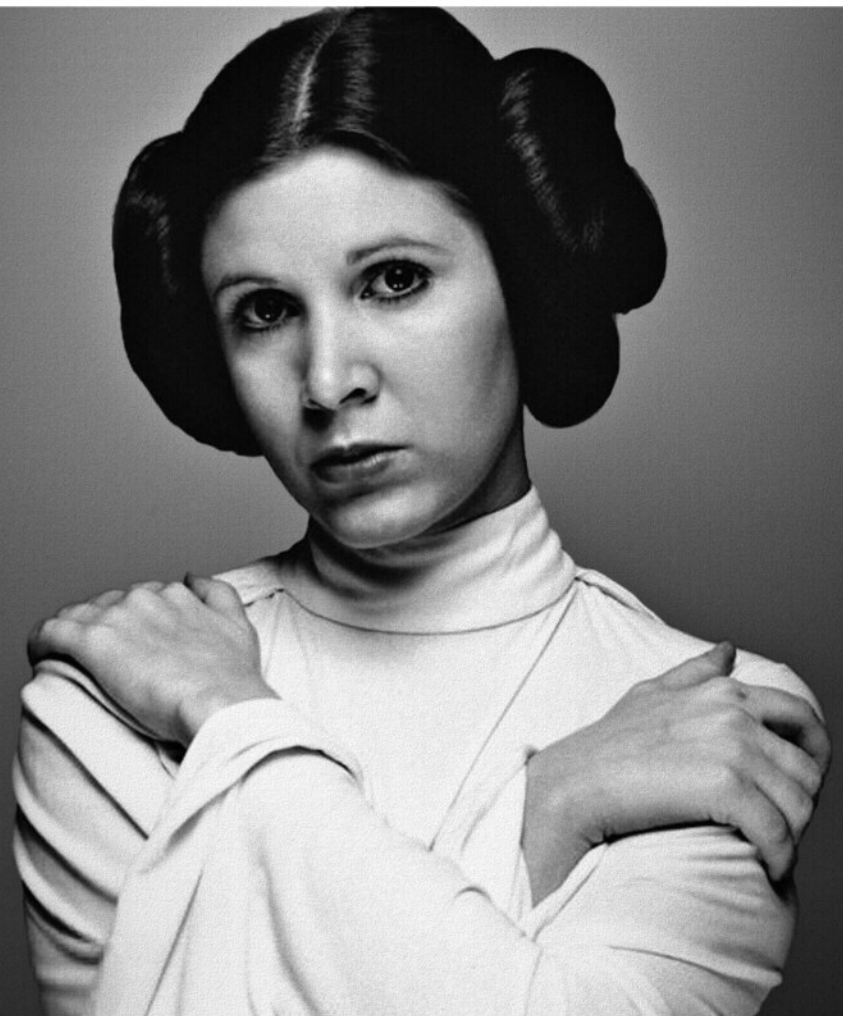
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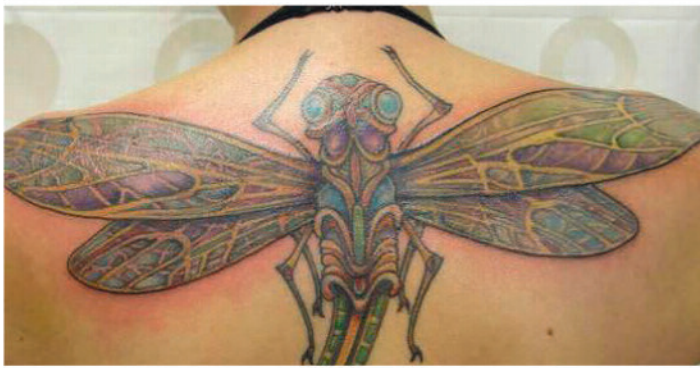


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# INK SLINGERS



**your decor is filled with the coolest selection of oddities and highball-lowbrow art I've ever seen. Tell us about what your interior decorating means to you while you're decorating other peoples' exteriors.**

TJ: Well, I'm a wacky kinda gal. I love all weird/odd, anything

and everything, I especially love dualities and combinations most would consider acidic, as in cute / horrific. The shop aesthetic is my personal aesthetic, my house is even crazier! I get bored

with stereotypical "tattoo" imagery, or that everything needs to be black and red, ugh. I get excited if people want to do tattoos that are dramatic, artistic, not expected or usual, as in combining styles, mashing up old school with realism, or abstractism. Unfortunately, not a lot of people share my aesthetic! I would really like to do more of this! I do love to do cover-ups and original drawings that work with body shape. I have been told that my use of colour is unusual, as I approach colour like a painter!

**AU: What makes a great tattoo great, in your opinion, and are there any subjects or style you**

**enjoy tattooing the most?**

TJ: Great tattoos in my opinion should be technically sound, solid lines, solid colouring, smooth blending and colour transitions, etc, as well as drawn well/ aesthetically pleasing. Last but not least, if it's a larger piece, [it should be] placed well on the body. I like doing a bit of everything, from solid black to black and grey wash, colour, realism, abstractism, not a huge fan of new school, but I love old school. People really like my colour work, especially flowers, and of course, like I mentioned before, mixing styles. I forgot to mention, I love doing oversized images, and want to do more!

**AU: Are there any subjects you won't tattoo?**

TJ: I don't really have anything specific, but I'm not a fan of tattooing jerks, or anything with negative intention, or that could be read in a negative way. A good example is, if you get a tattoo of a guy in a suit (representing corporations) raping a woman with leaves, water, etc. (representing mother earth) you still have a "rape" scene - good in concept - but as a tattoo, it may just be too much. Something that's "heavy" for the wearer,

it's like giving someone who's suicidal a knife and telling them go for it, and I'm not the gal for that job.

**AU: Your shop has two resident celebrity dogs, is your shop dog-friendly? Can someone bring their pet in while they're getting tattooed?**

TJ: Haha yes, I have two "hairless" Chinese Cresteds, the famous Freddie Mercury and Nina Simone. My shop is pet friendly, I'd have to know ahead if you're bringing your furry

friend with you, so I can leave my critters at home because they get territorial, and Freddie likes to sit on your lap while you're getting tattooed, he's a comfort dog. With health rules, reptiles are not allowed.

**AU: Have you done any tattoo work that really made you feel fantastic about what you do, or a very personal moment that made you go home saying, "That's what it's all about?"**

TJ: I've had a lot of those experiences. I often have really meaningful and in depth conversations with clients about their lives. I do play part psychologist, after all! Both men and women have a tendency to open up a lot! I have had women who have had painful memories associated with a tattoo or just one they've hated. One in particular [hated] one on her upper arm, she never wore shirts where it showed for over 30 years! She brought a tank top to her appointment and when it was done, wore it out the door proudly! Coverups do this the most! I'm very much a people-pleaser, and I can do it in a healthy way by making experiences like that happen!

**AU: In a city where tattoo shops pop up as fast as barbershop breweries, what do you contribute to your shop's longevity and what separates your craft from the "craft"?**

TJ: I think a lot of the longevity of my shop has to do with the fact that I'm not a super egotistical person. I believe I am respectful, consistent, responsible, dependable, can do a wide variety of "styles"

(no one-trick ponies here!) I do my best to give the client what they want, not what I think they should have. I do have an understanding of art, I appreciate the history of tattoos. Oh, and I'm a proud feminist. Mostly though (at least I hope), I do pretty good tattoos. Unfortunately, a lot of tattooists have had a history of addiction, chauvinism, sexism, racism,

etc. and suffer from ego/ egocentric ideals. I don't go for that. I rarely drink, don't do drugs. Never been interested. I have social anxiety (that's why you never see me out much) and am kind of a nerd in some ways, but not typically.

**AU: If you had a musical tattoo gun that played a melody while you inked, what song would it play?**

TJ: Teddy Bear's Picnic, the 1938 version by Henry Hall

**AU: Who else works in your shop?**

TJ: Geoff Funk and Sam McWilliams currently work with me. Both are American transplants, having married Canadians. Geoff has over 20 years of experience and is versatile in all styles. He owned his own shop in San Diego for eleven years, and has worked in both Florida and California. He has a bizarre sense of humour, which some people have difficulty with, but it is 99% tongue-in-cheek. Great guy! Sam currently

## Teresa Johnson

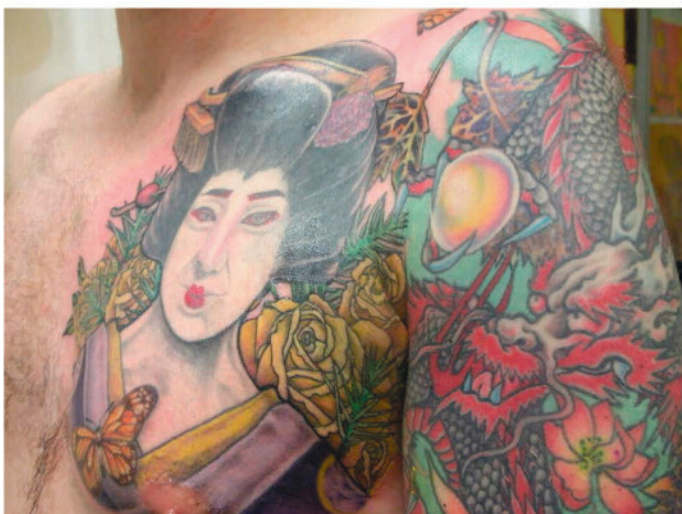
Interview by Billy Hopeless

What can I say about Teresa at Electro-LadyLux Tattoo? Well, it's her shop's 20th anniversary as Canada's first female-owned and operated tattoo shop. Let's let the goddess with the gun shoot from the lips and aim for your love.

**Absolute Underground: First off, we go back a long way, but let's fill in the readers and dig a little deeper with a brief history of your career as one of Vancouver's longest-running madames of the arts. When did you start tattooing, who trained you, where did you work before and when did you open the shop?**

Teresa Johnson: My first tattoo was a stick-and-poke at 13... first professional (my own drawing) at 15, after I left home. A single mom by 19, I got an addiction to tattoos, by 23 I had a half body suit. I was always "artistic," but never planned on being a tattooist... I just evolved into being a tattooist. It was NEVER, "I'm gonna be a tattooist," it was just a passion I had personally. At one time, I thought I'd be a social worker or psychologist, did three years of university, mostly academic, then went into fine arts as electives and realized how much I really missed it, all the while being a single mom. After getting lots of tattoos and being more "art driven," I considered trying to do a tattoo. Previously I'd considered it unimaginable and scary. I started tattooing in 1989/90, after moving to Vancouver from Regina. I am a self-taught tattooist, though I did pick up pointers here and there from people willing to share. During this time, I went to Emily Carr University as well and earned my BFA degree. I have filled in for people when they go away at different shops including one in Seattle in the early 90s, but other than that I've always worked for myself. I opened my first shop at 317A Cambie between Cordova and Hastings in 1995, and opened the current location at 876 Commercial Dr. In 1999.

**AU: I'm always interested in atmosphere and**





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## Tom Green

Interview by Ira Hunter

### Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

TG: My name's Tom Green and I'm coming to British Columbia for the Snow Jam Comedy Hip-Hop Snowboarding Tour, we're gonna be performing all over BC. We're kicking the show off in Vancouver and Victoria and then we're heading into the interior of BC and I'm gonna be doing my stand up comedy show, as well as incorporating music and beats into it with a DJ and then performing some music. It's gonna be a fun crazy night, and it's gonna be a wild ridiculous show. How are you doing today?

### AU: I'm alright. I'm in Victoria totally snowed in here.

TG: Oh, you got a lot of snow up there? That's cool. It will go well with my snowboarding tour that I'm doing because we're coming up to go snowboarding and I'm looking forward to it.

### AU: Oh yeah, is that why you're coming to BC?

TG: Yeah, I'm coming to BC to go snowboarding and rap and do music and do comedy.

I'm going to Whistler, Fernie, Sun Peaks, Golden and a few other places and it's all part of this tour which is gonna gonna be doing stand-up and I'm gonna be rapping and blending standup comedy and rap music together in one sort of show.

### AU: Do you still skateboard or are you into snowboarding more now?

TG: I still skateboard yeah, but were gonna be going snowboarding on this trip, yup.

### AU: Are you any good?

TG: Oh yeah, I'm a pretty good snowboarder. I've been doing it for 20 years. I don't try to go do back-flips over people you know or things like that but I like to cruise, I like to shred down the mountain.

### AU: What can we expect from this upcoming tour?

TG: You can kind of look it at like that like a stand up comedy show with music. I've been touring pretty much nonstop for the past 10 years, going all around the world.

### AU: Are you bringing any special guests along

### with you?

TG: Yeah I'm touring with DJ Vinyl Ritchie who's gonna be dropping the beats and then I also have a standup comedian who's going opening the show called Patrick Coppolino.

### AU: What are your thoughts now that they're thinking of legalizing marijuana?

TG: In Canada? Well I think that's the direction that things are going. I'm not really somebody that is really that vocal or outspoken on that. It's not something I know a lot about, but I tend to support the idea, I guess. I think it's probably helpful for a lot of people who have medical conditions.

### AU: Your song about Donald Trump, "Do The Donald," did you get any flak for that?

TG: No I didn't really get any flak for that. It was a very divided election, a very divisive time in America, and so certainly I got some people online who were Trump supporters who were upset that I was not supporting their candidate, but I felt like it was important for me to speak out about it since I know the president. Donald Trump was my old boss on *The Celebrity Apprentice* so he fired me and I know him. He knows me. And it would have been odd for me not to have said anything about it with everything that was going on. I talk about my experience on *The Apprentice* in my standup show and it's been great for comedy at least. I think we're living in very strange times and it's important that we make jokes and question authorities when things are like this in the world.

### AU: As a Canadian living down in LA, was it a scary thing?

TG: Yeah, I am Canadian, so if things get really bad I'll just move back to Ottawa.

### AU: How are your parents doing?

TG: My parents are doing great, yeah, they're doing really good. They're excited about my tours and my shows and they come to a lot of my shows, and you know they were a big part of the Tom Green show and the history of that, so they've always been supportive.

### AU: What are some things that you remember about Victoria?

TG: I remember the first time I was in Victoria, we did a bit for the Tom Green show where I got on a double-decker bus and whenever we drove past something I would say that I thought it sucked and then everybody got really mad at me, so I thought that was fun. I obviously think that it's a beautiful city - I don't think everything sucks, but we were trying to get a reaction on the show.

I love the city, I love Vancouver Island and the people there are great, I love being out in nature.

### AU: What is your old co-host

prolific and talented filmmakers and broadcasters and it's so cool to have gotten to get to know them over the years. I also shots for their *Live in Austin* standup comedy special, I did a scene at the end of that with Billy Bob Thornton and the guys and so that was really cool and yeah, they're great, those guys are just the funniest guys, incredible great comedians you got there, eh?

### AU: Totally eh, did you keep a keychain?

TG: Oh ya there bud, got a keychain.

### AU: Take us through a day in the life of Tom Green.

TG: Well today it's a lot of preparation for the tour, and finalizing some beats here in the studio, getting some music ready for that. I've got a few interviews today, promoting the shows and just looking forward to getting on the road tomorrow, it's gonna be fun.

### AU: Any new film projects in the works?

TG: Yeah, there's a couple of movies coming out in the next year or so, one's called *Iron Sky*, it's not gonna be out for a while, but it's a really crazy movie, so watch



for that.

### AU: Do you have a Tom Green beer now?

TG: I do have the Tom Green beer, and it's available and people gotta go drink the Tom Green beer, it's now newly available in British Columbia, it's an amazing bee, it's a milk stout, and it's made by this great brewery in Ontario called Beau's Brewery, and it's gonna be available all over Canada now, so people have to go check it out.

### AU: Any final words for Canadian fans on the fence about coming to the show?

TG: I just want people to come to the show that are not on the fence, ok? We're gonna have a packed house, it's gonna be like a crazy pandemonium night, so just tell the people to come who want to come party and have some laughs and tell

the people who are on the fence that they can stay home, alright?

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### Glenn Humplik up to these days?

TG: He's doing real well and my friend Phil, who you probably remember from the Tom Green show, he was the guy that drank coffee and laughed in the background, he's gonna be coming on tour with me, and we're gonna be snowboarding around BC.

### AU: What was it like working with the Trailer Park Boys on the Swearnet movie?

TG: I love those guys, they're so hilarious and they're such

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**AU: Do you have any pranks planned for Victoria this time?**

TG: We're just really focusing on this live tour so it's just gonna be a hilarious night of stand up comedy and I guess make it clear that, honestly, I don't want the people that are on the fence to stay home, I don't want the people that are on the fence to be on the fence though. I want them to understand what this is, get off the fence and come to the show. It's gonna be so much fun and it's a stand up comedy show with music mixed in, but you know, if you wanna laugh, if you feel like laughing your ass off and having a great night, you're gonna have to come and enjoy yourself cause like I said it's gonna be off the chain man, off

the chain!

**AU: OK man enjoy the snowboarding too and it's been a great year for powder here, they just got an insane amount of snow in Whistler, so you're definitely coming through on a good storm cycle.**

TG: Oh yeah, a fun thing we're gonna do on this tour is, when I have the day off the next day and am going snowboarding, at those shows I'm gonna give out a secret location and I'm gonna tell people to come meet me on the hill and we're gonna go take some runs together.

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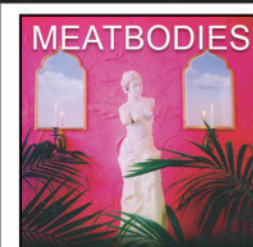
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## Insane Clown Posse

Interview by Jesse Bridgen

Violent J talks about the Canadian Juggalo Weekend, the March on Washington, and ICP's roots.

**AU: Absolute Underground: Hey J, how you doing bro?**

Violent J: I'm doing good, I'm down in the studio today working on a track with a new artist that we signed, this young kid. He's pretty fucking amazing, so I'm really excited about that and I really like the way the track's coming out. I haven't had the chance to be in the studio for probably about a month, so it feels good to be making music right now.

**AU: Who's the new artist?**

J: His name is Lyte, he's 26 years old, he's from Flint, Michigan, and his rhyming is just amazing.

**AU: You bringing him to the Gathering with you, in Canada?**

J: Oh, yeah! No doubt!

**AU: Awesome, I got tickets for that, really looking forward to it.**

J: Juggalo weekend? Yeah, no doubt. That's gonna be bombastic, know what I mean?

**AU: Can you tell us about anyone else you're bringing with you?**

J: Oh yeah, we're bringing Big Hoodoo, we're bringing Blahzay Roze -- she is, without a doubt, my favourite artist on the label.

When we first met, she wasn't trying to be a rapper. She had all the wrong ideas about herself: all broken, no self confidence, no nothing. We ended up signing her to the label. She never believed in herself enough to think she could do rap for a living, but she has this god-given talent that's just incredible, you know?

When I look at her, it's like we're growing a flower. We planted the seeds, and she's coming up... she put out her EP and it's called *Broken* and it's very much real, and it's very much her, and in a

lot of the songs she's the victim, but the project is she's going to get stronger with each release, and she's going to become this confident, powerful, strong woman. She's my funnest project, so she's comin' down with us. We got Anybody Killa coming -- he's actually the third artist we ever signed -- oh! DJ Clay's coming, the Rude Boy's coming, the Rude Boy is like a day one-er; like way back in the day, when we were called Inner City Posse, the Rude Boy was with us and he's always been hosting our shows and he's coming to host and for Juggalos that really follow our stuff, I think it's going to be a real treat for them. So yeah, we're bringing pretty much everybody.

**AU: I hear you guys are doing a March on Washington. What can you tell me about that?**

J: Yeah, we are. OK well, in the United States in 2011, the FBI released their list of the top ten gangs in the nation and Juggalos were listed among the gangs -- we're talking the Crips

and the Bloods and the fucking Aryan Nation and all these dangerous street gangs. We're talking about the people who love Juggalo music, who love our music; it's so insane to say they're a gang but you know what? There's penalties, if you're in the gang database. It can prevent you from joining the military, or in custody battles, if their attorney is able to tell the judge that you're a gang member according to the government.

**AU: Because we love music.**

J: That's right, because we love this style of music and we love to represent it in public; we love to wear the clothes and symbols because we're fans of this style of music so much that we want to wave the flag.

**AU: I'm wearing a Psychopathic shirt right now, I got it at your show in Victoria.**

J: Well you know what, if you were wearing that here in the States, and you're walking in the right area and the police see you and if they wanted to they can



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enter you in the gang database which means, let's say you happen to catch a first degree felony for whatever reason, and they see that you're in the gang database, it's automatically upgraded to a second degree felony. In my eyes, they made it illegal in a lot of states to be a Juggalo.

We're so hated -- we call ourselves the most hated band -- we have so little respect that there is no cavalry, there is nobody standing up on our behalf... none of 'em are coming to our aid. It's very painful.

So the whole idea of the March is to let the world, let the government in the United States know, as loud as we can, that we're not OK with being called a gang, being labeled a gang. We're not ok. That's it, that's the only goal. Because if we don't let people know that, we might as well be OK with it. We're letting the world know as loud as we can that we are not a gang and we're not OK with being called a gang.

**AU: So, as a Canadian who can't make it to Washington, how can**

**I help?**

J: I dunno, I wish you could make it to Washington... You know honestly it's like, that's a tough question. It's another country, I don't know, I guess I've never given it the right thought.

**AU: Maybe we can help organize it so that every Canadian that wants to support it can wear Juggalo colours that day, make sure everybody's sporting their colours loud and proud.**

J: Yeah, or maybe write some letters, you know? We're going to think of something and on our website juggalomarch.com we're going to post how people in other countries can help, we're going to think of something cool just like that, brother, and we'll post it on there how everybody across the world can help. That's a good idea, bro.

It's pretty hard because a lot of juggalo artists don't want anything to do with it, you know? We think they should. Like if you receive a significant amount of love from juggalos, we think you should be there you know. A lot of juggalo artists aren't coming and it just hurts, you know. We're the only ones doing something for it. In other words, if any of them were doing something for it, we would be a part of it instantly but they look at it like it's a publicity stunt for ICP, however if you go to the juggalomarch website you don't see our logos on there. We're trying to include everybody. The march is going down no matter what, brother.

**AU: Question about your wrestling roots, did you get into hip hop first, or wrestling first?**

J: Actually wrestling, we wanted to be wrestlers all our lives and then music sort of overtook that goal and that dream. But by the time we started pursuing music, we were already wrestling around Detroit and the Midwest, me and Shaggy both, but then music overtook us and we changed that goal from wrestling to music. From around ages 13-19, we knew we would be wrestlers. Then we switched it to music, we wanted to rap, we wanted to do ICP and by the time we made it in music, we had already put so much positive energy into wrestling that we made that dream come true too. The WWE called us to do music for one of their wrestling tag teams called the Oddities and we told them, you know we wrestle don't you? We sent them a video of us wrestling and the next thing you know we're in Summer Slam with the WWE. But the reason that dream came true is we put so much positive energy into it.

**AU: So that brings me to the face paint, the clowns, was that a wrestling gig that rolled over or was it something else?**

J: No, see Detroit, when we were coming up, the rap scene was very different. Detroit has always been very much into theatrics. For example, both Alice Cooper and Kiss, their biggest market was Detroit. Even Prince, people who were eccentric, artists who were different, they always won Detroit over first for some reason. And it kind of

showed in our rap scene when we were coming up. Like there was Esham and he would come on stage in a coffin with 666 on his shirt and rap about the devil and it was terrifying, you know? And the other guy that was really big at the time was Kid Rock who was doing suburban hillbilly rap that was unheard of at the time.

We were like, we need more theatrics in our show, and we had all these meetings and meetings -- then I had this crazy dream where this crazy clown -- it was cross between a dream and a panic attack, or it could've been sleep

much more like we were meant to do that. We call it the Dark Carnival but we feel that the Dark Carnival also presents itself in different forms to other people, but it's the same whatever it is, some sort of higher power. And for us, for kids from the street who were gang members and scrubs that's the way it related to us. To get to us, it spoke in that language. If we were playing polo and raised in a castle, it would probably present itself in a different way.

**AU: Vera Lee, is that a real girl or is that just a story?**

J: No, that's a story. That's the kind of story that I believe the Dark Carnival presents itself through me somehow because a lot of songs -- and this is the God's honest truth man -- a lot of songs I have no memory of writing them, and when I listen to them I don't even know where it came from. Sort of like I go into trance when I'm writing and when I'm done, and I read the wording of the song, I'm like fuck man, I'm writing words I don't even use. It sounds like something I couldn't have come up with. It's really really strange. To this day it's something that I can't explain without sounding like a complete psychopath, you know it's unexplainable.

**AU: I work at this thing called the Cannamall and -- you guys smoke marijuana yeah? And the owners of the mall wanna know if I can bring you a gift basket when I come to the Juggalo Weekend.**

J: Yeah, FUCK yeah. I wanna



paralysis because I couldn't move -- but a clown walked into my room and dropped these comic book size joker cards on the floor. They didn't look anything like our albums of the joker cards but that meeting turned into what we're doing to this day, most of it inspired from that dream, we took it as some sort of a message or something and now, we very much feel it was.

**AU: Absolutely, I mean the whole unfolding of the Joker Cards and the forethought that went into that is pretty mindblowing, really.**

J: Yeah, and it's much more than any shit I could come up with or Shaggy, you know, so it feels

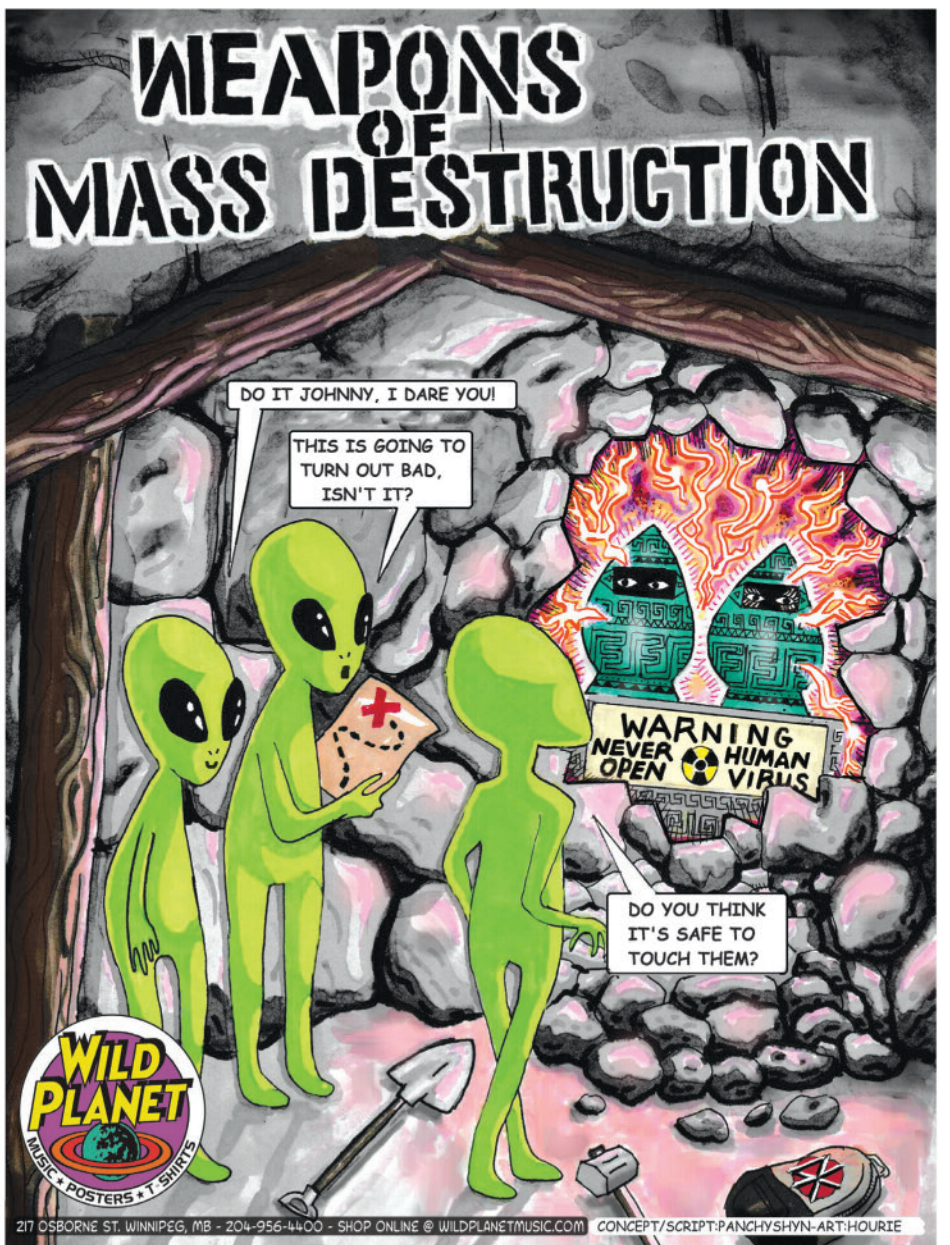
go to that mall! We're gonna be back, real soon and I wanna go! Like of course, you can bring a basket, but I wanna go! Absolutely. Wow, that's so cool, man. We're touring again in Canada really soon. I actually thought we were going to tour all the way to Calgary, but I guess we are just coming in for the Juggalo weekend and back to our regional tours.

**AU: Thanks man, it's been a pleasure.**

J: Mine too, bro. It's been a pleasure for me, too. Thanks!

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Instagram: @artbattle



## Art Battle

By Teagan Taylor

Art Battle! What's that? - It's an experience like no other.

Whether you're painting or spectating, this event defies simple explanation. Unlike many traditional art events, Art Battle is alive, and it engages all of your senses.

Walking into the Victoria Event Center on Broad Street, the first thing you'll see are six easels adorned with blank canvases in a circle at the center of the room. The edges of the stage are lined with completed pieces from past events - giving first time attendees a sneak peek of what can be achieved in a mere twenty minutes. As the night progresses, these paintings are replaced by those done that night, which are available for silent auction between rounds. The artists receive half of the proceeds and audience members get a chance to take home a piece of the experience.

At nearly all of the events in Victoria, a Wild Card spot is available in the second round, offering the chance for brave, unprepared souls to be part of the action. Artists and spectators mingle as the room fills, awaiting the first round of painters to be called to the floor. After the competitors are introduced, the Wild Card is drawn, and the countdown begins. There is a flurry of activity as artists attack their canvases, and the audience moves in a slow tornado around the action. At the end of each round, patrons vote for the piece which they feel was the most successful.

The rounds are twenty minutes long. All supplies are provided - artists can bring their own brushes but that's it. The time and supply constraints create a level playing field, in which both professional and hobby artists test their limits. The first and second round consist of six painters, with the top two from each moving on to the final.

Art Battle is an internationally-tied competition. There have been eight seasons of it here in Canada, with new cities joining in each year. So although there is a local focus to each event in

then gets flown out to Nationals which usually take place in Toronto or Ottawa - although there's a chance they'll move to the Maritimes this year.

Angela Hillier has been organizing the Art Battle events in both Victoria and Vancouver since 2014. Hailing from Ottawa herself, Angela's first interaction with the event was as a painter while she was in art school. "I just remember finding it somewhere online at some point [I used to paint really fast - just sit down and give'r] and I applied, and I painted, and it was sweet. The first time I got to the second round, which was cool..."

"Art Battle was really exciting in Ottawa, it was always really busy - it's all of the weird people in

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A graphic for 'Style N Print' featuring a screenprinter mask and various tools. The mask is the central focus, with a banner across it that says 'SCREENPRINTERS'. Above the mask, the words 'STYLE N PRINT' are written in a stylized, colorful font. To the left and right of the mask are vertical banners that say 'ARTWORK' and 'APPAREL' respectively. Below the mask, there are two banners that say 'BAND MERCH' and 'PRODUCT PROMO'. The background is black with some white and blue lines suggesting a screen or a design process.

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## Social Arsonist

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Social Arsonist is:

Cayle Charlton – Vocals, also known for his other band Day One

Manuel Morgado – Guitar, known for his work in the music scene in Chile and working with graphic design for companies and musicians

Dario Zuniga – Bass, known for his work in the music scene in Chile and working with photography for musicians

Danny Sever – Drums, known throughout Vancouver for his bands Born to Sever and Brimstone

### AU: Tell us about Social Arsonist. Where/when did you form, and what is your sound like, for those of us who haven't heard you before?

SA: Social Arsonist began as a project in Vina del Mar, Chile between Manuel and Dario. After a few years of writing together, we knew we wanted to take this project beyond South America, so contacted Cayle Charlton from Canada whom we had seen on YouTube doing vocal covers, and he agreed to try out, so we started working together online, sending ideas back and forth, it all seemed to fit perfectly.

### AU: You went through a rather unusual process to find a vocalist and drummer, tell us about it. How did you end up in Canada and where are you based out of now?

SA: For a while we played with a session drummer in Chile, when Cayle finally traveled down to South America to meet with us in person for the first time, after about three years working

online, we played a couple of shows there, but when we decided to bring the band over to Canada, we knew we needed to find a permanent drummer. We talked with drummers from all over the world who were interested on the project, finally we contacted Danny Sever who was from Canada as well, and we started working with him, he had everything the band was looking for in a drummer so he fit in perfectly. Waiting for something better, we decided to move the band to Vancouver, given the fact that Cayle and Danny are from Canada and were living there.

### AU: How do you find the music scene in Chile compares to that of Canada?

SA: The music scene in Chile is very limited, even though there are great musicians and bands, it's mainly an underground scene, since there's not much support for metal in general, whereas in Canada, we find there's a lot more support and opportunities for musicians in general. We've been greeted amazingly by everyone we've met, and everyone's been very supportive of our music, for which we're very thankful.

### AU: Do you have a favourite Canadian city to play when you tour?

SA: We did a tour over western Canada and played a couple of cities, everyone has accepted us and liked our music and the venues have been great. We really liked playing in Edmonton and Calgary, though we've played more shows here in Vancouver, so we're a bit more familiar with the local scene here.

### AU: What are your plans for the new year, will you be writing a new album or touring more?

SA: We're in the planning stage of a South American Tour for next year, where we expect to play a couple of countries such as Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia, but it's still undecided. We're also already writing new material for our upcoming album, which is coming along brutal, and should be done for next year, though it's a bit too early to know exactly when.

### AU: What can we expect to see from a Social Arsonist live show? What do you hope audiences take away from your performance?

SA: When we play live we like to give it all, we want people to feel our music and go nuts, we want them to have an amazing time and want to come back for more. Our music is fast-paced and aggressive, but there's also some groove to it, so a lot of people can relate to it, so far we've gotten a great acceptance by everyone.

### AU: What inspires Social Arsonist, musically or otherwise? Anything we might find surprising?

SA: Musically we have a bit of a mix of genres that inspire or influence us, there's old school thrash such as Slayer (of course), Megadeth, Metallica, Sepultura, Kreator, Pantera, Anthrax, Testament, but we're also inspired by the new wave of thrash/American metal, such as Lamb of God, Machine Head, Chimaira, DevilDriver, Unearth, Shadows Fall. As far as the context of our music or the band's ideology, we tend to be very anti-political/government/religion, we like to write about the exponential decadence of society. To us, our music is a way to protest and express our inner anger towards matters of society and the distribution of power within it.

### AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

SA: We're completely dedicated to this band; we're taking this very seriously. We expect to play more cities and/or festivals within the next couple of years and have a lot of new content for people to enjoy (hopefully). You can find our first independent release, *Duality of Perception* out now; We're also about to release our first video for the song, "Root of Anger."

Follow us on our social media for more details:

Facebook: facebook.com/SocialArsonist

Twitter: @SArsonist

YouTube: Social Arsonist

Soundcloud: soundcloud.com/socialarsonist

ReverbNation: reverbNation.com/socialarsonistofficial

### AU: Any final words for Canadian readers?

SA: We would like to thank everyone here for their support and to everyone that has not heard us yet, you won't be disappointed, we're going to keep on giving our best, and making the music that we love to share with you all.

PHOTO CREDIT: Dario Zuniga

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# Absolute Live Reviews

**Henry Rollins**  
**Alix Goolden Hall, Victoria BC**  
**January 5th, 2017**

Rollins returns, like a predictable wild animal to observe culture and corruption in the world. Stories went wide-reaching, and focused eventually on Trump taking the helm (and how punks and artists are and will respond) and the usual gamut of random stories of him interacting with cultural figures. Judging on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, hanging with Lemmy and David Bowie, and experiencing hero worship were notable ones. In classic Black Flag style, he grabs the mic cable and coils it tightly, and assumes a wide stance onstage – maybe he isn't musical these days, yet he remains challenging and relevant.

-Erik Lindholm

**Neurosis**  
**Yob**  
**Sumac**  
**Venue, Vancouver**  
**December 20th, 2016**

A night of transcendent music; call it metal, call it tribal, call it experience. A well thought-out bill gave the packed house a taste of slowed-down emotion, ending with Neurosis, who've spawned a thousand bands to try and ape their all-encompassing audio style. Musically, it felt like a forest slowly over-growing an abandoned city; the deer starting to run through alleyways, and trees overtaking traffic lights to capture the sun rays. The packed and respectful crowd indicated that community and hope are here to stay.

- Erik Lindholm



# Absolute Film Reviews

## Godzilla 1984 - Kraken Releasing

Back in 1985, I got to see a film that would forever change my life. Sitting in the cinema, I was overcome with wonderment as this giant monster towered over the audience, smashing the city of Tokyo and leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

This monster was Godzilla, and I was instantly hooked. So imagine my excitement when, 31 years later, Kraken Releasing put *Godzilla 1984* out on BluRay. Holding this movie in my hands, I was transported back to 1985, and felt like a five-year-old kid again. It was like a dream come true, finally, my collection would be complete and I would own all 30 Godzilla films (including the two American-made ones) on either DVD or BluRay. But this would be the first time in my life that I could actually watch *Godzilla 1984* in its original Japanese language version, not seen in North America before this release. All of the originally cut Japanese footage was restored and all the awful American added content was taken out.

This meant that all the monotone Raymond Burr shit would no longer cheese up this otherwise moving kaiju film. This was the first film in the heisei series

force of nature and essentially turning his otherwise kid-friendly franchise back into a horror film. They remade the suit to look more like the original 1954 Godzilla, took out most of the campy elements and replaced them with suspense and drama, thus taking this "new" Godzilla into the 80s with a more modern feel. And of course, America got ahold of the theatrical rights for 1984, redubbed it in English, and took out all the melodrama, erasing the tone and making it more kid-friendly so it could find a wider audience in cinemas over here.

As a kid, I didn't seem to mind. I mean, this was a giant monster movie like none I'd ever seen before. But as I got older and got to watch the original uncut film, I realized that it holds up a lot better in its true form. The only thing that the 1985 cut has going for it is the nostalgia of growing up watching the only version available. But my film tastes have somewhat matured as I age, and I find that nostalgia can't carry an entire film anymore.

Don't get me wrong, I still love the campy Godzilla films that came out in the 60s and 70s (*Destroy All Monsters* is still one of my favourite films in the series) but *1984* feels more like the original *Gojira* in tone and I think works better for the characterization of Godzilla. Originally, Godzilla was a metaphor about nuclear testing, and the bomb that fell over Hiroshima, but somewhere along the way he got

sidetracked. This was Toho's way of taking Godzilla back and making him into an uncontrollable force that not even the military could defeat. Even with the success of the rebranding, it would take five years for a sequel to come out and we, over in Canada, wouldn't see *Godzilla VS Biollante* until its home video release in 1992. *Godzilla 1984* is a quasi-sequel, quasi-remake of the original '54 film, in the sense that it hits all the same beats as the first film, but also makes nods to there being another Godzilla before this. It's kind of like how *Shin Godzilla* is a stand alone film, but feels like a sequel to the original. Director Koji Hashimoto only made two films, both of which came out in 1984, but he was an excellent pick to bring this new Godzilla to the big screen. Having worked as assistant director on five previous Godzilla films, he definitely knew the tokusatsu genre. Plus, this added some new blood to the directors chair and helped bring Godzilla out of the past and into the future.

This new direction paved the way for the rest of the films in the Godzilla series, but also made it possible for other kaiju characters to push past the stereotypical "kids only" type films that had all come out prior to 1984. Three new Gamera films would be made in the 90s, and would become instant classics, all thanks to *Godzilla 1984* and its attempts at making a more serious kaiju film.

After watching *Godzilla 1984* in Japanese for the first time, I can appreciate the route this new Godzilla was taking, but no matter how I look at it, I will always feel like that five-year-old kid, sitting in awe as the big G blew his fire breath over the tanks that littered the streets below. Like I said before, I was instantly hooked and I've been a fan ever since.

- Cody No Teeth

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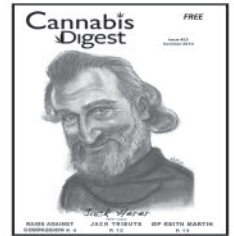
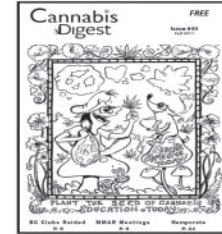
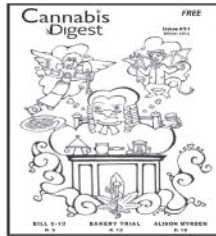
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## Absolute Album Reviews

### 1968 - Fortuna Havana Black Bow Records

The opening track "Vorpal" starts like a transmission from planet Caravan, then it unleashes a glorious doom-scape of dimension-crushing riffs and powerful wailing vocals that are reminiscent of Soundgarden, if Ronnie James Dio was the frontman. The singing is really the focal point, due to its unrelenting soulful power as it surfs the wave of heavy rhythms.

"Duchess" has some cool shoe-gazer elements to it that break up the Hendrix-inspired guitar parts. The lyrics tell of cosmic events transpiring here on Earth, a true psychedelic subject to dig into. All their songs sound warm and fuzzy, and really make for great comfort listening. 1968's output is definitely accessible without being redundant, due to each track having something unique to offer.

Like the primordial time in music history identified by their name, these guys take that bluesy goodness and get it ripped out its mind, so the heaviness can come forth spewing with it shards of wicked metal ripe for headbanging.

-Dan Potter

### Dark Messiah - Dark Messiah Independent

This band is an act of love by its riff rocking members. Each track drips with the kind of suburban good vibes of adolescent past, and in turn makes that summer you discovered Metallica's Black Album seem just like yesterday. They kick out some wild classic thrash on "No Soul to Sell," which is an awesome outsider anthem complete with moshing guitar riffs and sinister leads.

Their music comes from a familiar place, but the real commitment to the craft of no-holds-barred metal makes this EP a refreshment rather than a mere blast from the past. Another stand-out track is "Eliminate the Enemy," which is relentless in its dark quest, with a soul searing, wah-wah drenched guitar solo that takes things to an even higher level.

Overall, the riffs are bone-crushing in their fury, and are sure to get those heads a-banging.

-Dan Potter

### Drude - S/T Independent

Doom and prog genres tend to challenge the attention span of many heavy music listeners. Eight minute, slow building dirges aren't everyone's stimulant. Drude, though audibly allied with these sludgy sub-genres, do things a bit differently. They play the kind of doom-centered metal that would keep even the most ADHD-afflicted headbanger engaged.

The opening track, "Drude" takes an endless trip through timbres and rhythms demonstrating the musical prowess this trio possesses. This track has some excellent hardcore breakdowns, and the triple vocal

attack really keeps things varied and thus makes its eight-minute length seem like a mere four. Each song is rich in rhythmic complexity and memorable dynamic shifts.

Drude are definitely a hybrid style of sludgy greatness all their own, as the track "Oasu" shows, with its Viking growls over top a shoegazer-textured guitar strumming expedition, before blasting into some mammoth-awakening riffage.

-Dan Potter

### Heavy Temple - Chassit Van Records/Tridroid Records

Let the acid flow and the smoke from the ganja rise, because this band is as trippy as they are heavy. Listening to this EP is just like stepping into a Heavy Temple where the soundtrack to services is some radical Sabbathian riff rock cloaked in a veil of sensory mangling fuzz guitar noise that is reminiscent of some electronic bong gurgling away somewhere at the back of the universe. Overtop this rich tapestry of doom croons the white rabbit herself in true apocalyptic fervor.

The eight-minute-plus song "Ursa Machina" is utter psych/doom glory, with its slow crater-forming buildup that needs no hallucinogen to get stoned off of. The howling vocals ride the relentless barrage of lommi-meets-Lucifer riffage, all melding into one big memorable rock out. Amazingly, even more huge riffs are unleashed in "Pink Glass" before cutting it down for some excellent eerie stoned-on-the-bayou quietness.

These guys and girl sound massive; they make good use of their economic three-piece configuration super well. They are not just great music connoisseurs siphoning out the best parts of 70s metal for monetary gain, either; no, they are spiritual types looking to please their lord of the Heavy who, without a doubt, is looking up in approval.

-Dan Potter

### Jupiter Hollow - Odyssey Independent

Progressive metal duo Jupiter Hollow has got some great complex riffs that are reminiscent of Rush and Periphery. Lots of peaks and valleys to this release, which keeps things super interesting. The singing, especially on "Deep in Space," is very accessible and well-honed. It almost has a pop-metal feel, with plenty of high-pitched vocal freak-outs and melodic structure, but the complex guitar-pro riff keeps things metal.

There is a lot of that djent-style aesthetic on these tracks; calming guitar chord voicings and lonesome hymn-like vocal parts. "Hades Heart" has a Perfect Circle-feel that is full of emotion and dynamic performances. Underneath all the thick guitar riffs is a soothing ambience that implies lighter things ahead, but then "Over 50 Years" blasts out the speakers, filled with Tool-meets-Animals As Leaders guitar complexity,

which totally rocks.

This five-song EP is chock full of excellent ideas from an upcoming young band that really holds a lot of promise for the future.

-Dan Potter

### Kratonas - Devoured By Damnation Grathila Records

Super intense death metal with a grindcore-like aesthetic permeates this lesson in sonic barbarism. The vocals are retched out as though some ancient Sumerian demon has taken up residence inside the bullet-belted metalhead responsible for such great titles as "Spit on God" and "Dead Burning Christ."

Haunting guitar squeals round out the tortured-yet-empowered songwriting. Clearly, these guys are looking for pure brutality to hang their fascination with darkness on. Like all great death metal groups, they push that threshold of wild abandon beyond the point of no return. One will not be able to just sit through the deluge of unspeakable mayhem that pours forth out the speakers. The track "Blood of the Devil" further demonstrates the absolute kinetic energy that they are able to generate, and the lyrics prove they aren't just abominable in sound, but in idea also.

Keeping it simple makes all the difference here. Pure guts and glory take the spotlight, which is exactly what the powers that be don't want.

-Dan Potter

### Nula - Kenoma Black Bow Records

Serbian sludge demons Nula like to mix the soulfulness of Down with the soullessness of Sweden's Shining, all with a shot of Type O Negative. The result is engaging and groovy. Even though the lyrics are sung in Serbian, the emotion and brutal doom metal smack down isn't lost in translation. "Silazak U Prah" is an awesome grinding track that plays with the best of Sleep's material, as well as ripping shit up like a great Pantera ditty.

The guitars are melodic at times, knifing through the sludge-filled surface ambience of very low-tuned riffs. Any guitar solos refrain from glitzy show off stuff, instead relying on wailing, siren-like tension. The vocalist is gravel-voiced, but articulate in his ability to commute the Serbian dialect and its sharp, vowel-less aesthetic.

Bottomless chugging dominates each song, save for a few creepy monk-like quiet parts that show the versatility of the singer in particular, who sounds like a Rasputin-like character at times, adding to the eerie cold wasteland this music must come out of.

-Dan Potter

### Omnisight - Power Of One Warunki Media

This prog metal fantasy band stirs some crazy shit up that all ends well. The trippy elements of early Soundgarden meet in an unlikely union with tech-y Dream Theater or Steve Vai-level fretboard prowess. These guys are definitely a "guitar band" as the crushing and hooky riffs are relentlessly poured forth either backing up the catchy vocal lines or some blazing shred sessions.

The track "Resistance" comes off as a forgotten grunge classic, as those muddy proto-metal guitar lines sludge away underneath some undeniably memorable singing that is definitely Sub-pop approved. "Seven Sisters" has some cool Coheed and Cambria vibes going on, with its emotive words and full on neo-prog ecstasy level breakdowns. This Vancouver band, for lack of a better description, just rains down awesome guitar playing as "Fall of the Empire" further proves with its acoustic intro followed by groovy riffs and endless ripping solos.

Even though this release is fairly long for an EP, it still leaves me wanting more, because their sound as a band is certainly very addictive.

-Dan Potter

### Taiga - Sky Satanath Records

When you think black metal, your thoughts will usually turn to Norway. Well, Taiga have one-upped the dark and cold vision of bleakness; they hail from Siberia. Their music is what you would expect coming from the coldest and most desolate habitation on Earth. The depressive yet meditative sounds seemingly come straight out of those freezing winds that relentlessly buffet the bands locale; how black metal is that, right?

Eerie and haunting tones emerge in the "Intro" first track, followed by metallic ghosts that come out to play in the form of wailing vocals and opioid-induced guitar riffs that seem to lurk around just to mess with your senses. The pummeling of the rhythm section sets up the perfect backdrop for some King Diamond level screeching, of course this time it's all done in Russian.

Mystery is a good thing in metal, and with this release being in another language, it makes for an even more interesting listening experience. Like hypothermia, this freezing and bleak release can warm up even the darkest of nights, making it the perfect winter metal experience.

-Dan Potter

### Sail - Slumbersong Hibernacular Records

This band definitely gets the blessing of thunder and raging destructive tornadoes. With a gruff, mountain man voice, tales of struggle and rebirth are told. Pile-driving guitars hammer home the fight in brutal fashion, but also add layers of dynamic dissonance that really fries the senses. The up-tempo sludge riffs are dense enough to swallow the woolliest of mammoths, and they initiate the melodic depth that swirls underneath the thick metallic surface. The drums pound away like it; the second coming of Motorhead, helping the mix by keeping things essential instead of blasting a bunch of super complex fills. The track "The Weight of Gold" is a firm smack that will wake up even the most jaded sludge demon. It's catchy and complex; that perfect mix of grit and intelligence.

Like Baroness and Hark, this band takes a classic song writing approach to the sludge and doom genre and wins doing it by sacrificing none of the bludgeoning heaviness.

-Dan Potter

### Teramobil - Magnitude of Thoughts Independent

Journey into an abyss of demented instrumental tech metal so dense that you may feel as though you're at the bottom of the Mariana's Trench with a submerged flying saucer. There are Meshuggah-like rhythms going on all over the place, and brutal speed blasts like Beneath the Massacre, but what's interesting is the mad organ breaks and surf music-like riffs that seemingly appear out of the crazed shredding. "Thanatonaut" is like Gorguts on LSD, with adventurous bass virtuoso

playing that propels things almost into jazz-fusion territory. As an instrumental band, these musicians really know how to keep it interesting by overloading the senses with ideas, whether it's in the form of huge dissonant sections or high-pitched experiments in note density. They expect a lot from the listener by assuming that the willing subject has a craving for watching a David Lynch film whilst their brain is being operated on.

It doesn't get sicker than "Sychrotron," a song that has parts that sound like the thoughts of a crashing hard disc in an AI bot being disassembled. That's metal!

-Dan Potter

### Witchapter - Spellcaster Black Bow Records

Their name is derived from a term meaning a respect for the Earth and nature, and the lyrics reference the times when those who practiced this tradition were labeled witches and persecuted. The cavernous, low-tuned guitar riffs really conjure up the spirit of dead witches. Bowel-wobbling growls seem to climb up out of the ground in search of the guilty. "Veiled Aggressor" blasts into action, with an almost Deftones-like groove riff, but played twice as low. It then disintegrates into a robotic thud groove that walk, step by step, into doom oblivion.

The track "Through Smoke and Sulfur" sounds like late Led Zeppelin on bath salts. Frantic and primitive backing full of smashing drums and thunderous bass frequencies house the wretched vocal incantations that spew forth whirlwinds of madness and anger. The mix of each track is also more distant than many doom or sludge groups, it's like you can hear them grinding on in the distance through the dark forest with the full moon staring down.

"Everywhere I Look I See My Grave" is a ten-minute treat for all you pentagram obsessives out there with its lock-step death march around Stonehenge summoning a headbanger's delight.

-Dan Potter

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## Epica

Interview by Adam VanThiel

# EPICA

Epica's very own siren-like songstress, Simone Simons, took my call all the way from Germany, to discuss an album her band released earlier this year. After taking some time off, Epica is about to embark on yet another dizzying tour schedule, with stops in Brazil, Canada and the United States.

### Absolute Underground: How are you today?

Simone Simons: I'm good, how are you?

### AU: I am great thanks, it's raining but it's warm at least.

SS: Oh lucky, it's cold here. I had to wear my winter coat walking around today. Two weeks ago it was warm, we actually went to the beach in the south of Germany, kind of a mini-holiday. It was a stone beach on the lake, so it was really nice.

### AU: Is that what you regularly do after an album comes out?

SS: Yes we like to do mini-trips, and spend time with family in the south of Germany. We don't usually leave Germany, because it is so beautiful.

### AU: Do you ever think about an album after it comes out, how your fans are going to receive it?

SS: Well I think an album is never 100 percent finished, because you work on them with so many people with different views and tastes, but there comes a time where you just have to let it go, especially when there is a deadline breathing down your neck. It makes you say, "Ok it's finished, and that's that."

### AU: What makes you most proud about the new album?

SS: I guess for me as a singer, my vocal presentation this time around really allowed me to showcase different aspects of my voice, and also the diversity of the songs. We have five songwriters, who have all been writing songs in very different and diverse styles, and it really made for an interesting collection. I am also super happy the fact that we got to record our seventh CD, and are still out touring and making a living doing what we love.

### AU: Do you ever find it difficult to work and collaborate with so many people?

SS: Well I work with the band, that's what I am used to. I also do sessions with our producer and Mark, so those are the people who I'm usually working the closest with. Depending on whose song we are working on though, that person will also be sitting in on vocal sessions, and sometimes we have different opinions, which can be challenging because when you write a song, you have a way you want it to sound, but then you add the other five people and sometimes it goes badly, and there just isn't a consensus.

### AU: So did recording go smoothly?

SS: We were writing and recording this album in between touring, so that certainly made it hard for us, not being able to be in the studio all the time. I personally am not a studio person, and when I got back from touring, I had a day or two at home before having to record again. I ended up with a really nasty cold and cough, and had to

work through it to get this record done.

### AU: Are you looking forward to performing a particular song?

SS: Well, our first show performing the new stuff is coming up, so that will be great. I really like "The Holographic Principle."

### AU: What about heavy music speaks to you?

SS: I always loved to sing. Back in primary school, I auditioned for a role in a musical. I didn't get it, but the teacher gave me a role just so I could sing, but I couldn't act, so I just stood there, shyly singing. She really gave me push though, and said go out there and do something with your voice, and that's when I started taking singing lessons. My friends listened to a lot of alternative rock, and were interested in bands, so I joined them. My first boyfriend was a metalhead, so I was introduced to black metal, symphonic metal, and after that I heard Nightwish, and that was the inspiration to take classical singing lessons. I met Mark after that, and he asked me to join his band, after I helped him find a few other vocalists that didn't work out. That was 14 years ago.

### AU: Is it true *The Matrix* plays a role in the lyrics on this album?

SS: Yeah. There is a song called "Beyond the Matrix," but it isn't the song inspired by it. "The Phantasmic Parade," is based on *The Matrix*, and the "Holographic Principle," that we are all searching for reality, but we keep looking for it in virtual places, and technology and that the space we currently occupy is just a simulation of a higher reality we can't grasp. You can choose what world you live in, these days, and creating your own reality is commonplace with all the new technologies, you can really be in your own sphere. I should mention though, this is not a concept album. Our lyrics have always been very spiritual and philosophical.

### AU: How does it make you feel seeing people kind of living in Epica's reality... getting the logo tattooed on themselves, or listen non-stop to your music for example?

SS: It's weird, somehow I still can't grasp it. Except when you're in front of a crowd... We did a festival recently, and there were two thousand people there, and it suddenly dawned on me that these people know my name, and I know maybe 100 of them, because I see them at out shows. I think it's a very huge honour. I have loved and idolized bands too, but I still don't get it.

### AU: Who did your artwork?

SS: A friend of mine here in Germany, Stefan Heilemann, he gets our ideas and translates them to art. He is a true artist when it comes to Photoshop and things like that. "Digital wizard" is the term I was looking for. We are a good team.

### AU: What are your plans for the rest of the year?

SS: Touring. We aren't writing anything yet. Our tour in North America is coming up with Fleshgod Apocalypse, Arkona and The Agonist.

[facebook.com/epica](http://facebook.com/epica)

PHOTO CREDIT: Tim Tronckoe

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## Pigeon Park

Interview by Vern Wembly and Gumpo Smith

Vancouver's Pigeon Park have made a name for themselves in the west coast indie scene over the past few years with their particular alt-rock guitar sound and constant gigging, not to mention the fact that the band has had more opportunities and "doors open" for them than most bands realize in a lifetime: grand prize wins at radio station-sponsored battle of the bands contests, opening slots and tour support opportunities with stadium-level bands, working with legendary record producers, and so much more.

Guitarist Kevin Okabe took a few minutes to answer *Absolute Underground's* questions:

**Absolute Underground: How did Pigeon Park form and how did you personally get involved with the band?**

Kevin Okabe: The band formed out of high school and I personally got involved in the project through (singer) Nick Weber. We took

math together and instead of learning, we would mostly just show each other music. That led to me showing him some of my tunes, and we started working on them together.

**AU: A lot of Canadian bands have used the word "pigeon" in their name in the past decade: Pigeon Park, Woodpigeon, Pigeon Hole... There is also a New York band called Pigeons. PIG EON from Salt Lake City. Can you explain this trend/ phenomenon?**

KO: I never realized there were so many, maybe it's because the pigeon is such a badass bird?

**AU: Pigeon Park has released a number of EPs and singles over the past few years, but haven't released a full-length studio album. Has that been a strategy, or has it just worked out that way?**

KO: We have two full-length albums that we don't talk much about publicly (for good reason), but our best work has been our last two EPs. We really try and cut the fat and only release our best work. With that being said, you can expect a full-length album very soon. We just released our new single "Sunlight Fading Away," a couple months ago, but we're always in the process of writing new music.

**AU: How did you meet up with super-producer Garth Richardson (Rage Against The Machine, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Melvins) and convince him to produce your *Stripes* EP?**

KO: We actually got that opportunity through winning a radio contest called CFOX "Seeds." He really put us through the wringer before we even stepped into the studio. We must've showed him 30 songs before he finally gave us the green light.

**AU: What was it like working with a producer with that much experience? Was it different than you anticipated?**

KO: Honestly, Garth is such a down-to-earth and funny guy that any pre-conceived notions we had of working with him were put to rest. He's a very meticulous guy, which I think is a big reason for his success.

**AU: What did you learn/take away from the Garth Richardson sessions as a band?**

KO: To really listen to each other and what everybody else is doing in the song. Never before have we really stripped everything down and isolated what everybody is doing and finding out where you sit with a song. That really helped the songs take form.

**AU: You've also worked with Producer Jordan Oorebeek, whose credits are also impressive. How was your experience with Jordan?**

KO: Working with Jord is just very comfortable, we've known each other for over ten years, so there's a certain trust that comes with that. He's not afraid to say anything to us and vice versa. That goes a long way.

**AU: You've had a chance to open for/tour with a number of impressive bands recently, including The Offspring, Collective Soul, Scott Weiland, Big Wreck, Slash, Aerosmith... that sounds like it would have been a lot of fun. Any notable experiences during those shows?**

KO: Everything really, just getting to share the stage with the bands you grew up listening to as a kid, bands that pretty much got you into playing music is surreal. Talking to them is even more so, we got a chance to open for Aerosmith and our bass player Artur worked up some liquid courage and talked to Steven Tyler, he was greeted with a

big hug and some words of encouragement. That was pretty huge.

**AU: What inspires the band's songwriting?**

KO: I think it's important not to limit yourself when it comes to inspiration. I mean I could write a song about a sandwich I loved... you just gotta make people see it your way. I think a large part of it comes from life experiences. Love, loss, and all that's in between.

**AU: What's the weirdest thing that has happened to the band whilst on tour. Details please.**

KO: Over the years we have seen some interesting things. We've been invited to play in New Zealand by gang members, which we accepted but it fell through. We've slept in the bar we played in because all the hotels were closed. There's been some sleepwalking pee incidents. We found a half-rotted deer carcass while under the influence of some "mind altering" substances. Lots of stuff!

**AU: Do you have any band rules when touring? Is there a list?**

KO: 1. If you decide to stay somewhere other than the hotel, you have to have your phone with you. We've had some search parties in the past.

2. Two people awake while driving always to avoid the driver passing out behind the wheel.

3. Don't be an asshole.

**AU: Name the top three things you love about being in Pigeon Park.**

KO: 1. Making tunes with friends

2. Playing live

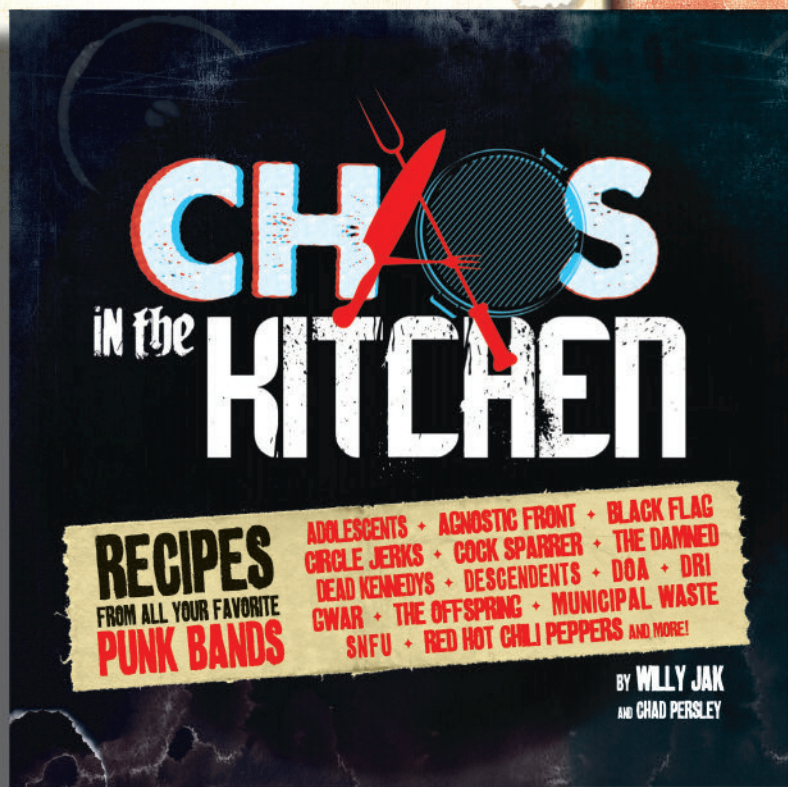
3. Super Smash Brothers tournaments

**AU: What is the least "rock star" activity that a member of your band partakes in?**

KO: Probably when instead of staying out partying after a show, we all go back to the hotel and play video games and eat pizza. That's rock 'n roll fuel, if you ask me.

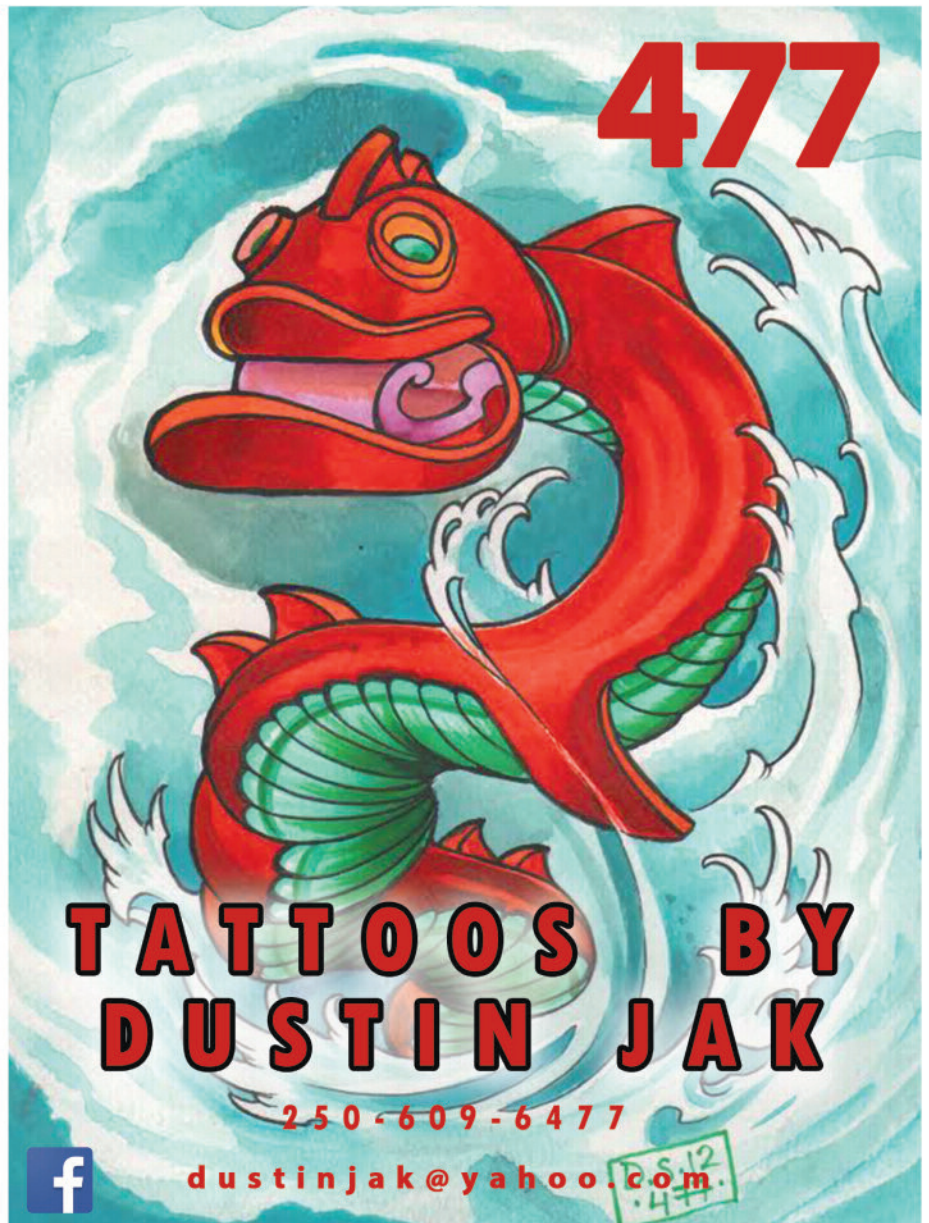
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More than 2,500 patients have joined The Herbal-Health Centre for access to medical cannabis. Word continues to spread quickly and results keep people coming back. Over the past two years, THHC has been an advocate for the shift to non-psychoactive cannabis therapies. Patients report that these options offer relief from a host of symptoms, but without the “high” normally associated with cannabis use. These therapies effectively remove barriers for anyone who does not want to expose themselves to a mind-altering substance.

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The barriers for considering cannabis as a legitimate therapeutic option continue to fall and the number of patients exploring this option continues to grow. The professional, knowledgeable and compassionate staff at THHC are prepared to answer your questions about which forms of cannabis can help improve your quality of life.

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— Eric, *Enderby, BC / Plumber*

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# ZUCKUSS



## Zuckuss

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Dungar: Dungar, Zuckuss guitarist since 1997, studio bassist 1997-2010

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band.**

D: Formed in 1997 by Bossk Jass, myself, and two other fellows who have long since departed for greener pastures.

**AU: How would you describe your style of music?**

D: *Star Wars*-inspired Porno Grind

**AU: We understand it's your 20th anniversary as a band, congratulations! What's your secret to success? What's the most valuable lesson you've learned in the last 20 years?**

D: Perseverance is the key to Zuckuss. In Greek mythology, there is a legend of a guy named Sisyphus who is forced to spend eternity rolling a gigantic boulder up a hill. This has become a metaphor for our band's mission to make three trilogies of music, totaling nine albums. It's very hard, ceaseless work but we are too stubborn to ever give up until we accomplish our goal.

**AU: Can you list the names of all your albums, and your upcoming release?**

D: *Titfucked by Taun Taun* (2000), *Rancor Rimjob* (2004), *Gammorean Gangbang* (2009)

Upcoming CD release - *Zuck My Nock*, May 4th, 2017

Upcoming CD release - *BukkakeEWOK*, May 4th, 2018

**AU: What is your philosophy when it comes to making music?**

D: We all write music that we want to hear. Sometimes we start with a skeleton of riffs to add beats to. Other times we'll start with a skeleton of drums, adding notes in later. We write out separate drum and guitar tablature for every Zuckuss song.

**AU: When can we see you play? What can we expect to see at a Zuckuss show?**

D: We usually play three or four times a year locally. Funky's, Astoria, Rickshaw, Pat's Pub, etc. Basically East Hastings. We'd love to play the Biltmore or the Commodore. On stage, Landon, Boba and Lord Blader thrash around like maniacs. Bossk Jass grinds out blast beats 'til he pukes. And I basically stand there like a tree.

**AU: What did you think of *Rogue One*... are you guys pro-*Anthology* series? What were your thoughts on *The Force Awakens*?**

D: *Rogue One* - Loved it, seen it three times in theatre already. *The Force Awakens* - Really liked it, saw it twice in theatres... Prior to these installments, we've only really recognized three *Star Wars* movies as being important... and those are *Episode IV - A New Hope* (1977), *The Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978) and the *Empire Strikes Back*

(1980). (Ok, most of *Return of the Jedi* (1983) was pretty good, too).

**AU: Do you think Jar Jar would make a better President than Trump?**

D: Anybody would be better than Trump as the President. Who the fuck is Jar Jar?

**AU: What are your thoughts on Carrie Fisher's death?**

D: So sad... we love her. Our collective Taun Taun penises bend at half mast in respect. Her Broadway one-woman monologue show was fucking amazing, by the way.

**AU: What is Road Warrior?**

D: Our original vocalist traded his Road Warrior mask for a Bed & Breakfast ID laminate almost ten years ago.

**AU: Your website mentions that you're looking to book gigs in the new year, but only if the promoter can meet your very reasonable rider... can you tell us some of the things that are on it?**

D: We are a unique band with specific needs. Check out the rider for yourself at [www.zuckuss.net](http://www.zuckuss.net). Bring us food, we're starving. Actually, I'll take a large, blue Snaggletooth Cantina figure from 1978 (with no blemishes please).

**AU: What does the future hold for Zuckuss? Tell us of your long-term goals for world domination.**

D: Making nine albums. Period. March 1, 2027 is the CD release date for our ninth album, tentatively titled *ZUCKUSS: The Gand Finale. Episode ASSININE. Swallow the Yellow Thick Load.*

**AU: What should we know about Zuckuss that we don't already?**

D: Current Lineup consistent for last seven years. Prior to this, Zuckuss had jammed with 30 different bass players, ranging in time from one week to four years.

**AU: Any final words for our readers?**

D: Two movie recommendations: *The People vs. George Lucas* (2010) and *Plastic Galaxy: The Story of Star Wars Toys* (2014) (Zuckuss actually have a cameo in this as there is a copy of *Rancor Rimjob* sitting on the shelf behind a Kenner Employee being interviewed in the middle of the film). If George Lucas or Disney would like to help us out financially, we could really use the help. We're all sick of working and we'd like this journey to be more comfortable (Like rolling a marble down a hill comfortably as opposed to pushing a boulder up a hill uncomfortably).

May the Farce be with You!

[www.zuckuss.net](http://www.zuckuss.net)

PHOTO CREDIT: Ryan Smith





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# Absolute Comic-Geekdom

## Arcana Studios

By Ed Sum



Huge plans are in store for one of Arcana Studio's flagship titles. *Howard Lovecraft* is this company's youthful take of the seminal writer, H.P. Lovecraft, before the doom and gloom overtook him, and the trilogy of stories created by author Bruce Brown is getting animated. The graphic novel, *Howard Lovecraft and the Three Kingdoms*, shows Brown's take of the tale, though the movie version is going to be different.

Production is well under way for the second film, with talents like Mark Hamill lending his voice to play an all-new character, Dr. Henry Armitage, while Jeffrey Combs has been cast in the role of King Abdul, the series' main antagonist. Christopher Plummer and Doug Bradley will be reprising their roles as Dr. Herbert West and Nyarlathotep.

Not everyone is aware of what this Burnaby-based company is about, and I had a chance to interview co-founder Sean Patrick O'Reilly about the company he created with his wife, Michelle.

**Absolute Underground: What drew you into the world of comics? As the online bio states, you were a school instructor. Like some teachers, did you bring comics to the classroom?**

Sean Patrick O'Reilly: Never brought comics to the classroom, but I loved comics since Marvel's *Transformers* and X-Men's *The Mutant Massacre*. It's

been a huge part of my childhood and the stories filled my thoughts and imagination for decades after. That old ragtag group of misfit mutants, from the large metallic Russian to the scrappy and deadly Canadian, to the cursed German circus performer... the cast was fantastic. The leadership styles shown between Cyclops and Storm created great group dynamics with this team, and the world outside, from the robots to aliens to clones to presidents and politicians to mutant hunters, it was just amazing.

**AU: I like how you also follow the Marvel approach and turned some comics into films/television shows. Will DVDs of shows like *Kagagi* or *Paradox* eventually become available?**

SPO: *Kagagi* is still being aired on APTN and we are looking at more distribution channels for it as well including DVD and iTunes. I haven't had an update on *Paradox* since the Syfy airing, but it would be great to see that turn into a magic-based procedural, *CSI-meets-D&D*.

**AU: Of all the works that are out there (*Howard Lovecraft*), ones being worked on (*The Steam Engines of Oz*) and others on hold (*Clockwork Girl*), which would you say you are the most enthusiastic for?**

SPO: It's like picking your favourite child in a family of four. Right now we're in the middle of the Lovecraft trilogy and it's taking up the majority of my time, and we have begun *Steam Engines* preproduction (almost production) and that is the one on the horizon where we are using new software, hardware and new techniques so that should be exciting. *Pixies* is another one I am



extremely proud of as it was our first animated feature.

**AU: About the *Frozen Kingdom*, was there any particular reason for a shift in the character designs? Some are faithful to the book and others are a bit of a departure?**

SPO: Gary Yuen is our art director and modeler, and I really do love how he went into a much more Tim Burton look, especially with Howard. Because there were so many artists on the book series, Howard's look was never completely locked down. One of the greatest things from comic to movie comes from learning what worked and what didn't work and being able to make those changes.

**AU: What part of the transition to film did you find most exciting? Was it difficult to get names like Ron Perlman or Carrie-Anne Moss involved?**

SPO: I love taking the root of the story and exploring the world and relationships. For the most part we've taken that

root and have elaborated on it massively in the movies. Getting top talent is always challenging and thankfully we've had an amazing head start with the comics, designs and we continue to work hard which hopefully is leading to a strong reputation.

**AU: What can you say is in the pipeline?**

SPO: *Howard Lovecraft & the Undersea Kingdom* is being released in 2017 and *Howard Lovecraft & the Kingdom of Madness* in 2018. From a production point of view, this is actually much easier, as we are reusing the animation assets across three movies. It saves us a lot of time in design and modeling, and our entire animation team is literally rolling from one movie to the next. We've kept some of these employees in their full time position, without any interruption, since 2010 and



I am very, very proud of that. It's been our number one focus to nurture and grow our studio and it's sometimes amazing to think we've come this far.

**AU: Between writing and overseeing these theatrical projects, is it difficult to balance your schedule?**

SPO: Honestly, it feels so impossible on some days. Today is a rough one and it was nice to take some time out, do this interview and type and organize some of my own thoughts. So much of what I do is react to problems or situations and it's difficult to reflect the past and articulate the future I envision.

**AU: Have you been able to continue penning new stories? What can readers expect next from you?**

SPO: JUST started doing this last night. On the publishing side I'm going to continue an all-ages book, I've just started a high-concept live-action slate of books. Sounds heady, but it's working out amazingly well. Coming soon on the print front includes: *Lex Talionis*, *Magistra Vitae*, *Geronimo Rising*, *The Socrates Project*, *Gene Simmons' Zipper*, and *Dominatrix*, *Herbert West & Astounding Tales of Medical Malpractice* and a new *Kade* graphic novel.

**AU: Any final remarks?**

SPO: Thank you to everyone for your support! We are very thankful to be here and doing what we are so passionate about.

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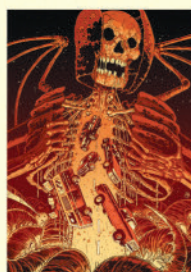
# Absolute Horror

## The Lost Art of the Horror Anthology

By Vince D'Amato

Over Christmas time during any given year, I'm usually wont to throw on the 1972 Amicus production of *Tales from the Crypt*, thanks mostly to the infamous Joan Collins/maniac Santa segment that kicks off the horror anthology. This got me thinking, there are some damn fine horror anthology films out there – many of which have actually helped shape the landscape of horror cinema, although most remain uncredited, under-appreciated, or maintain an unfair spot in the shadow of the more traditionally linear feature film. True, the anthology as a storytelling device has seen more success in genre television than in the cinema, and even HBO's *Tales From the Crypt* series (which premiered twenty years after Amicus' feature-length film version) was arguably more successful than its cinematic predecessor. In the 80s, genre anthologies all but dominated the primetime spots of network television: Steven Spielberg's *Amazing Stories*, a re-make of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and a full-out reboot of the *Twilight Zone* television series would boast the collaboration of Hollywood's top storytellers and feature film directors; Wes Craven and William Friedkin both directed memorable new *Twilight Zone* episodes, Martin Scorsese directed one of the most nerve-jangling nightmare episodes of the usually-light *Amazing Stories*, while the new *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* was going for a far more 80s-contemporary slant of intensity and exploitation. In the late 80s and early 90s, even Canada got in on the action with the impressively long-lived series *The Hitchhiker*, a strange yet thrilling mixture of mystery-horror-thriller and oddball genre sensibilities that seemed to be the cornerstone of Canadian genre cinema at the time. *The Hitchhiker* was like Bob Clark on some intense drugs, and this series was way edgier than its Hollywood counterparts when it came to sex and violence. Being far less prudish, this was a good stomping ground for emerging Canadian (and American) talent both in front of and behind the camera. Not long

afterwards, Canada double-dipped into the television anthology sub-genre with *Friday the 13th: The Series*, which had far less in common with the feature film franchise about the hockey-mask-wearing serial-killing half-dead maniac than it did with the old-school British horror anthology films from decades past. The series, about a group of misfits working out of



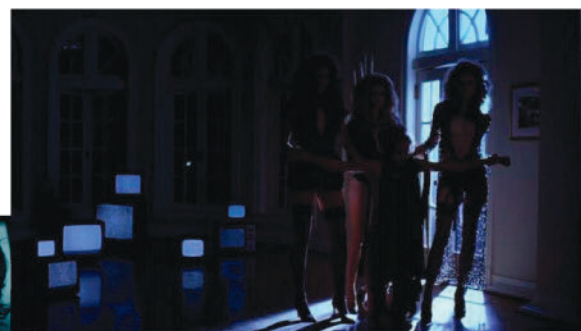
a supernatural curio shop and getting themselves into weekly gory mystery-adventures, also boasted the guest talents of Canadian genre experts like David Cronenberg, Paul Lynch, and William Fruet. Heading into the mid-nineties, Hollywood then re-imagined yet another decades-old popular genre anthology series – *The Outer Limits*. While all of these series enjoyed years of popularity on network and cable television station, it really prompted the question as to why feature-length anthologies like *Twilight Zone: The Movie* and *Creepshow* have to wait to gain a

cult audience, when their television counterparts were seemingly so successful? What was it about the context of cinema itself that seemed to take away from the short-shot punch of the anthology stories? I believe that it was Quentin Tarantino who first took the idea of the genre anthology film and pulled it, twisting and pulsating, into something else altogether with his (arguable) crime masterpiece *Pulp Fiction* – by creating an anthology film with three separate stories but utilizing key characters through all three stories to create a new, comprehensive, and even post-modern cinema anthology. Since the release of *Pulp Fiction* over twenty years ago, the most successful genre anthology films have taken the sophisticated cues from Tarantino's film and applied them to their own material, whether said material was originally written in that manner or not – like *Sin City* and *Trick 'R' Treat*. Both of these genre anthologies take the idea of several characters crisscrossing through each others' stories to create something of a four-dimensional film experience. This technique creates an extra layer, more depth, to each of the individual proceedings in the overall story. You're watching one story play out while simultaneously still thinking about or mentally connecting it to the story you've already seen. Or in some cases, wondering what one seemingly out-of-place scene might have to do with something else entirely later



on in the film, in a whole different story. This clever post-modern progression of the genre anthology, however, has done little to elevate

the popularity of genre anthologies themselves in the mainstream movie-watching populace. And so, with their continued mediocre success in cinemaland, it's actually inspiring to see new independent horror filmmakers gravitating to



this wholly underrated, and still under-explored, horror sub-genre. Case in point: the *V/H/S* film series. While these films don't actually utilize the character-string to connect the stories in each film, the *V/H/S* films do cleverly use a running theme through each feature, clearly inspired by the likes of the comic-book anthologies *Tales from the Crypt* and *Creepshow*, but modernized to play within the found-footage arena of the new wave of horror movies. Obviously, even if you've never watched a *V/H/S* movie, you likely can guess where the anthology connective tissue will come from – stories what are found and contained on mysterious stacks of VHS videotapes. However, even if you're not a big fan of found-footage horror films (and I'll admit I fall right into that not-a-fan category), there is a pleasant surprise waiting in the third installment of the horror series: *V/H/S Viral*, which takes the whole idea of the found-footage trope and turns it right on its head, giving us a semi-experimental horror film with kinetic, indie-movie aesthetics reminiscent of classic sci-fi/horror hybrids of (ironically enough) *The Outer Limits*. If you are collector like myself, then you will get an extra bonus on the *V/H/S Viral* Blu-ray, as there is a separate, visually sumptuous, experimental short film included on the disc that was originally shot for -but subsequently cut from- the film, entitled "Gorgeous Vortex."

The makers of the *V/H/S* film series did not stop their horror anthology experiments there, though – they continued on in 2016 by producing another, completely different, horror anthology called *Southbound*, which received a minor theatrical release before slipping quietly onto home video. In Canada, the Blu-ray is annoyingly hard to come by, but if you get a chance to check it out, you will be in for a bit of a trip as the four filmmakers involved with *Southbound* create a somewhat exciting circle-of-hell within their four stories (three shorts and a wraparound), all connected through some amusing character tissue – both plotwise and of the visceral type. But while *Southbound* is mostly fun, the producers of this and the *V/H/S* films have this time around supplied us with tales that lack any real plot development, and even more surprisingly, all elements of irony are completely missing here – which is actually a bit insane, as anthology stories tend to rely heavily on irony from even their comic-book and short-lit beginnings. While the use of different filmmakers for each section plus the use of continuing characters through each story seemed like a phenomenal experiment here, it soon became apparent that the superior 2007 horror anthology *The Signal* handled this same experiment far more deftly, in a film that has, like so many other anthology movies, touched way below the mainstream and even the cult-film radar. For those willing to dive into this rich and prolific horror sub-genre, there are many gory treasures to unearth.

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# SHRED SESSION

## Teen

Interview by Malcolm Hassin and Brandon Cotton

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

Teen: My name is Sean, most people know me as Teen or Teenage, I represent Menu Skateboard Shop, I started the Red Dragons, and I represent me everyday.

**AU: What was skating like here in the 80s and 90s?**

Teen: It was the best, growing up here during that time, when I got my first skateboard, it must have been in '85, there were only two places to go skate in Vancouver and it was Seyllynn or China Creek. Options were pretty limited, but it was the funnest time of my life. At the start, I was kind of a Seyllynn local, lived in Coquitlam, skipped school a lot to go there, and eventually ended up living in North Van. Then they built Skate Ranch and then we had Griffin. It was the best, I got to grow up with some of the best pros that ever rode skateboards.

**AU: What were the main spots in the 90s?**

Teen: Skating downtown, nothing was capped yet, Bentall's was there, not capped, the art gallery was kinda the main meeting spot, bricktown, and then later on the new spot, that's why we called it New Spot. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, a new spot appeared, at the end of Hornby St. and then New Spot just took over. You can see that in all those old videos.

**AU: What sort of trouble did you get into at the Richmond Skate Ranch?**

T: A lot of trouble, pretty much dropped out of school several times just to spend time at the Skate Ranch. I lived in North Van and Skate Ranch was in Richmond, so it was a series of buses to get out there, so on the way there it would always be pretty chill, but the Skate Ranch closed at nine, and on the way home things would get outta hand. We liked to smash a lot of shit. We liked to break windows, we liked the sound of smashing glass. One of our favourite things was to focus car windshields, jump up on the hood of the car, and put your foot through the windshield. We quite often had something to smash with too, sling shots or something. It got to

the point where it was almost like a contest to see who could smash the most shit, or who could smash the biggest window. We use to do 7/11 raids, run in and steal everything, somehow we got into doing graffiti, then spray cans came into the mix, we started spray painting shit, writing "red dragon" everywhere, yeah we caused a lot of shit.

**AU: How did the Red Dragons come to be?**

T: My friend Johnny Wray, a guy I went to high school with, his mom went away to Vegas for the weekend, just left him with the place he lived at in North Van. So we were all over there and making prank calls, this is before they had call display, really before you could get into trouble for making prank calls. It was me, Johnny Wray, another guy, Mike Chalmers, and another dude Ben Nahanee. Ben was making the calls and got an answering machine, he was like, "Holy shit, holy shit, I got an answering machine, what do I do?" And we were like, "Fucking leave a message, dumbass," so he just went off, "This is the red dragons, we know where you live, you sold us some rotten salmon, we'll kill you, red dragons will kill you." And we were just on the side laughing so hard, we thought it was the funniest shit ever. And that's like where it started... anywhere we went after that, it was just like, "Fucking red dragons, we kill you.. smash your windows, smash your whole fucking life," just took over. At that time in Vancouver, there were a lot of actual gangs... we used to get chased all over. We would get into fights, it was kinda like we were making fun of those gangs when we started it, we were never like a real gang, we were just a group of skaters skating every day... yeah that's where it all started. Three dudes that aren't even really around anymore... Johnny Wray, Mike Chalmers, and Ben Nahanee, those were like main dudes and everyone else kinda just took it and rolled with it. Eventually, it became a skateboard store, and also became a clothing line, but that's where it all started. Prank phone calls.

**AU: What does FSU mean?**

Teen: FSU means Fuck Shit Up!

**AU: What are some of the FSU stories?**

Teen: Fuck there are so many, there was one time Rick Howard had a girlfriend in Victoria, so one New Year's Eve, we all went to Victoria on the last ferry, it was me, Rick Howard, Mike Carroll was there, Jake Rosenberg, this

is when they were filming for the first Plan B video, and we get over there and Rick kinda goes his way to his girlfriend's house and we were just left in Victoria on New Years, we don't know what the fuck we're doing, pretty much there to skate and smash. I think one of us had a fire extinguisher from the ferry, I remember Moses just unloading that fire extinguisher into the mail slot of a liquor store, and covered the entire liquor store in that shit. It looked like it had snowed inside the liquor store. There were a lot of fights that night too, we tried to go into a party, it wasn't cool to be a skater back then, there was no fucking way they were letting us into their party. So we smashed every car in their driveway and just bombed the hill and got the fuck outta there. Fire extinguishers were always around, I remember running through the Hotel Vancouver spraying a fire extinguisher, once. We really got into picking up big pots with plants in them, dropping them off balconies, anything we could do to kinda out-do the other guy, we would do. The slingshot was a lot of fun, there was a big car dealership in Richmond, it had a window the size of your front area here (25x14)... I just remember pulling back and then watching the whole window come down. Then the Pacific Center, TD Building, ten storeys up, it didn't matter, nothing was sacred. Everything was smashable.

**AU: All-time worst skate trend?**

Teen: Wearing fucking girls pants, there was a time when dudes were actually buying ladies jeans, it was like, tightest pants win. That shit was so fucking wrong to me, man, I understand there has always kinda been those



two camps in skating, fresh and hesh, definitely me and my crew leaned more toward the fresh side. That's just too fucking hesh, I don't even know what that is. Ladies pants in skateboarding, that was a bad one.

**AU: What do you think skateboarding in Vancouver needs?**

Teen: We need to save the plaza for starters, that is one immediate concern I have, I think we're heading into that final year, the viaduct is coming down within a year. I love the skate scene here, it's so diverse, everyone's cool with each other, can't really say it needs anything, like I need a guy to go out tonight and smash all the caps off of Bentall Center, that would be great. I need someone to go out and make all the spots I grew up skating skateable again. The scene in Vancouver is super sick.

**AU: Closing comments?**

Teen: Just skate, keep skating, it's the best thing in the world, just do you, keep it real.

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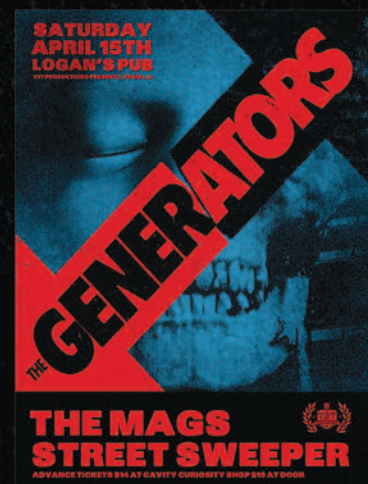
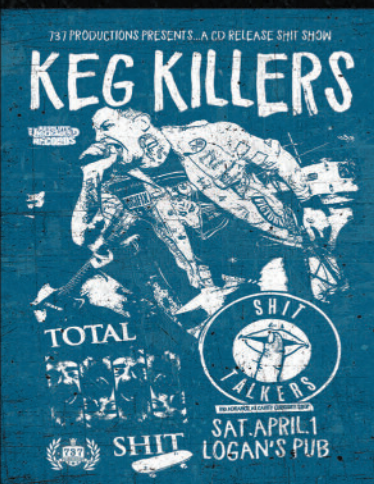
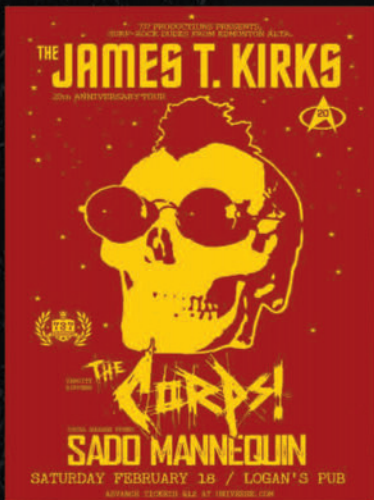
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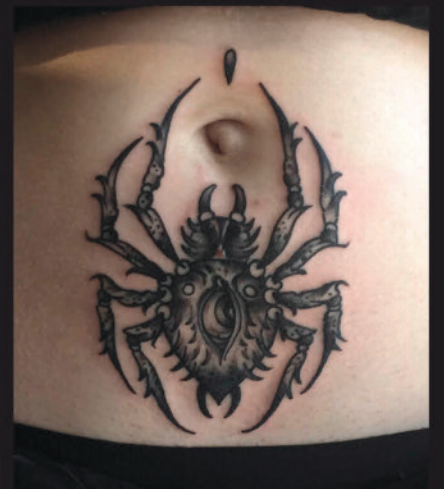


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## 2017 Victoria Film Festival Horror Guide

Victoria, BC Canada

By Ed Sum

The 2017 Victoria Film Festival is mixing up a bit of the supernatural with the psychological in this year's selection of tales of terror to astound. Along with its usual mix of documentaries (sadly, no look into the punk scene is offered this year), multiculturalism and international films, the flavour will be unique each year. If you love Samurai films, *Tatara Samurai* is worth a look. The animated film *Window Horses* is this year's opening gala event, which sees a "stranger in a strange land" formula exploring the Persian world through the eyes of a young oriental girl.

This guide on the horror genre offers quick reviews of what's to come; leading the pack is a new take on the zombie genre.

### *The Girl With All The Gifts*

Feb 10, 9pm  
Cineplex Silvercity  
Tillicum

Helen Justineau (Gemma Arterton) and Dr. Caroline Caldwell (Glenn Close) represent opposite sides of a belief in how to deal with an outbreak turning humanity into mindless automatons. They are walking dead, with no will of their own but a fungus to help guide their most basic of needs, to feast. But when the infection happens at an early age, the children are indistinguishable from being truly intelligent (and alive) to the adult state where they are ravaging monsters. Much of the story is seen through the eyes of Melanie (excellently played by newcomer Sennia Nanua), as she proves to be the most intelligent of the group herded into a camp to study.

With this film, much of the well-played tension comes from the conflict between the educator and doctor. It's a nail-biting look that explores at the inevitable, and what humanity can do to survive. Zombie movies do not have to follow the norm and look at eradication; they can embrace it instead, much like *Shaun of the Dead*.

4/5

### *The Hollow Child* (World Premiere)

Feb 9, 9pm, Cineplex  
Silvercity Tillicum

Feb 11, 4pm, Cineplex  
Silvercity Tillicum

When a child goes missing every few decades, just what can a sleepy community do? For teen Samantha (Jessica McLeod) getting a second chance at life with a new family interested in adopting her and her younger sister

Olivia (Hannah Cheramy), that's a tough call. The eight-year-old is next, and while she managed to find her way back, nobody is wise to the fact except for this newcomer.

The terror is a slow burn and the question of whether Olivia is really Olivia prompts the question of what lives in the woods and why it is interested in only taking away young children. The mystery is well-developed, and it moves like an Edgar Allen Poe story as small reveals are made. Director Jeremy Lutter does not use the jump scares blockbuster films use, instead approaching the tension Hitchcock-style.

With a story taking its inspiration from fairy-lore about changelings, this film has the potential to be expanded upon. Some may compare this story's style by Ben Rutter to *Pan's Labyrinth*, but *Brothers Grimm* makes a better comparison.

4/5

### *Personal Shopper*

Feb 3, 9pm, The Vic Theatre

Feb 5, 1:30pm, The Vic Theatre

The invisible becomes tangible in this ghost story starring Kristen Stewart. Thankfully, her days in the *Twilight* saga are over, and she can shine in these independent films. Olivier Assayas directs this movie, using an air of listless wandering through a haunted house by day

while dealing with the frights at night.

The terror is very reserved and this is a movie not meant for a *The Women in Black* crowd. It kind of wants to be like like *The Haunting of Hill House*. For paranormal enthusiasts, this modern take of a ghost story has a few moments to like, but if you're looking for loud bang scary action to wet your pants, this movie is not it.

3/5

### *Prevenge*

Feb 4, 9pm, Cineplex  
Silvercity Tillicum

Feb 6, 9pm, Cineplex  
Silvercity Tillicum

Most movies about fictional serial killers are usually one-sided in their narrative

structure, told from the victim's perspective, and in the third person. With this movie, the roles are reversed, and the execution works. Marketed as a black comedy, Alice Rowe wrote and directed this look from a would-be murderer's perspective, where Ruth (who Rowe also plays) is killing at random; she is motivated by the whispers her baby (still in the womb) is telegraphing, if not telepathically projecting.

While the victims are seemingly random, there may be a pattern, and audiences are invited to guess and figure out if there is something linking them together.

We never get to know if the police are even investigating. One nearly botched attempt does have them racing to the scene, but we never get to find out if Ruth will be caught or not. She does eventually confront the father, but therein lies a different shock. Just what will Ruth do to him if she can get him alone?

3.5/5

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