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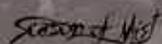
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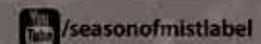
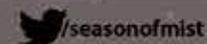
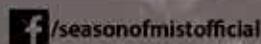
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Enemies

Interview by Roger The Shrubber

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

Enemies: Kevin and Braydan. Enemies isn't infamous for anything because we're new, but Kevin is infamous for bad form at the gym and Braydan is a walking musical encyclopedia.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band. Where are you from, how did you form?

E: Kevin and Chris are from Windsor and played in a couple bands together there. Braydan is from Manitoba and Jayden is from here (Calgary). Braydan and Kevin met through a mutual friend and wanted to start a band that sounded different from anything else happening in Calgary influenced by our mutual musical interests.

We've only been a band for under a year and played a couple shows and released a couple tapes so far.

AU: Describe your music for someone who's never heard it before. What can we expect to experience at a live Enemies show?

E: Kevin and Jayden making funny faces, Chris looking too big behind the drum set, and Braydan looking cool for all the photos. We play sort of tight, I guess?

AU: You just released a demo in June, do you have any other music we can hear? Any plans to record in the near future?

E: We have a demo from January and a promo from June. We are writing some new stuff right now hopefully for a 7", but taking our time with it. We don't have a set date or anything, but hope to record it in the fall.

AU: What influences you as artists, musically or otherwise?

E: Well it's no secret that we sort of vibe with the 86 Mentality sound but when we started writing we were thinking about Negative Approach, SSD, Negative FX and less obvious influences like The Business, Blitz, and The Oppressed.

AU: When and where can we see you play next? Any big shows coming up this fall that you're particularly looking forward to?

E: We're playing a show in Calgary with Napalm Raid from out east and then another with Prowl from Montreal in the next couple months but that's it for now.

AU: What's the punk scene in Calgary like right now? Do you guys play in any other groups? Any locals we should be keeping an eye out for?

Braydan: The current scene is pretty decent, we don't get a lot of bands touring through because we live in cold ass Alberta. The local scene is a lot better now than it was in the last couple of years

because more bands are starting to pop up.

I play bass in a band called The Chain. We aren't doing much right now since our guitar players are off in other provinces. Jayden has a couple of brand new projects on the go also.

As far as bands to check out, Alberta has some gems. Trench, Erector Set, Hard Pressed, The Enforcers, Mortality Rate, Glare and Languid are all sick.

AU: We noticed you don't seem to have a band facebook page - is that intentional? What are your thoughts on social media as a means of music promotion?

E: Honestly, we haven't really thought about it. However, we will probably make a Facebook page just because of this question.

We don't feel strongly about it one way or another. It's hard to get your music to other countries and even other cities without social media promotion these days.. so we can't really complain!

AU: That said, where can we find your music

CALGARY CARNAGE

and more information?

E: Our bandcamp page has all of our music and leftover merch. All we have left is a few copies of the newest tapes. The link is: www.enemiesab.bandcamp.com

We don't have any other means of promotion except for personal social media accounts but will probably have a Facebook soon!

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

E: I would like to take this opportunity to let everyone know that Jay Breen designed our logo/demo cover. I get asked about this a lot, so now everyone knows!

AU: Any final words for readers?

E: Thanks for taking the time to interview us and listen to Manowar. It makes you stronger.

www.enemiesab.bandcamp.com

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Absolute sub-culture

By wendythirteen

Is anyone that is underground and culturally inclined left in Vancouver proper? What a clusterfuck this, and many other greedily gentrified yet empty cities are experiencing. Unless there is a medium to high level musical act rolling through Vancouver, the streets are becoming ghostly. It seems that the turnout bug is also trickling upwards too. These poor corporate promoters may start feeling this pinch for a change.



The economic divide has never been more evident. You're either very wealthy or very poor in Vancouver. Millions are being funneled into the downtown east side, but not for culture. The working poor, starving artists and even the middle class are being driven out of the city in record numbers. People are grasping at straws, working three jobs in order to barely hang on. Are the wealthy business owners really that obtuse and blind to this exodus? Where will they get their minions to keep their businesses afloat.

Everytime I scroll the Facebook news feed another person is being renovicted, moving to the somewhat more affordable suburbs, or just leaving the lower mainland in general. What's the point of selling out your city to foreign money if it leaves over 26 thousand homes empty. This phantom money parking epidemic has laundered out the creatives and culture lovers. It has turned once reasonable landlords into money grubbing assholes. Shitholes are renting for thousands now, with waiting lists.

A couple people I know are talking trailers, living in their vans or my personal favorite daydream, a cabin deep in the woods.

When I get show requests that inquire about a "Vancouver-based band with a draw" to play with I have to laugh. Who the hell is still living in this city? The live music fans have also been strong armed out of town. This shit is real and dire.

I wouldn't want to commute on fucking Translink for two hours without a guaranteed thriving event destination in Vancouver. Local shows won't cut the mustard in that sense.

It's not just the demise of the underground subculture we're experiencing; mainstream restaurants and bars can't find employees. These businesses are also cutting their hours or closing completely. There are stories like this in the media daily. Expect more 'For Lease' signs that no DIY style business can afford.

This really saddens me. The hub of underground culture used to be Vancouver in its gritty glory. The great venues were always down on the mean streets. The squalor kept them safe from the mainstreamers. Art spaces were a dime a

dozen. Cheap holes in the wall were killer booze cans. Now, they're all snapped up by greedy developers waiting to sell their city culture myth to unsuspecting suckers.

You can't price drive all the creatives out of a city and expect any sort of good cultural vibes to remain.

So fuck all the levels of government and your hordes of money grubbing real estate gluttons for ruining Vancouver as an underground cultural hub.

If I was so inclined to jump back into the gritty venue game it would be undertaken points east. Vancouver has become a vapid, Gap commercial with its greatest cultural offering being cookie-cutter chachi bars, and gaudy fireworks sessions complete with more litter and public urination than you can shake a stick at.

I'm eternally grateful that I had the opportunity for all those years to meld our community together with the Cobes. Punk, metal, freaks, weirdos and geeks, we were just a melting pot and the camaraderie was second to none. That was truly a magical time within our musical subculture. Everything feels so clichishly fractured these days.. Every poorly attended show with absolutely stellar lineups rips at my soul. It's hard to take.

Shout out to Mo and the Rickshaw team, my frowning friend Brian Else at Pats Pub, Andrew / Malcolm, Cecil / Donna at SBC, Jayme for reviving Pub 340, Lana / Mark at Lanalous, Nikki sticking with the Astoria at the mercy of those Sahota slumfire assholes, 333, the Black Lab, the Red Gate and my current employer the Wise Hall. Don't forget your scrupulous promoters. They're often the unsung heroes. Working for free, peanuts or the once in a blue moon hit where you can actually take some money for yourself. The photographers for capturing the moments. The staple door greeters. The drink slingers. The archivists like Ira has with Absolute Underground, chock full of reviews and interviews about local bands. The endless internet blogs dedicated to our scene. The jam spaces that remain. And the poster guy!

These are the people holding down your live music scene in Vancouver. Support them. Everything is a hard sell these days. I've never seen so many snake oily gimmicks used in an attempt to sell you on a live music gig.

Fuck slumlords. Fuck developers. Fuck shitty attendance for quality local underground bands. Fuck this Vancouver economy reserved for the wealthy. Fuck getting usurped from your thriving venue in favor of gentrifying, deep pocketed yupsters. Fuck working for free. Fuck outrageous rents driving the underground out of town. Fuck the money parkers hogging the real estate.

See you intermittently, when you can actually afford a night out on the town. Don't know if I can let the music bug go. I might never leave my cave. Until then, I'm plugging along. Hang in there. I wish us all luck that this shit might turn around.

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Cyclolith

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

DM: Derek Mendoza, infamous for yellin' and guitar playin' in Mendoza (Drums in Cyclolith).

KS: Kevin Smart, played in Northern and Compound Terror (Guitar in Cyclolith).

AU: Give us a brief band history. When did you form, who is in the band?

DM: Cyclolith was formed about a year ago after our other band Azodanum went on an indefinite hiatus. Composed of Kevin Smart, Norm Apro (Mendoza), Ernesto Mendez (Terminal Sequence) and Derek Mendoza.

KS: We are constantly writing music and had a big bank of riffs that weren't a perfect fit for Azodanum, so we used the downtime to start this band and get fuzzy and rad.

AU: How would you describe your music, for someone that's never heard it?

DM: Our sound is equal parts doom, sludge, stoner rock, and death metal. So far, people have compared us to a doomy version of Entombed

with death metal vocals

KS: Slow, sludgy, fuzzy and smelly.

AU: What can people expect to see at a Cyclolith show?

DM: Our live show is a hot mess of devastating riffs and

pummeling drums at ear-shattering volumes with a slight chance of vomit.

KS: A super handsome dude smashing his face with a microphone and mean mugging the shit out of you, then shaking your hand and having a drink after he's done yelling, a ringing in your ears if you didn't bring ear plugs, and a real, real good time.

AU: Do you have any music released? Where can we find it?

DM: We just released our first album on CD and digital download on Bandcamp.

KS: You can find it over at cyclolith.bandcamp.com and at any of our live shows.

AU: Any new music coming down the pipe? Will you be recording an album soon?

DM: We're on a writing hot streak and already have a good chunk of the next record already written. Hopefully we can get the next record done by early 2018.

KS: Tons of new stuff happening all the time. 2018 seems so far away, but we just released our first record so new stuff will be recorded once we have enough material that we are happy with to fill a full record. We don't want to write songs just to have something to play, we want to be stoked

on every new riff. If you're going to play a riff for two or three minutes at a time, it had better rule!

AU: What do you take inspiration from, musically or otherwise?

DM: We get inspiration from everything around us, life, death, tragedy, other bands, ancient history. Our universe is full of inspirational and horrific things.

KS: Everyday life, being stuck in an office job, having to do shit you don't want to do to pay for shit you don't need. Monolord, Black Sabbath, Weedeater, marijuana.

AU: You have a bunch of shows coming up, tell us about some of the upcoming gigs! Any bands you're particularly looking forward to sharing the stage with?

DM: We head out on a short tour with Heron to Calgary and back, starting with a sweet gig in Vancouver with Year of the Cobra. Then in August we play with Zaum in Victoria, which should be a fairly rippin' gig.

KS: I was in Compound Terror with Heron's singer, Jamie, and we never got to go on tour, so this is going be pretty great.

AU: What else do you have coming up this year? Tours? Videos? Any major plans for the future of the band?

DM: Unfortunately that will be it for shows for the year as our singer will be going to Europe for an extended period of time. We'll be working hard on new music for the next record in the meantime.

KS: We will be on tour starting on July 27th. I think

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY



that will probably be before this issue comes out. I'm super interested in doing a video for one of our songs. We're all pretty broke so we'll probably end up doing it ourselves. I predict a B-movie production value (in the best possibly way).

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

DM: Some things are better left unsaid.

KS: I'm going to say them. You should know how much we love heavy music, mind-altering substances, sweaty rooms, riffs, horror movies, long walks on the beach, driving super far in a camper van, riffs, basements, not having any air conditioning and our sweet, sweet Lord Satan.

AU: Final words for the nice readers?

DM: Come party with us on tour! DOOMWORSHIP

KS: Give us your money, we are figuratively wasting away over here.

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

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Neck Of The Woods

Interview by Stepan Soroka

Neck of the Woods has been described as "the most exciting progressive metal band to emerge from Vancouver's underground music scene in a generation." If you've ever seen them live, you know this is not really an overstatement. I sat down with vocalist Jeff Radomsky and guitarist Dave Carr on a sunny East Vancouver beach to discuss the band's upcoming debut full-length.

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

Jeff Radomsky: My name is Jeff and I am the vocalist for Neck of the Woods. We've got a new record coming out in September and it tells a bit of a story that we're all pretty connected to. It's pretty explicitly personal to myself and to the rest of the band, and we just wanted to talk a little bit about it.

Dave Carr: And I'm Dave. I play guitar.

AU: Can you give us a brief history of the band?

Jeff: It kind of started as an incarnation of Dave's previous band called Reckoner.

Dave: Yeah, I was playing in Reckoner around Vancouver ten or so years ago, it feels like... which it may have well been. It kind of fell apart

and I still had the riffs and still had the motivation so I just started looking for new guys. I found Jeff through the old Reckoner singer, and this is his first band, actually. Travis I found on Craigslist and the other guys, just through other bands. And it wasn't until last year that Jordan and Jeremy joined. That had a huge impact on the band and our songs. It goes back to 2013 or so.

AU: The Passenger is your debut full-length. Tell us all about it.

Jeff: This record is pretty deep-seated in my personal life. It deals with a lot of themes based around my family situation. Unfortunately, my sister is dealing with brain cancer at the moment, and a lot of the songs are focused on that as the centre point, straight down from her diagnosis to one of the songs being written in the waiting room during her craniotomy. The majority of the record's underlying theme is a message of support from myself and the rest of the band, who are all also personally connected with my sister, Sarah, to aid her through it and tell her that she's going to get past it. It's a stepping stone and it's only going to make her stronger. That's kind of the ethos of the record.

Dave: Musically, the album is a bit of a jump ahead from the EP. The EP was the first six songs that we had written. There are nine songs on the new album, which really showcases the new members and us all getting better at our instruments. Jeff has this crazy new range that he didn't have when he first started out 'cause he had no experience, and now he has lots. Musically, we're really happy with it. The songs are really cool and we have a lot of fun playing them. It's out on September 15th.

AU: There was a bit of a debacle surrounding the artwork for the album. What happened with that?

Jeff: That was a bit of an unfortunate situation where we as a band picked out the piece by an artist in the States and purchased it, and were told that we had the exclusive rights to this piece.

It wasn't until we had signed a deal with Basick Records over in Europe and had already released the first single that it was brought to our attention that an Australian band had the same record cover. That band was, fortunately, really relaxed and cool about it... They produced receipts [that proved] they had it first, so we decided that we needed to change it. Unfortunately, at that point in time the photographer blocked my emails, stopped accepting contact from Facebook and Instagram. He took our money and ran.

Dave: He ghosted.
 Jeff: Which is kind of funny, because the cover is a ghost. But, at the end of the day we were really lucky to get to work with a guy named Kevin Moore at Soft Surrogate. He went above and beyond. Ultimately, we ended up with a cover that we are way happier with, and feel represents both *The Passenger* and the themes of Neck of the Woods much better than the piece we had originally purchased. And we got to do it ourselves. We got to shoot it, be involved in the art direction and make sure that it was exactly what we wanted it to be. Kevin really went above and beyond for us.

AU: Why should someone who has never seen Neck of the Woods come to one of your shows?

Dave: I think you guys should come see us because we have a fairly engaging live show. Sometimes at our shows not everybody is moving around and moshing, and that's cool because you look at them and they're looking at you and following what's going on. And the rowdy shows are awesome, don't get me wrong, but it's cool to see people engaged. We put a lot of passion into our live performance and we just have so much fun doing it. I think people see us having fun. We have a lot of friends who aren't crazy metalheads who come out to the shows and have a good time, have a couple of beers and watch the entertainment... And Jeff takes his shirt off.

Jeff: I'm always half naked. The blinders go on and I stop paying attention to what's happening... I get so involved in the live show and it's so

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

encompassing and gripping that you get off stage and it's like, "Did we play? Did it happen? Are we done?"

AU: What's coming up for you guys besides the new album?

Jeff: We're doing a Western Canadian tour, 12 shows, out to Saskatchewan and back. The record comes out on September 15th and in between now and then we'll have a couple of singles released. We will also be releasing a music video for the track "You Will Always Look the Same to Me." And then spring 2018 is branching into the wonderful country of America and seeing how that goes, and hopefully over to Europe and meet the folks at the label and do all that fun stuff.

Dave: We're also playing Out for a Riff on August 26th at the Waldorf. It's pretty much the new Burger Fest, I believe. Bunch of bands... Black Wizard, Weedeater, Heron. It's sponsored by a bunch of cool bars and restaurants so looking forward to that. We'll have an album release show in late September, as well.

AU: Fuck yeah. Anything you want to add before we wrap up?

Jeff: I hope people legitimately enjoy listening to our album as much as we enjoy playing it. Getting to perform with this band live is the most fulfilling thing that's going on in all of our lives. I just hope that it's as engaging and as exciting for everybody else as it is for us.

Dave: Yeah, we're just really excited for people to hear the new record and we're really proud of the material on there. It's one big song. It goes from start to finish.

Upcoming Neck of the Woods tour dates:
 Sept 10: Calgary @ Broken City, All ages.
 Sept 11: Saskatoon @ Vangelis
 Sept 13: Drumheller @ Neighbours Corner Pub
 Sept 14: Regina @ Cloud 9 Live
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Idolatry

Interview by Apryl Fawn

It's a particularly algid midsummer's day, with the scent of whiskey and burning forests looming in the reddened sky. The archetypal day to engage in discourse with a band whose dark, droning riffs and classic black metal vocals entrance fans in all subgenres of metal. With songs like "Clefs Au Chambre De Tristesse," (A key to the room of sadness), "Tiamatic Winds," and "Sentient Burning Unto Ecclesiastic Tombs," (from the split album with American black metal band Kult ov Azazel), Idolatry is a band that will crack open your mind, and leave your eyes black with realization.

Today we sat down with drummer, Daemonikus, to discuss the band's past and the ideologies that influence their writing.

Absolute Underground: Firstly, can you tell us a little bit about the history of the band?

Daemonikus: Idolatry was formed in 2014 by myself out of a desire to do a traditional black metal project, as that has always been my preferred genre. Our lineup has had several changes over the years, but each time that has happened, it has been necessary for the evolution of the band. As difficult and frustrating

as altering the lineup can be at times, it must be viewed as an opportunity for growth and improvement. We parted ways with our previous vocalist in September of last year. In October we did a tour with Panzerfaust and Erimha in with Caesar Tiberius of Ides Of Winter filling in that slot just for the tour. We then began writing new material while

Defeated Sanity, and a host of other punitive-sounding bands. It's sure to be a boiling pot of pure chaos!

AU: It sounds like you keep yourselves busy. Can you tell us a bit about the concepts behind your lyrics and where you draw your ideas from?

D: Initially, I was the one writing the lyrics, and I knew I wanted to have a strong sense of subjectivity in them. Of course, there are parts and songs that are more direct, but for the most part, a lot of it is drawn from concepts of abstract thought that are used to convey an objective message. Abstract thoughts can come from anywhere, whether it be a sleepless night, weeks of deep depression, or a drunken night of debauchery and indulgence. I also draw a lot of inspiration from my hatred of humanity. It is not a blind hatred though, since hating something without critical justification is no different than loving something without justification. My hate for humanity is born from the observation of its own stupidity, willful ignorance, and the complacent minds that have no interest in evolving themselves beyond their own personal bias, beliefs, comforts, and preferences.

AU: Agreed. Obviously in metal there are some main themes we see and hear throughout the majority of records, but in more specific terms, to what extent do you feel your lyrics represent your personal beliefs?

D: Lyrics are certainly a vehicle for such things. The band, as its own entity, is fully anti-religious, whether that refers to xtianity, Islam, Wicca, or any other "spiritual" belief system. Idolatry respects none of them, and to see the elimination of such ignorant, and self-deluding beliefs would advance humanity at a much faster pace than we are currently moving. Personally, I consider myself a Satanist, but only in a philosophical and ideological context. I see Satan as the figurative personification of an adversary to the moral and social constructs of a world dominated by religious morality, and tradition, and these sentiments are certainly common in our lyrics.

AU: In a biblical sense "Idolatry" is defined as

image-worship or divine honor paid to any created object - a crime of false-worship punishable by death. I'm sure the majority of our readers are attuned to the risible absurdity of this concept. When you devised this name for the band, did you do so with any specific idols in mind?

D: Self is the idol. The self is greater than the god, because we create them in our own minds. Much of religion is based on fear, weakness, uncertainty, and other forms of self-doubt. When we realize that we are the ones in control of our own understanding, and take personal responsibility for our own actions, and ignorance, we cast off the cloak of deceit that we ought to be led by forms of thought and morality that are not truly our own. When we cast aside subjective belief, and embrace objective truth, we break the chains of ignorance and become the idol ourselves.

AU: There are many answers to be found in the darkness, for those who choose to embrace it. When you play live do you see yourself as a character, or is your stage show a reflection of who you really are?

D: For us, it's more about portraying that darker side of yourself in a more direct way. The aesthetic of wearing paint, spikes, filth, blood, or whatever, lends itself to the direct portrayal of that dark side of ourselves, and using an alternate name helps push it further into being able to fully embrace it during a performance. So it's not a "character," but rather a different version of the self.

I can't walk around town spewing hatred at everyone I see, as much as I would like to, so the music and the aesthetics of it become a vehicle for the expression of that pure hatred.

Catch Idolatry this September with Acheron and Horna, at the Considered Dead Festival in Quebec City.

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idolatryblackmetal.bandcamp.com



searching for a permanent vocalist, and had Ba'al Berith join us in New Year. Our newest member, who is being announced for the first time in this publication, is Mose, who replaced Nox on guitar. He also currently plays in Repugnant Scum, and has immediately shown himself to be a great fit both personally, and musically. His playing is harsh and aggressive, even during long drawn out riffs. The way he can just saw away at a simple, chorded riff really adds to the intensity of a song.

We currently have four releases; a four-track demo, a 7" split with Unrest (U.S.), a full length album through Humanity's Plague Productions, and a split CD with Kult Ov Azazel (U.S.), also through HPP. Since the release of the full length we have had to replace three members, so the writing process has been slow, but we do have new material written that we will be releasing for a new full length (no release date yet).

We are also currently preparing for our next set of performances where we will be traveling to Quebec City to perform at the Considered Dead Festival, along with Horna, Acheron, Slaughtbath,

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- 05 SINZERE MENTAL HEALTH
- 09 IN THE WHALE WITH GUESTS
- 11 P.O.S. TRANSIT22 + BROM + STAGE
- 12 VNV NATION IVARDENSPHERE
- 14 DRIVE-IN DOUBLE FEATURE
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- 16 WOOHOO! SIMPSONS TRIVIA
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- 19 GIUDA
- 21 FAKE MUSTACHE
- 22 VOODOO GLOW SKULLS K-MAN & THE 45'S + JULIUS SUMNER MILLER
- 25 DARK TRANQUILITY
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WITH GUESTS BROM + STAGE

AUG 11

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Show Of Bedlam

Interview by André Laniel

Absolute Underground: How do you feel about the release of *Transfiguration*?

Show Of Bedlam: Well, it definitely feels good to have this come out after so many years. It was a lot of work for us and it sometimes felt like it would never end since we recorded it by ourselves and had lots of issues along the way. It's a kind of relief in a way.

AU: How hard is it to let go of a song after recording it?

SOB: It depends. Some of us like to play around with them live, while others like to play them exactly the way they are. We've been looking forward to working on new material and mess around with new ideas for a while now.

AU: How was the process to create this album?

SOB: It was a very long process, as I've said earlier. We started working on some of the songs on *Transfiguration* even before *Roont* was out. We

had many issues during the last five years like lineup changes and technical problems during recording, etc. and that's why it took us so long. But in a way, it allowed us to really work on our songs and record what we thought was the best tracks we had in our hands. Also, we really took our time to record the whole thing. If we thought something could be better, we tried something else. It gave us an opportunity to work on our thing at our pace until we were satisfied enough with the result.

AU: Does the music come naturally or it takes a lot of time to put together?

SOB: It really depends. Sometimes it just flows naturally and we can almost come out with a complete song out of an improvisation. Other times, we bring two or three riffs that fit well together and take a lot of time to build on those. In the end, the amount of time is really dictated by the quality of what comes out. If we like it, we keep it even if it was made in five minutes. If it's shit, well, we try to find something better.

AU: How were you influenced musically for this album?

SOB: We are all huge music fans so we are always very influenced musically. We like to keep a real open mind regarding arts and especially music. Anything could influence us, from old field recordings of world music to old-school death metal, from psychedelic to industrial, we like all of it. But it doesn't mean we want to bring all these styles into our music, we can just be inspired by them.

AU: What are the themes you explored in the songs?

Paulina: We don't choose specific themes. The inspiration is drawn mostly from personal experiences and also from certain literary genres like magic realism (Gabriel Garcia Marquez) and the classic fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm brothers. I don't pretend to be even half as talented as a proper writer (let alone those writers), but the tone and atmosphere of the works like *One Hundred*

Years of Solitude or *Eva Luna* (Isabel Allende) fascinates me, and of course, inspire me so much. Reality becomes mingled with fantasy to a point where there's no telling which one is which. And that's the way I like to narrate my reality.

AU: Did you have the words for a while or did they come with the music?

Paulina: The words definitely come with the music. At first, when the song is still in the works, I sing with the band in a sort of made up language, a bit like Elizabeth Fraser used to do with Cocteau Twins. But as the writing of the song progresses, I start hearing what I'm supposed to be saying. There's a part in "Easter Water," one of the songs in the new album, where I just left the made up words there. I just thought it sounded like I wanted it to sound, and it wouldn't have sounded the same with actual words.

AU: What does the album mean for you?

SOB: To us *Transfiguration* is like a passage, an evolution, a change of face or of phase in the band's life.

AU: Any stuff left out from this album that might become songs later?

SOB: Yes, we actually have an extra track from the *Transfiguration* sessions that's all recorded and just needs to be mixed. We also have some other tracks that we had the chance to record in an awesome studio at McGill University, and we still need to do overdubs on them. We should finish those this summer.

AU: What's to expect from Show of Bedlam with this album in terms of shows, tours, festivals?

SOB: We don't have a tour planned yet, but we would love to tour (any opportunity would be welcomed, ha!) Our next show in Montreal is on August 27th. We are also working on a video, which should be out soon.

AU: Do you guys have other projects?

SOB: We do not have many active other

MONTREAL MASSACRE

projects right now, only Trauco, which is on and off. We did two shows, but it's more a space for experimentation, really. We have many past bands. Nick used to be in Towards Darkness. He also played in Seized, the former band of our new bassist, Wag. He used to play in The Black Hand, Shiftfit and Human Greed, too. Also, Ari, who was the bassist at the moment of the recording, used to be in many bands all the time. He had all of these other projects like Boneblack, Xothogua, Saw Mass, etc.

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AUGUST 25 AT SUGAR



Megan Meow

Interview by Billy Hopeless

Can cats and dogs get along? Well, in this case the answer is yes. Miss Meow is a truly magical and talented divine feline who is definitely not a scratcher, but a true mistress of the arts. A cat, a queen, and one tattoo artist well worth howling about.

Absolute Underground: First off, tell us how you got into tattooing, how long you have been doing it, and who your teachers were.

Megan Meow: I had spent a lot of time in shops in the past. I have always been an artist, but I never really believed I had what it took to grind through an apprenticeship. I also worked very hard at perfecting and tightening my artistic hand - I felt my work was too "loose" to translate into good tattoo work. I worked at building a tattoo/art portfolio, and took it around to my friends and peers in the industry. I've been tattooing since the fall of 2015. I was at the right place at the right time and got put in touch with my mentor Ian Jansen Van Beek of Three Point Tattoo.

AU: How would you describe your personal cat style if you had to put it into a marketing slogan?

MM: Cattoos 4 U by Megan Meow.

AU: You're working at Three Point, right across from the International Village Mall, which always attracts an interesting array of people. I'm sure you've had some interesting experiences and tattoo requests... can you share any of those magic moments with us?

MM: I think the most interesting requests we receive at the shop are unrealistic expectations. Like, "I'm only in town for two days and I want

to get a full sleeve/portrait done." Although we welcome walk-ins, we often have clients booked and try our best to accommodate walk in clients. But there's always that person that "needs" their tattoo right MEOW!

Come to think of it though, I have yet to receive a really weird/hilarious tattoo request... I look forward to that day in my career!

AU: What, in your opinion, are the defining attributes that make a tattoo great?

MM: My mentor has always impressed upon myself and the crew the importance of good overall flow and composition with the consideration of the client's individual body form. I think with that mindfulness and experience, with clean and proper tattoo application, a good tattoo can become a great tattoo.

AU: By the piece or by the hour?

MM: When I work out of the shop, I go by my hourly rate. When it comes to Tattoo Convention time (April 28-30th), I can charge by the flash piece.

AU: Besides being such a cute and charming inner city kitty, what do you think you bring to Vancouver's tattoo shop collection?

MM: I feel like people can appreciate the aesthetic of my work. Some of it is feminine, I draw lots of good-looking females, and I pay attention to detail and subtleties. There are lots of great shops with crazy talented artists in this city... Sometimes it can get overwhelming being another young blood in the industry. But whenever it gets like that, I remember that my mentor believed in my work enough to invest precious time and patience into me, so I must bring something cool to the 'hood.

AU: What's your take on facial tattoos?

MM: I can dig them. I have not done one yet. But I believe that facial tattoos need to be well thought out, expertly tattooed and probably reserved for the guys and girls who are already heavily tattooed.

AU: Favourite tattoo you've done and least favourite tattoo that you kinda wish you hadn't?

MM: My favourite is when people claim designs that I put a lot of love into and maybe even considered tattooing on myself. I'm happy to send them out into the world on other people rather than hoarding them away. Tattoos that make people happy or have some significance, like a memorial, are always special too. Thankfully I tend not to agree to tattoos I would regret putting on someone, but I know

there's a compass tattoo from my very early days that I wouldn't mind touching up.

AU: What are your favourite songs to have playing when you get your paws a-twerking?

MM: 70s! Electric Light Orchestra. Blondie is a good time. ABBA is GOLD. Feel-good soul is usually a pleasant way to start the day, and everyone can appreciate the hits!

AU: How full is your dance card? Do people have to book in months ahead or are you able to accommodate short notice?

MM: I'm usually a month or two booked in advance, with pockets of time here or there.

AU: As an artist with a skin colouring book, what are your fave colours to use?

MM: Black and grey is classic and my preference, but colours I like are olive and neutral greens, dusty rose pink and reds. Seafood Green is loved by all.

AU: So if you're going to tattoo a picture of my best friend Bean on me (hint hint), would you

INK SLINGERS

prefer a pre-drawn image or would you prefer to draw your own from a photo?

MM: I would like photograph references and always appreciate sketches to help me get a feel of what you're envisioning. Plus, Bean is pretty cute... So, pics please!



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Diamond Head

Interview by Casey Lazar

Diamond Head are one of the first heavy metal bands, having formed in 1976. Their music has played a hugely influential role on the genre, with their work famously being covered by the world's biggest metal band – Metallica – as well as many others. They're about to embark on an extensive north American tour, including stops at Psycho Las Vegas, Wings of Metal, and the Vancouver Island Metal Festival. We had the opportunity to chat with Brian Tatler, one of the founding members of the band.

Absolute Underground: You guys are one of the first New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands and one of the most influential ones. That being said, you've never really achieved the success of some of your peers. Do you agree with that sentiment, and if so, is there anything you can attribute that to?

Brian Tatler: It's been said many times how influential we have been and yes, that status hasn't brought as much success in terms of album sales, as people might imagine. The reasons have been well documented over the years, the naivety

of youth, poor management decisions, long periods of inactivity, etc, but what we try and do is learn and move forward not dwell on what might have been, this is where we're at and we've still got things to do and say.

AU: Over the past 41 years you guys have had 41 releases. Of these releases, only seven are studio albums. I was wondering if you could shed some light on this? What's the

reasoning behind putting out so many non-album releases?

BT: Again, long periods of the band being dormant, periods where we didn't want to record, an



album that we did record that probably will never see the light of day, while this was going on (or not) there was still interest in the band, albums that were released had finished the licensing period and so were re-released, compilations using songs etc, it sort of quietly kept the name ticking along when there was very little activity in the Diamond Head camp.

AU: The latest album, came out last year and is a self-titled album. Why make the seventh album the self-titled one?

BT: Why not? As you know, we've never really been a conventional band. We wanted to record an album that was a Diamond Head album of old, with a little modern twist here and there, which I think, as do a lot of fans, that we achieved to a certain degree. It's been done before, Metallica, The Beatles and Genesis all released eponymous albums that were not their debuts.

AU: Speaking of the latest album, it's really

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good, which unfortunately, is something that can't be expected of a lot of older bands. Some people have been saying that it's even better than some of the albums you guys put out back in the day. What can this be attributed to? What did you guys do differently this time, and what's been the same?

BT: Thanks for the comments, we really went back to how we used to write songs, bringing ideas into a rehearsal room and playing around with them refining, re-writing, changing round until we thought we'd matched the brief, which was to make a DH album, with great riffs, great solos, great vocals and most importantly great songs.

AU: What's next for Diamond Head?

BT: We have been and continue to be really busy touring, we head back to North America and Canada starting with Psycho in Las Vegas on the 19th of August, and are busy pretty much 'til the end of the year. We've also written and have started recording a new album that we are really excited about, release date TBD. We've had a ball this year and everyone can rest assured that there's so much more to come.

facebook.com/DiamondHeadOfficial
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PHOTO CREDIT: Lorenzo Guerrier

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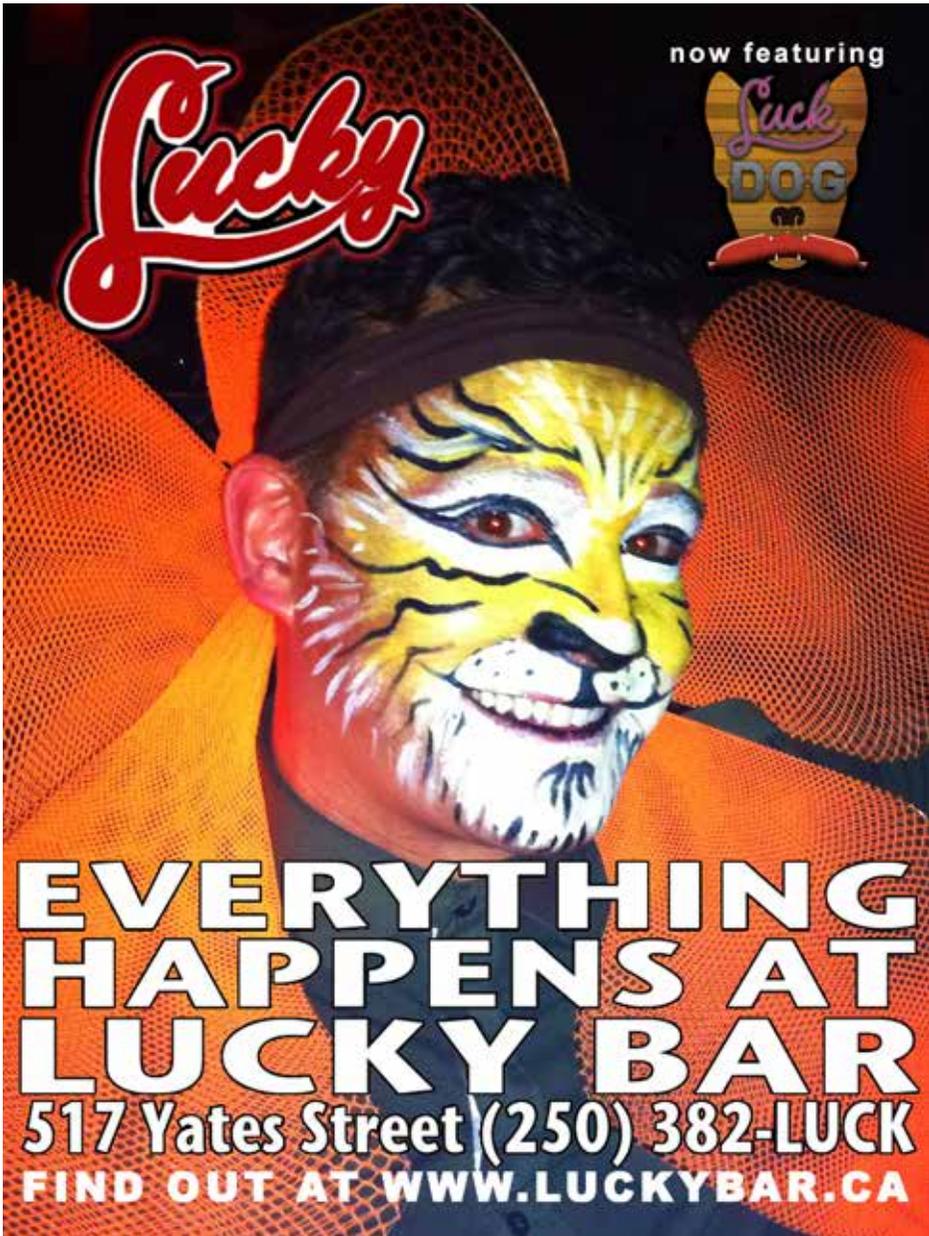
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something that seems insane to me. The fact that there are people so rich, they have enough to feed their families for hundreds of years, yet they can turn a blind eye to people who are starving and unable to provide for theirs, it's really sad when you sit down and think about it. Obviously, there isn't much we can do to change this, so we figured we may as well

Ancients

Interview with Kenny Cook
By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Good day sir, where are you and what are you up to? Set the scene for us.

Kenny Cook: I am currently in Mission, BC listening to *Fuck the Universe* by Craft, and answering emails. We are cooped up inside because there is a shroud of forest fire smoke surrounding us. Some idiot decided it was a good idea to chuck his dart out the window, and now the air conditions are brutal. I can faintly hear my two-year-old smashing his guitar whilst singing "Baby Beluga"... Now that's fucking metal!

AU: Can you tell us about your latest record, *Voice Of The Void*. What did you want to communicate with this album lyrically?

KC: The lyrical theme of this record is basically our observation of various problems we as a society are facing at this current time in history. It's crazy to see some of the things that are going on these days. We are consuming at a larger rate than ever before, gouging Mother Earth for all of her resources. The economic divide is another topic we've touched on within this record. It's



write about it. I believe the earth will eventually eradicate humans if we don't change something fast, so it's either do something about it, or ride the wave to hell!

AU: Have you heard of the Voyager Golden Record NASA experiment? They sent a record player into outer space with a variety of music from Earth. If a record was to come from outer space ("a voice of the void" if you will) what do you think alien music would sound like?

KC: Unfortunately I hadn't heard of this until now.

That seems like quite the idea. When I think about this question. I'm envisioning two things, either it could be a totally advanced type of music that we as humans could not understand... but, what I'm thinking of most, is the sound of insects playing with a bunch of delay pedals running through a Leslie rotary speaker running at light speed.

AU: Tell us about your upcoming tour across Canada. What are you looking forward to about it, and who are you going out with?

KC: Well, it will be our first trip out east supporting *Voice of the Void*. It always feels like such a privilege getting to see our country as a whole, it's not an opportunity everyone gets, especially while doing something they love to do. We will be heading out with the maniacs in Dead Quiet. It's Kevin from Barnburner's latest project, and they fucking shred hard. We also share a guitarist with them, the amazingly talented Brock McInnes. He joined our band earlier this year when Chris decided to hang up the gloves. The tour is going to be a blast as we are all super good buds. Let the beer-drinking and hell-raising commence!

AU: From a guitar player's point of view, what is your most vital piece of gear and why? What do you find most useful?

KC: That's an easy one, my guitar. It's the most important tool of my trade, without out it I wouldn't have a pot to piss in. It's always there when I'm lonely, never talks back, and I can always get something from it that nothing else could give me.

AU: You graced Vancouver with the Modified Ghost festival! What was the best part of that experience for the band?

KC: It was an honour to be involved in that festival. It was put on by our friend Jason. He went above and beyond this year making it one of the coolest things that has ever happened in Vancouver when it comes to hard rock and metal. To share the stage with such an amazing variety of bands from all over the world was a real pleasure for us and we thank him for having us. Unfortunately, I had to leave the minute after we played, my sister was getting married in Mexico, so I pretty much had to head straight for the airport the second we got off stage. From what I

hear, Nails, Razor, and Municipal Waste destroyed the Rickshaw after I left.

AU: What is the most challenging groovy record you've ever heard and why – any genre?

KC: One of the records that changed the game for me was the Guitar Trio album that features Paco de Lucia, John McLaughlin, and Al di Meola. I remember hearing that record for the first time when I was a teenager and just having my mind blown. I would listen to it over and over, it's definitely one of those records that made we want to practice guitar, but I would never be able to touch any of those guys, they are monsters!

As far as groove goes, it's all about the pocket for me. James Brown's band was always so sick, I would say they are the pocket in my eyes. I also really enjoy *Back to Oakland* by Tower of Power for that same reason, that band is just sick.

AU: Can you share the experience of getting nominated for a Juno? What doors did that open for you?

KC: It was nothing more than complete shock. I don't think any of us even considered that as being an option for our music. Obviously it was cool to be recognized in that regard, but we would never expect such a thing. I'm sure we we must have gotten something from it, but I can't really put my finger on as to what doors it opened for us.

AU: Last words to Canadians found in the mountains, and the mosh pits:

KC: If you're going to smoke, throw your fucking ciggy butts in the ashtray where they are meant to go, or we will have only burnt mountains and that would suck. Aside from that, if you enjoy music of any genre, get out to some shows and support it before it's too late. Peace and Love. Peace, and, Love.

ancients.ca/

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

PHOTO CREDIT: Shimon Karmel

ARTIST PROFILE



Dirty Donny

Interview by Billy Hopeless

My history with Donny goes back to before the violent years when a young, inspiring artist living in Quebec painted the Black Halos Banner on his apartment floor for the low low, low-brow price of 100 bucks. Years later, through my love of pinball, I was pleased to find out he had racked some huge credits in outsider art and the pinball game. So let's plunge into this interview with the one and only vision quest of Dirty Donny!

Absolute Underground: So it's been a year since we last talked and I know from your

Facebook page that you've been busy. You first created the art for the Swedish rock band the Hellacopters, but then you got the big score with the chance to design the first Metallica pinball, including the Ride the Lightning Sparky figure. As if that isn't hitting the lights, you got to have members of the band over to your place to play the game you designed. Are you still blown away by that and tell us, was the band any good at pinball?

Dirty Donny: I was first hired by Kirk Hammett 15 years ago to paint murals in Metallica's then-new HQ building in San Rafael, CA. Kirk's a big pinball fan and we hit it off first thing with the pinball connection, art and monsters. James and Robert are also into pinball. I have the high score on Kirk's *Twilight Zone* pinball at HQ!

AU: Yeah man, you really hit the lights on that one but you didn't stop there! Next you got to draw the lines on the new Aerosmith pinball! Are you satisfied with the game and did the band have any input on the art? Did you get to meet them and play the game with them?

DD: I'm really happy with the way Aerosmith turned out. I tried to raise the bar with the artwork, jamming as much art into it as I could. It's a fun game and Stern did a great job. The only changes were Stephen Tyler wanted more "sins" and "cigarette butts" on the playfield. The whole band signed off on the art so that made me happy. With Metallica, they are buddies of mine but with Aerosmith I don't know the members personally and have yet to meet them. I was stoked they like the game, though. I tried to make it as cool as possible, bringing back that old school hand-drawn feel that is my favourite era of pinball.

AU: Your love of pinball and art doesn't just grace the tables but also table books, as it's now available in the first published book of your art, entitled *Pinball*

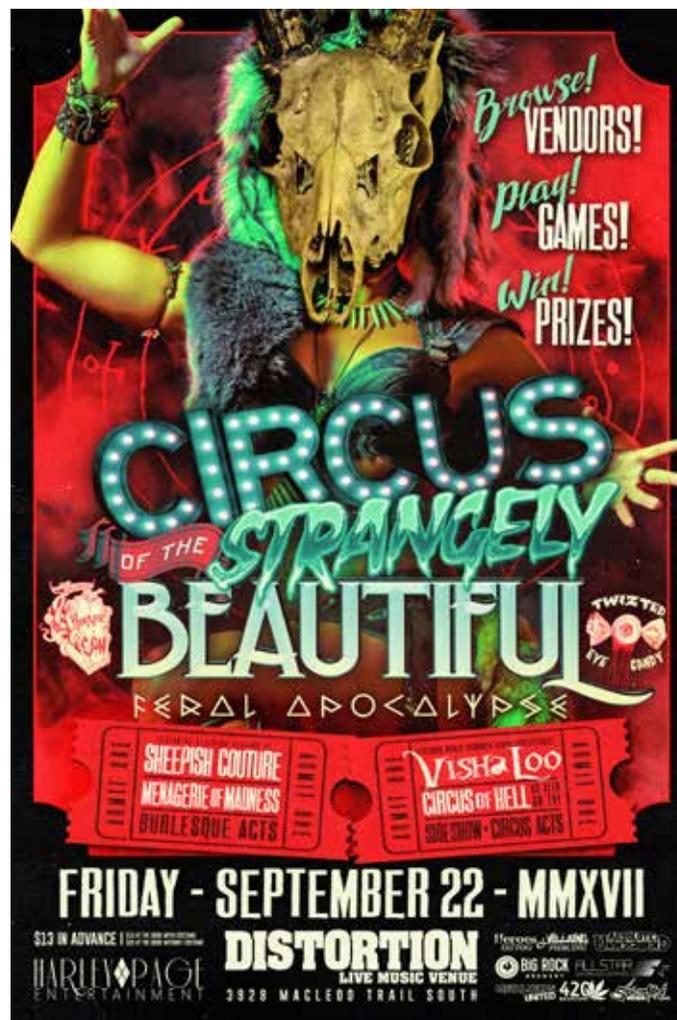
Destroyers and Black Light Destroyers. Tell us how you would describe this collection of fluorescent freak outs and where the fine fucking art lovers can get a copy of it?

DD: This is actually my second art book. It's my art from the last five years, the latest and greatest. It has my blacklight poster series, my solo retro sci-fi fantasy art show, skateboards, the top fuel funny car and art for Snap-on tools and Bell helmets, my '69 Satellite I restored and my 1973 Doge Streetvan I customized and painted, just to name a few things. I packed this book to the limit.

You can get the book on my site, dirtydonny.com

AU: Since the first day I met you, one thing I remember is bonding instantly over your finer collection of vintage toys and, being a lifelong glue sniffer and kit builder, I was stoked to see you've gotten to design a few model kits for one of the longest running legendary names in the plastic part game, AMT models. How did this happen and tell us about the muscle and monsters you've created for them.

DD: That's been a fun job. They are putting out my "Pinball Punk" monster kit this fall! I've done a few cars, a van and a monster already. It's like



him in the early 90s and used to skate his decks in the 80s. PD and Skullskates are worldwide icons. I recently started my YouTube channel, donnyTV, and I tried to rock the Skull Skates shirt he gave me in the first season as much as possible. Hoping to get on a design for him soon. This have been insane this year with the book and Aerosmith pin out.



achildhood dream come true. The kits are in the book too.

AU: I guess since this is an Absolute Jaks sweat rag we should talk skater creator. When we were at P.D.'s Hot Shop last year, you were telling me about how you used to snail mail order Skull Skates stuff from them back in the dark ages, only to see they carried grip tape with your art on it. You and P.D. were mutually respecting each others' art, all cool down to touch ground master skater form until finally the obvious trick landed on the thought of you designing a Skull Skates deck. Has there been any progress on that?

DD: It was cool to meet PD in person, he's a rad guy. I used to order lowrider bike parts from

AU: Well once again, I applaud, salute, and await further news of your conquests, victories and adventures. We'll hook up again at the Vancouver Flipout Pinball Expo. Tell all the bad kids what goodies you'll have for sale at the convention?

DD: I plan to have the new book and all the new blacklight posters, so stop by and say hi! Good talking with you, Billy. See you in September!

Dirty Donny will be appearing as a guest at the Vancouver Flipout Pinball Expo sept 22-24th



Dropkick Murphys

Interview by Esther Wurley

Absolute Underground: What can fans expect from your upcoming tour with Rancid?

Matt Kelly: They can expect two bands with a lot of history together to bash it out like touring machines, plus our great friends and greater band, the Bouncing Souls and Jake Burns from the legendary Stiff Little Fingers rounding it off. Then out west, the two-tone legends the Selecter and Mr. Kevin Seconds. A very special tour for us all, really.

AU: What can you tell us about your new album?

MK: It's fast, it's slow, it's heavy and lighthearted in different parts. Lyrically, it deals with some dark subjects such as opiate addiction and the Boston Marathon bombing, but also some fun stuff like beating the crap out of people, respect for our supporters/fans, and a little band history.

We had a blast recording it, living on-site at Sonic Ranch studio in Tornillo, Texas, and it's amazing how audiences have responded to the songs.



They're going over as well as any of our other more popular tunes... and for that we thank our rabid fans.

AU: Tell me about the Claddagh Fund. How did you develop the organization, and why is it important?

MK: The Claddagh Fund (www.claddaghfund.org) was started as a way for us to make sure charitable donations were actually going to the people they were intended to. The main focus of the charity is to raise money for underprivileged children, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, and the difficulties faced by war veterans returning home.

We've always tried to use our popularity to give back to the community in Boston (and Philadelphia, where the other chapter of the Claddagh Fund resides), and figured this was the perfect way to do it and do it right.

Basically how the ball got rolling was Ken pow-wow-ing with Bobby Orr, who is of course known for his

charity work over the decades. The perfect guy to talk to on such matters!

AU: You're constantly selling out giant venues and festivals. How did it feel to play to 330 people at Brighton Music Hall back in 2012?

MK: I prefer those more intimate gigs, personally. That was a blast. We've done that every year since in one form or another, and it's always a very special time.

AU: Is it still easy to identify as working class while being wildly successful musicians? How do you stay connected? Do you ever feel like you've sold out along the way?

MK: I grew up working class, and that's what I am. Perhaps my son is not so much— though I hope to instill in him the values that my parents taught me. Staying connected really isn't something I sit

and ponder. Anybody who knows me knows how I am, who I am as a man, and what I stand for, so that's enough for me.

Sold out? We're still doing what we set out to do from day one: Become as big a band as possible while staying true to what we stand for. So far I'd say it's worked. Anybody who calls that selling out should get their head checked.

AU: How did "The Rat" help out DKM back in the day to develop your fan base?

MK: They let us book all-ages matinee gigs there, and it was a base of operations for us and many other local bands at the time. It was a regular venue and we booked all the great Oi! and punk bands coming through at the time, and yeah, we cut our teeth at the Rathskeller. A real shithole to be fair, but it was such an important venue.

AU: Why did Mighty Mighty Bosstones pick you guys to join them in 1997? You only had one split out with Anti-Heros, and Do or Die was still a year away from being born.

MK: We were an up-and-coming band, featuring a member of one of Tim and Dickie's favorite bands, Rick Barton from the Outlets. Also, if the Bosstones taught us anything, them taking us out set an example for us to help out other local up-and-comers when we got a little more popular.

As far as our output at the time: the Anti-Heros split didn't come out until maybe August or September that year. At the time we were embarking on tour with the Bosstones, we had the *Fire and Brimstone 7"*, the *Tattoos and Scally Caps 7"*, the split 7" with the Ducky Boys, and various compilations. While on tour with the Bosstones, the *Boys On the Docks* EP came out, and yeah, then later that year the Anti-Heros split came out. So we had a few bits and bobs out, but *Do or Die* came out in February 1998. We recorded it in summer '97.

AU: What's up with the Dropkick Murphys/ Mighty Mighty Bosstones "rivalry?" I remember DKM played shenanigans on the Bosstones at Hometown Throwdown 18, to which the Bosstones retaliated with a video that was filmed outside Ken's bar, McGreevy's.

What's the history there, as I know this is an ongoing thing.

MK: Just a bunch of ball-busters busting balls essentially. Friendly banter between old friends!

AU: You've collaborated with Bruce Springsteen. What was that like?

MK: That was pretty cool, as some of the guys in the band worship that man. Dude is down-to-earth as hell and a pleasure to work with. He truly walks the walk. Top man.

AU: How is the Boston hardcore scene better than L.A.? What do you love most about it?

MK: This is how: DYS, SSD, Negative FX, Last Rights, Gangreen, Vile, Slapshot, F.U.'S, Jerry's Kids, The Freeze, Wrecking Crew, Anal Cunt, Siege, Eye For An Eye, Cops and Robbers, A Poor Excuse, The Lovely Lads, Rival Mob, Boston Strangler, Peacebreakers, Savageheads, Out Cold, Think I Care, Blood For Blood.... Harder, faster, meaner, better... That's how.

AU: How did you come up with the name Dropkick Murphys?

MK: John "Dropkick" Murphy was a wrestler, boxer, and later boxing trainer whose primitive detox programs were the stuff of legends. He helped a lot of drunken boxers (and then your average Joe) to clean up their act.

AU: Is it easy or hard to work alongside your bandmates that were in other bands (The Bruisers, Ducky Boys, Pinkerton Thugs, Vigilantes, etc.) Is it a democracy? Do egos ever get in the way?

MK: No, not at all. The experience however it isn't always a democracy. Somebody has to steer the ship. I don't think the ego thing really plays into it, we all know our roles and try to perform them as best we can... Essentially, we write songs we'd like to hear, and enjoy playing them together.

www.dropkickmurphys.com

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Legends Valley Music Festival

August 23 - 27, 2017
Lake Cowichan, BC

Interview by AU Editorial

AU: What was the genesis of Legends Valley Music Festival?

We are crazy motherfuckers. No one was booking our band Antipolitic at the time and we wanted to open up for The Forgotten Rebels, Biff Naked, and Body Count. Bucket list kind of thing, you know? So we decided to start our own music festival and invite them all out. More work than we ever thought but mission accomplished and good times, for sure.

AU: What can one expect if attending this year's festival?

We have been practising lots. Antipolitic is on fire. We have just put out our first album, *Relentless*, with all new songs that will be available at the show. The Forgotten Rebels are coming out again. We've got Delinquent Habits in the house. House of Pain on their 25th anniversary tour with all

original members including Everlast and DJ Lethal. Power Clown is back, Cocaine Moustache is in, this band called Magic!, with over 1.5 billion YouTube views, will pull in a massive demographic of super sexy women. Plus the Cannabis Cup this year is going to be insanely massive. I hope you like to get high on cannabis and music!

AU: Who are some of the other bands playing?

We also have Daniel Wesley, Delhi to Dublin, Kytami, Sloan, Five Alarm Funk, The Harpoonist and The Axe Murderer, Funkdoobiest, Dayglo Abortions, Mat the Alien, The Gaff, Bend Sinister, Taryn Laronge & The Revolvers, The Getaway Sticks and lots more. It's going to be the party of the summer. Fasten your seatbelt!

AU: Thanks for bringing the Forgotten Rebels back again.

The Forgotten Rebels are friends of ours and inspirations for Antipolitic. We cover a bunch of their songs and just turned "Surfing on Heroin" into "Flying on Fentanyl" to raise awareness. We flew to see their show at Lee's Palace in Toronto last February and invited them back. They are the legends.

AU: Any other acts that might still be added?

Yes. One of the members of Body Count got in an accident a few weeks ago and they cancelled their world tour. This was super devastating news to me. I sincerely hope that the band member makes a speedy recovery and hopefully they can come next year. So we will hopefully be adding 50 Cent and Damian Marley, that seems like the most likely scenario.

AU: Where does the event take place?

By beautiful Lake Cowichan on Vancouver Island at the biggest permanent outdoor amphitheatre in all of Canada. My friend Greg C Adams built it. He is a former Vancouver Canuck and NHL alumni who rag-dolled both Bob Probert and Marty McSorley.

AU: This event also has a Cannabis Expo?

Last year was the Bio Cup. We had international competitors and vendors. It was the cannabis event of the year by far. Of course we caught the attention of *High Times* Magazine who are turning it into an official *High Times* Cannabis Cup, the first one ever in Canada. Expect our cannabis expo to double in size. This will go down in history as the most monumentally epic cannabis and music event of all time in the first G1 country to be on the cusp of national legalization. It's a super exciting time.

AU: How does one become a judge?

Because of the short notice of *High Times* coming in, we will still run this cup this year under Bio Cup rules. 110 judges will be able to purchase judges bags and cast votes on the best cannabis, concentrates, edibles and topicals within the peoples choice awards. A celebrity judges panel will deliberate on the *High Times* Cannabis Cups themselves. All product entries are due by August 15th.

AU: What sorts of vendors will be exhibiting?

Loads of concentrate companies will be there, both at the expo and in the competition. Also we will have edible companies, seed companies, vape companies, smoke shops, rolling paper companies, trimming machine collectives. Companies with new infused products and companies on the cutting edge of the ever-expanding hotbed of new cannabis technologies.

AU: What's the festival atmosphere like?

The smoke is in the air! Everybody is just so elated to be there, with such epic talent and the cannabis expo there to entertain. If I had to sum it up, "totally stoked" would be the key



phrase. The atmosphere also changes from day to night. Some people like to spread a blanket on a grassy hill. Others like to be in front of the main stage. Some stroll through the Cannabis Expo. I recommend getting energized with a swim in the lake and then dancing hard on the VIP balcony, where you feel like you're on top of the world. People also love the welcoming campground parties. Everyone will be having a peak experience at an event like no other.

AU: What is your grand vision for the future of the festival?

We've built the foundation for Legends Valley to get bigger and better every year, and will continue bringing in some of the biggest legends of the music world.

People will always look back and remember these early years though, and will tell their friends how awesome it was to be there.

AU: Words of wisdom for people planning to attend?

Stay high, hydrated and happy. Don't miss Antipolitic on the main stage Saturday afternoon.

www.legend山谷musicfestival.com



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Van Isle Tattoo Expo

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking with today and what is your involvement in the upcoming Van Isle Tattoo Expo?

Jordan Pringle: My name is Jordan Pringle, and I am organizing and promoting the event.

AU: What was the genesis of the idea to put on a tattoo convention in Victoria?

JP: It had been something that was on my mind since I got involved with *West Coast Ink Magazine* a few years ago. There has been a few tattoo conventions in Victoria in years past, but it's been some time. After attending many shows throughout western Canada representing West Coast Ink and talking to the artists, guests and



promoters, I started to think that with the right support I could put together a great convention myself, especially since Victoria and Vancouver Island in general have so much to offer as a setting. The idea was growing when our team of JRK Productions came together to make it official. I have two great partners in this venture: Ryan Scarpino, a world renowned sponsored tattoo artist who grew up in Nanaimo and now resides in Kelowna (when he's not travelling to tattoo conventions all over the world!) and our good friend Keegan, who is a huge tattoo enthusiast that provides us the support we need to be able to go all out in producing a sick event. It seemed like a bit of a void NOT having a tattoo convention in an awesome city with so much talent like Victoria, and we are excited to have the

opportunity to step up and make it a world class event!

AU: When and where with it all be taking place?

JP: It's all going down September 29 to October 1 at the Victoria Conference Centre. We could not be happier with the dates, as the weather is still great here at that time, everybody is back from summer vacations, and we are not in conflict with any other major annual local events.

AU: What will make this event unique?

JP: I would say the venue is definitely a major difference from most events. The Victoria Conference Centre is a very high end and beautiful facility, it offers more interest and a different feeling layout than the typical exhibition hall type venue. The location can't be beat either, some past events were held more in the suburbs, but we think it's pretty awesome that ours is right smack in downtown Victoria surrounded by great restaurants, bars, shops and a ton of foot traffic. We have a lot of artists and attendees coming from out of town, and we think it's important to give them the real Victoria experience. We are also using native carvings as our tattoo contest trophies, which people have really responded strongly to. We want to show respect to our local First Nations culture and incorporate their amazing art into the legacy of our event.

AU: How many artists will be attending?

JP: We will be hosting about 140 artists total. There is a great mix of very talented tattoo artists from the island, Canada and the rest of the world.

AU: For someone who has never attended a tattoo convention, how does it work for getting a tattoo at the convention?

JP: That's funny, as one of the questions we are asked the most is, "Can I get tattooed at the show?" The answer of course is HELL YES! Many of the artists will book up in advance, that is done directly through the artist. We list the attending

artists on our website and promote them on social media, providing contact info for this purpose. A good general idea is if you are looking to get a larger piece done, try to book in advance. If you aren't sure about committing or just want a fun little piece, come down, see who you get a good vibe with and let it happen!

AU: Any extra special guests appearing?

JP: We are really excited to welcoming Miss Bernadette Macias, who will be representing Inked Magazine and conducting an Inked Girl Model Contest which will draw some great attention to us in the tattoo industry globally. It's a great opportunity for the ladies that are trying to gain recognition as tattoo models, as the winner will get a feature in Inked Magazine as well as some awesome prizes. Bernadette is



one of the most recognized tattoo models in the world and is also a very familiar face through her work covering tattoo events around the world for Sullen TV's popular Youtube Channel. We will also be filming video footage throughout the event for one of Sullen TV's Convention Recap features, which will again help give us and our attending artists some great exposure from some of the most popular media outlets in the tattoo world!

AU: Any other sorts of entertainment planned for the weekend?

JP: We will have local DJs spinning some good tunes throughout the weekend, with a few performance acts sprinkled in. Details will be posted closer to the event dates. We are more concerned with making the actual event about tattoo art and culture rather than turning it into more of a concert. We are, however, working closely with local punk and hip hop promoters to make sure there will be some sick afterparties and shows going on in the nightlife, as there will be lots of rad people in town looking for something to do! We will cross promote these shows to make it a pretty bumpin' weekend in the city of Victoria!

AU: What is your grand vision for the future of the Van Isle Tattoo Expo?

JP: Right now it's all about paying attention to the details and having this first one run as a tight ship. We want all the attending artists to be happy and comfortable at the show, and busy making sweet tattoos all weekend! There are a lot of moving parts to these events and we are focused on this year's show being the foundation of an annual production that is looked forward to each year by our local attending public, as well artists and brands throughout the tattoo world. We have so many super talented artists on the island and we want to give them an opportunity to showcase their work alongside some of the best of Canada and the rest of the world.

We have found the overwhelming interest from out of town artists to be a real eye opener, and

in that respect we want to build it into a bit of a destination event that attracts top artists from all around the world to come work the show, and also hang out for a bit to bask in all of our island glory! We are helping our visitors organize cool activities in the days surrounding the show, from fishing and whale watching tours, to racing exotic cars with our friends at Island Exotics Racing Experience.

AU: What can you tell people about West Coast Ink, the tattoo and culture magazine you publish?

JP: We have developed a clothing line that we are getting a huge response to, so that has been our focus as of late. It's really exciting, people really love our stuff and the interaction we get from it is really rewarding. We are working on revamping our print model at the moment but we still have a lot of great content on our website. You can bet that *West Coast Ink* will be a presence at the Van Isle Tattoo Expo.

AU: What else do you want people to know about the Van Isle Tattoo Expo?

JP: The biggest thing is our commitment to putting on a quality show and the sense of pride that will come with a job well done. We are bringing some big time artists and brands to our neck of the woods that will give it a bit more of an

international vibe than a lot of Canadian shows; our aim is to put this show on the map in the global sense and bring a real spotlight to Victoria in the tattoo industry for years to come. In putting on these events, you are never going to please everybody and might piss some people off, but at the end of the day the positivity, support and excitement that we have got from people who identify with what we are doing helps us stay on the right track!

AU: Where can one find more info about event? Website?

JP: Our website www.vanisleattooexpo.ca is a great source of info, as well as Facebook and Instagram. We are easy to connect with through social media and email, and love to engage with anyone who wants to find out more about the show.

Vancouver Island Metal Festival

By Ryan Swinney

After many years, Vancouver Island finally has its very own heavy metal festival. The aptly named Vancouver Island Metal Festival takes place August 25th, 26th, and 27th at various venues throughout the city of Victoria. This year's lineup spans a wide variety of genres, and includes bands such as Weedeater, Diamond Head, Frosttide, Aggression, and many more. "The metal scene in Victoria has been asking for this for a long, long time," says Casey Lazar, founder of the festival. "The scene here has progressively been getting stronger and stronger over the last several years. A festival just seems like the next step." Vancouver Island Metal Festival's lineup reflects this; of the 22 bands on the bill, 17 of them are based on, or have members based on Vancouver Island. "Part of the idea behind this festival is that it's a celebration of our community on the island. While Vancouver and the mainland do have some killer bands, we have our own stuff to be proud of, and that's what this festival is all about."

"Really, the only way for a band to cross between Vancouver Island and the mainland is with BC Ferries. That means that it'll cost a band a minimum of \$200 just to get over to the mainland and back. As

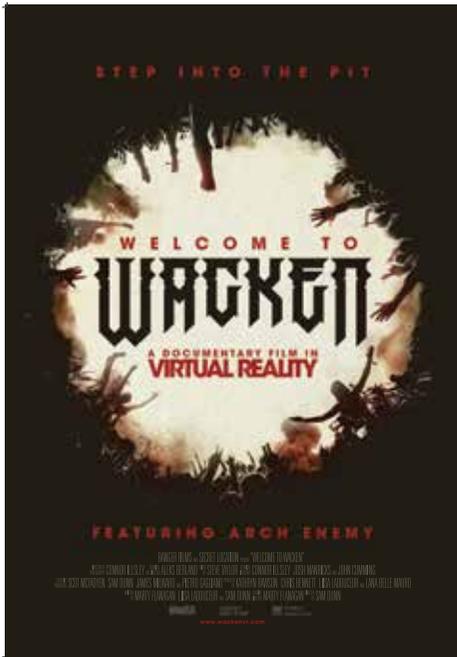
a result, it's a lot harder for Vancouver Island bands to play the mainland, and a lot harder for mainland bands to play Vancouver Island. This means that we're a bit isolated and we wind up with bands that are pretty popular on the island that are almost unheard of on the mainland." While some island bands such as Torrefy, Scimitar, and Atrous Leviathan have made a name for themselves across western Canada, most of the bands on the bill are newer up-and-coming. "This decision was intentional. The festival is a celebration of our scene, by and for ourselves."

The festival is divided up into five shows: Friday night, Saturday daytime, Saturday night, Sunday daytime, and Sunday night. Friday night is taking place at Sugar Nightclub and is being headlined by the legendary stoner doom band Weedeater who are on tour with Iowa's Telekinetic Yeti. Supporting them are Victoria's Buzzard and Domesticated, as well as Chunksaurus from up island. Saturday kicks off with a very special, all-ages show happening at Logan's Pub sponsored



by CFUV 101.9. The show features Canadian 80s thrash legends Aggression, as well as Courtney's up-and-comers Liberatia. Joining them are Fractured Anatomy from Victoria, as well as Malevolents from Nanaimo. Later on in the day on Saturday, the legendary NWOBHM band Diamond Head will be performing at the V-Lounge with Spell and Roadrash from Vancouver, as well as Electric Druids and Rollie Fingers from Victoria. Sunday plays host to the fest's most brutal segment – Ogroem, Cryptic Enslavment, Evilosity, and Aetherion at the Copper Owl. The festival closes with Frosttide from Finland, Valfreya from Quebec, Battlesworn from Nanaimo, and the newest band on the bill, Winters Reach, who incorporate flute, fiddle, and even hurdy gurdy into their performances.

Tickets are available at Cavity Curiosity Shop, Supreme Echo, and Lyle's Place in Victoria, as well as online at <https://squareup.com/store/heavy-metal-uvic> www.vanisleattooexpo.ca



Welcome To Wacken

Virtual Reality Documentary
Interview with Sam Dunn

Absolute Underground: Are your kids into heavy metal yet?

Sam Dunn: I took my son, to his first Iron Maiden show two weeks ago, he's five. Maiden and Metallica were in Toronto the same weekend, I think I'm just recovering now. He really loved it, he had a blast. He was drawing before we went, he wanted to draw Eddie, so he did his own little rendition of three different Iron Maiden covers, and he got to meet Rod Smallwood and some of the other guys in the band beforehand, so Rory

gave his drawings to Rod and Rod loved them so much he said he's going to start a new column in the fan online magazine of kids' Iron Maiden drawings, so that's pretty awesome.

AU: There's going to be a Vancouver Island Metal Festival Aug 25th-27th.

SD: Great to hear. Victoria is a different place than when I lived here, 20 years ago. It's changed so much, for the better I think. Certainly in terms of music, there's so much more going on now.

AU: Tell us about Welcome to Wacken, the VR documentary.

SD: It's our first foray into working in virtual reality, we've partnered with a company called Secret Location. When we started to think about it, what's the best thing to do for metal in VR, we automatically thought of Wacken, because it's such a sensory experience. In VR, we thought it would be the closest thing to feeling like your feet are actually on the ground at the festival. We wanted to bring people to Wacken by collecting a few fans from around the world and telling the story of what it's like to be at Wacken through their eyes. So there are four different fans and it's broken into chapters, so it's really like a number of four or five-minute documentaries. They're all part of one piece but they all kind of stand alone in their own right.

AU: So how do people watch it?

SD: It's available for purchase, you can download an app, it's available on Gear VR, it'll be available through other platforms soon, you'll be able to get it on Google Cardboard eventually. But at the moment, you download an app, you load it onto your phone, and if you have the headset,

you just snap it in and let it go. We're really still at the infancy of VR technology, but who knows where it's going to go? There are a lot of possibilities. But we think we've created something pretty cool, the reaction has been pretty awesome.

AU: So it culminates with an Arch Enemy concert?

SD: Yeah. So the last chapter, the last fan's story, culminates with a song from Arch Enemy, and there are four cameras, two are mounted on the stage, and one is in the photo pit and one is out in the crowd, and it's sort of like, the climax of the experience. The sentiment of the experience is that you're standing in the crowd or on the stage with the band... so it definitely has that feeling of being physically present on stage, you feel like you can reach out and touch Michael Amott, 'cause you're standing right there.

AU: What are some other upcoming projects for Banger Films?

SD: We're really busy, doing both metal and non-metal stuff. On the metal side, we've still got Banger TV going, with our show Lock Horns and Overkill Reviews show, we're going to be wrapping up for a new season in September. Our bigger vision for metal right now is developing our very own heavy metal streaming service, because we really feel that metal fans right now are pretty underserved, there's basically YouTube and that's it. And the problem with that is that the bands don't make any money, the record



labels don't make any money, it really is not a sustainable model for visual content for metal. So we're trying to create something totally new. And then beyond metal, we've got 12 more episodes of *Hip-Hop Evolution* that we're working on, that did really well for Netflix, so we're pretty stoked.



We're doing a documentary series for CBC for the first time, I've unlocked their archive of music content, which goes back to the 1950s, so we're going to be doing a number of documentaries based on the incredible footage and interviews they have in their library. And we're also still plugging away on our ZZ Top feature documentary.

AU: What are the secrets of making a good documentary?

SD: Building a good team, is absolutely essential. There is a reason why the credits take five minutes to roll at the end of films, there are so many pieces to the puzzle. Finding stories that have some human emotion to them, and can transcend just a fan base or a particular niche audience. If you



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then he died at the start of May, but I think that the history of the Whiskey and the Rainbow would definitely be interesting.

can develop stories in a way that have a broader emotional impact, it just makes for better film and TV. I don't know if those are secrets, but it's certainly what we've learned.

AU: Are there any new metal bands that you really like?

SD: I wave the flag for Ancients,

that's a great idea, in fact we've been talking for a while about how there needs to be a great documentary series about important music venues, whether they're still standing or not. Like, kind of what Dave Grohl with *Sonic Highways* did

SD: I think



not just because they're a west coast band, but I actually think they're one of Canada's best metal bands. I like the new Tombs record quite a bit. I think the new Decapitated record, *Anticult*, is so, so strong in my mind.

AU: Is there still anyone on your bucket list that you really want to interview?

SD: You know, it's funny, I've never met or interviewed James Hetfield. I know Lars well and I know Rob well, I've spent time with Kirk, I was even hanging out with them in Toronto when Metallica was there a few weeks ago, but still to this day, I've never had the opportunity to meet James. So obviously, that would be a huge moment for me. And actually, Ozzy too, same situation, frontman I haven't met. I've spent time with Tony and Geezer and Bill Ward, but never Ozzy. So even though I've been doing this for 15 years, there are still some boxes to check off.

AU: Have you ever gone on the 70 000 Tons of Metal Cruise?

SD: You know I haven't, but yeah we've actually been thinking about going in February I think definitely it would make for some fun documentary. Have you been before?

AU: Yeah, I've gone twice, once on the Barge to Hell to the Bahamas and then to Jamaica another time. It's wicked, it would make an amazing VR experience, especially the pool deck stage and hot tub mosh pits. And the excursions are hilarious, one of the choices I went on, it was called "Swimming with dolphins and Cannibal Corpse."

SD: Haha, great!

AU: Okay I'm going to pitch you my documentary ideas, you ready?

SD: Ready!

AU: So my buddy Clark's friend Mario recently died, he was the owner of the Whiskey a Go Go and the Rainbow Room, and we were supposed to go down in April to film some stuff with him, and we didn't go, and

for music studios. I feel there's an opportunity to do something for music venues, just because as you know, these rooms are so vital to local scenes, vital to bands, they're really central to



so much of music history. So yeah, I'm with you there, I think the Whiskey and The Rainbow would be on the list. I'm sure I met Mario, I've spent probably more time in The Rainbow than I should have... we've done interviews in the Rainbow Room with Lemmy, Frankie Banali and other people. It's a place of legend.

AU: The history of corpse paint.

SD: Yeah! That's interesting. I agree that could be cool. Do you make it broader than that, I wonder?

AU: You go to like, Kabuki, interview Arthur Brown, Screaming Lord Sutch, all the early people... you could talk to Alice Cooper, King Diamond, Gene Simmons.

SD: Yeah for sure! And any excuse to go back to Norway, I'm up for.

AU: A documentary on Victoria or Vancouver Island metal.

SD: Yeah! Pretty niche tho.

AU: A Ross Bay Metal Documentary.

SD: That'd be fun. I haven't seen Jason Flower in a while but I'm wondering if he was going to do a book following up on his earlier punk book, picking it up in the mid-80s, because that's really where metal gets started on the West Coast.

AU: You can just pop by his record store, it's called

Supreme Echo.

SD: Yeah, I've got history with that guy. We were in our first metal band together, back in the late 80s. We had a band called Dementia. I was 14, it was with Kelly Nordstrum and Jason Flower, and we did three or four songs, and it's really, really bad. But charming nonetheless, full of ambition.

AU: Well it got you somewhere! Final words for Canadian metal fans and fans of Banger Films!

SD: I think it's important that people continue to support music. I think that there is so much great music out there, but it's so hard for bands to survive right now, it just does not seem fair. I tell people, if Mastodon came out with their first record in 1970, they'd probably be one of the all time great rock bands. There is so much talent out there, the state of the music industry is not a reflection of the talent that exists, it's a reflection of all the other changes that have gone on, and people just need to understand that they need to go to shows and buy T-shirts and spend money on music. It's not an original rant but dammit, I'm sticking to it.

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got the first one ever.

Frankie: That is fantastic.

AU: I remember I did a Quiet Riot air band to "Bang Your Head" in elementary school. My dad made this wicked wooden guitar for me.

Frankie: That's classic, man. At the end of the day that's what it's all

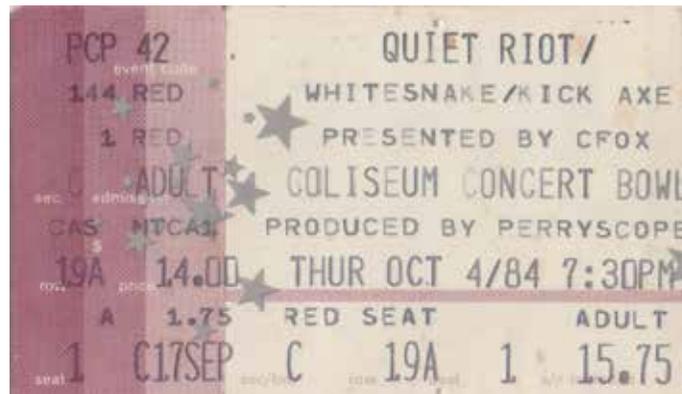
Vancouver knew who they were. Everyone was like, "We want the fuckin' Cult!"

Frankie: Everybody starts there!

AU: Let's get this started. Who are we talking to?

Frankie: This is Frankie Banali from Quiet Riot.

AU: No way, dude! I'm so stoked! Were you still touring around with Kevin DuBrow at the end there?



Quiet Riot

Road Rage

Interview with drummer Frankie Banali
By Ira "Bang Your Head" Hunter

Absolute Underground: My first concert experience ever was in 1984. Quiet Riot, Kick Axe, and White Snake at the Coliseum in Vancouver. My Dad took me, I was nine years old.

Frankie Banali: That is awesome, that was on the *Condition Critical* tour.

AU: I remember I bought the *Condition Critical* tape that day and got the Quiet Riot bandana that night at the show.

Frankie: That's a great memory, thanks for sharing that!

AU: I still have the ticket stub.

Frankie: Wow! I don't even have those ticket stubs.

AU: I still collect my ticket stubs because I've



about. I love hearing stories like that. You had a good dad.

AU: Yeah, the next one he took me to was *The Cult Electric Tour* and *Guns N Roses* touring *Appetite for Destruction* opened and nobody in

Frankie: Yeah, with Kevin our touring cycle ended in November of 2007, actually in San Jose, California. That was the last show we did, and then Kevin passed away shortly after that. It'll be ten years this November since Kevin has been gone.

AU: And so you have decided to keep the band going, resurrected. How do you find someone to replace such a man as Kevin DuBrow?

Frankie: You know, you don't replace a singer like Kevin because Kevin was very unique, he was one of a kind and just unbelievably talented. He had an amazing voice, and was an amazing stage performer. It took three years after he passed away before I was at a place in my life where I wanted to continue Quiet Riot and after a number of false starts, we get to the point now where I have James

Durban singing in the band, along with Chuck Wright on bass who has been a part of the Quiet Riot family for decades on and off, and Alex Grossi who has been in the band for ten years, but up until recently was considered the "new guy", and

James kind of completes the picture for us. James has the same energy that Kevin had, and he has the vocal capabilities to sing the old Quiet Riot material in the spirit that it's meant to be sung but at the same time bringing something new to the table.

AU: Give us a brief band history.

Frankie: The first version of Quiet Riot with the late great Randy Rhoads, and of course Kevin, and my dear friend Rudy Sarzo who was playing bass at the time, they released two records in Japan only but they were never released in the United States and the band never achieved the recognition or fame that they should have, which is why Randy left Quiet Riot to play with Ozzy. He became famous for playing with Ozzy, and not for being in Quiet Riot - sadly we lost him tragically in 1982. I started working with Kevin in 1980, and in 1982 we recorded the *Metal Health* record and then subsequently we recorded *Condition Critical*, *QR III*, and the band just went on continuing to record records throughout the history. There have been so many different members that have come in and out of the band. I have the unique distinction to be the only member that has played on every single record from *Metal Health* through the latest release *Road Rage* so I'm very proud of that fact.

AU: I went to Japan and looked in every record store trying to find those early Quiet Riot records but they were impossible to find.

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Frankie: I have one copy of each in my vinyl collection.

AU: Wow! Were there any songs that continued onto the *Metal Health* album?

Frankie: Yeah, I used to go see the first version of Quiet Riot play at a club called the Starwood all the time. I liked the band and most of the audience was female so that was the band to go see. I was always really impressed with the song that they played called "Slick Black Cadillac" which

second record.

AU: Tell us about your new record *Road Rage*.

Frankie: *Rage* came out on August 4th. I am really proud of this record, this is the first official Quiet Riot record released in 11 years. We recently did a video for the opening track which is called "Can't Get Enough," which is the first video we've done in 29 years. I think it's a great record. There's some songs on the *Road Rage* record that I think long time Quiet Riot fans will be able to make a

connection to the sound and the style of the Quiet Riot from the past, but at the same time there's a lot of songs that are different from what you would expect from Quiet Riot which is something we've always done, on every single Quiet Riot record there's always been songs that right off the first listening you wouldn't expect Quiet Riot to do and it's all about

moving forward.

AU: Where did the concept of the metal mask come from, did your mascot have a name?

Frankie: We never named it anything, to us it was always the metal mask. The idea behind it was supposed to be a fan that was so crazy he kept banging his head so they made this metal mask and put it on him for his own protection which is why you see him on the cover with the red leather straight jacket. While we were recording the *Metal Health* album, Rudy said maybe we should do something like the classic story of the *Man in the Iron Mask*, so it evolved from that and the red leather straight jacket was actually my leather jacket that I had bought in Scotland a couple of years before that and we just put it on

the character backwards to make it look like a straight jacket. It was just a combination of ideas to make this guy look like a diehard Quiet Riot headbanger.

AU: There is nothing more metal than that.

Frankie: I completely and totally agree. You see that and you know what it's all about.

AU: Are you guys planning to tour?

Frankie: Quiet Riot is a touring working band, we've actually been on tour since January of this year we just took a break right now so that we could do press for *Road Rage*. We start right back up again in Texas on August 11th, and we are booked already into 2018.

AU: Do you think you'll be visiting Canada?

Frankie: I hope so. We have achieved gold and multi-platinum status in Canada so we are really grateful to our Canadian fans, and any opportunity we get to travel north to bang your head, I'm definitely going to be there to do it and bring *Road Rage* while we're at it.

AU: Did MTV and Much Music have a lot to do with the timing of your success?

Frankie: No question about it that back in the day MTV and Much Music were very instrumental in the early 80s, before that you only knew what a band looked like from an album cover or a picture

in a magazine, but as soon as you started doing videos you were able to see what the band looked like, how the members moved, how they played their instruments.

AU: Playing any festivals in Europe?

Frankie: We recently did three festivals in Europe. I would really like to concentrate a little more on the European market since we didn't get to do it in the past. I think this is the time to do it.

AU: *Road Rage*, the cover seems a lot like *Road Warrior* or *Maximum Overdrive*.

Frankie: The idea was to have an album cover that was representative of the band with mask on the front as a shield and it is very much inspired by *Road Warrior*. It's just a statement of, "This is what we are," we are on the road all the time and we're on the road to have a good time and have a party.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

Frankie: I love Canadian fans because their passion for rock music and metal has never changed. They are diehard fans who appreciate the music. I hope they will listen to *Road Rage* and I hope they enjoy it.

AU: Was Quiet Riot a pretty rowdy party band back in the day?

Frankie: We had a lot of fun, and got into a lot of trouble.

There was certainly a lot of everything, nothing exceeds like excess and there was a lot of excess.

quietriot.band



to tour with them in the future?

Sean: Wow! That seems like it was 20 years ago! It was a huge show, super fun. We've been lucky enough to play a few shows with them, in the US and Canada. No tour plans with them at the moment, but we'd love to!

AU: What do you love about your relationship with Stomp! Records, as you've been signed to them since 2008, when Run for your Life was released. Why did you make the switch from Stereo Dynamite?

Sean: First off, I'd like to say that we wouldn't be anywhere without Stereo Dynamite. When we started this band, I didn't want to tour anymore, and just wanted to play the odd show here and there on weekends. The owner Adam, pushed, and convinced us to be a "real" band, and gave us the means to put out an album, and do some tours. When we were ready to do our second

album, he knew that Stomp! was interested and decided to let us sign with them, which was very cool of him. We were all fans of what Stomp! was doing and it was a perfect fit. Great people there, and a great group of bands on the label. A real family-type vibe.

AU: Your last album, Life After Death, was released in 2013. Any new albums in the works?

Kenda: We have finished recording our new album, *Death At My Door*, and it's being released in mid September! We are pretty excited about it. It's been a long time comin'.

AU: Kenda, how did you take The Creepshow and make it your own? You were quoted as saying: "...I don't want to fill anybody's shoes. I kind of want to put on my own shoes." (January 28, 2014, Orlando Weekly)

Kenda: I have my own voice and my own style. I never wanted to change the band. I've always loved The Creepshow, even before I was in it. When I said that, I meant that I wasn't trying to replace anyone. I didn't want to fill anyone else's shoes. Jenn, Sarah and myself are three different people, with our very own pair of shoes. No need to fill anything. They brought their talents to the table and that's what I wanted. I made it my own with the bond I share with the guys on and off stage.

AU: Do you think Canada has a healthy rockabilly/psychobilly scene?

Kenda: The rockabilly/psychobilly scene isn't as strong as it is in Europe, I find. Regardless, we have a hell of a time playing here.

Sean: It's smaller here in Canada for sure, but it will never die... we tend to put a lot of different genres of bands on our shows, like ska, punk, hardcore, so we get a very mixed crowd.

AU: Who is your favourite female-fronted punk band (Canadian or otherwise)?

Kenda: The Distillers. Brody Dalle has such a bad ass style. I love her voice and stage presence

AU: What is currently in heavy rotation on your turntable right now?

Kenda: Nowherebound (it's currently what I am listening to), The Bronx, Seasick Steve, Rolling Stones.

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

PHOTO SOURCE: Union Label Group

The Creepshow

Interview by Esther Wurley

Absolute Underground: How does it feel to be the first Canadian band to be signed to Hellcat?

Sean: I can't lie, it was pretty fucking cool to see the Hellcat logo on the back of our albums. As a young punk kid, I had always dreamed of being

on Hellcat Records one day. And to be the first Canadian band to do so, that was an honour.

The guys from Stomp! Records in Canada really helped make that happen. Hellcat licensed our second and third albums, and then we moved on to Sailor's Grave Records for our US releases. Those guys rule hard!

AU: What's your most notable memory from playing Tiger Army's October Flame show in California back in 2011? Are there any plans

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Venom Inc

Avé Satanus

Interview with bassist and vocalist Tony "Demolition Man" Dollan
By Ira "Son of Satan" Hunter

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

DM: This is the Demolition Man, I'm from Venom Inc. I guess I'm most infamous for playing bass and doing vocals for Venom Inc and M:PIRE of EVIL with Mantas. Also I was in Venom, and my band Atomkraft, which was going back a way to 1978.

AU: How did you get the name Demolition Man?

DM: It's an exciting story. We were doing a show in 1979 and back then, when bands played, everybody did a solo, a bass solo, drum solo and guitar solo. So what happened was even when we were just playing pubs, we would do solos because that was our Madison Square Garden moment. So we were doing a show and it was my turn to do a solo and there was some tables set out and a couple of guys that I'd noticed had just been chatting through the whole set. So I thought, "I'm going to take it to those two motherfuckers," so I run across the stage and I jumped onto this table, but what I forgot was that my lead wasn't that long, and my roadie had wrapped it around my bass stack head, so when I jumped on the table, it was just a few inches too far and the whole stack fell over, and something loud blew up and there were sparks and flames and while everybody was trying to put the fire out, my guitarist went to the microphone and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Demolition Man!" And that was it!

I'm a bit heavy-handed, all my basses I play are really heavy duty so I kick the living shit out of them, I've had some roadies in the past that cried after shows. I tend to break stuff, people, glasses, things, that's just what I do.

AU: Last time you were supposed to play in Vancouver, we were on the ferry going over for the meet and greet at Evergreen Cannabis Society, but then as we found out you guys were stuck in the snow.

DM: Yeah it was a really bizarre thing, we were heading from Salt Lake City and there was snow coming down and we got up to the pass and a truck driver pulled and said, "You guys don't have snow chains on, you'd better go back and put snow chains on because there's a real bad storm." So the tour manager was like, "I don't know how to put snow chains on. It's too much of a risk." So I tried to get him to take us to the airport so so at least the three of us could fly up there and play, but the agent just said, "No we're not going to play the show. We'll reschedule it." And I was like, "Fuck!" And then the second time, the reason we went out so soon after to do the second tour was because all we really wanted was to do Vancouver and all the other dates we just put in because they were nearby there. And then the agent didn't book Vancouver! We didn't cross the border, we played in Washington, so we were so pissed off. So when they started talking about this tour for September, I said, "I don't give a shit where else we go, but we're going to go to Vancouver. Those Canucks are gonna hate the sight of us"... so thankfully we'll be there this time.

AU: What brought about the reformation of Venom as Venom Inc?

DM: Well there's a Venom with Cronos that's kind of a solo thing, but he uses the name, it's a progressive thing from when Abadon, him and Mantas reformed, and then they left and he continued in a straight line. But for us, I played a show in the North of England with my other band, Atomkraft and Mantas lived in the North of England so I invited him onstage to join me for a couple of Venom songs. Then a week later, there's a festival in Germany called Keep It True, he called me and said, "The show where you got Mantas onstage,

was really exciting. What if Abadon joined you onstage and you guys played some Venom classics?" So I called Mantas and explained, "This is just about playing and having some fun" So eventually we agreed on five Venom songs, classics, to play as a surprise, which is what we did, we played our M:PIRE of EVIL show, the lights went out, we changed drummers, Abadon came on and people went nuts. But what happened afterwards was massive, we weren't expecting it, people wanted us to play everywhere in the world. I was trying to let people know that we weren't actually a band, we just did it for a one-off. But there was so much interest, so we said okay and went out to play and the fans have driven us around the world twice in two years and we didn't originally even consider making an album, so the fact that we've now been signed to Nuclear Blast is incredible. The album is titled *Ave*, which is Latin for a hail or salute. It's our way of saying thank you to everybody.

AU: What else can you tell us about the new album?

DM: The cover is powerful but in a passive aggressive way. It's Lucifer with his pan pipes, barefooted, quiet, this monolithic figure, but all all-powerful, he's walking towards you with his serpents in his bag, on a barren landscape with a foreboding sky, you can see Adam and Eve eating from the Tree of Knowledge, you can see David's temple in the background, the sheep representing man, because Lucifer was cast out from Heaven and his role was to guide man and to bring him knowledge, and because he questioned "The God", he was cast down to walk on Earth for eternity, The sheep, one has it's eye torn open, it's the wolf inside. That's the whole symbolism of the album cover, is it Armageddon? There's no bombs going off, there's no napalmed bodies, there's no cracks in the earth with fire spewing forth and demons rising up. It could be the beginning of mankind, or the end of mankind.

AU: What are some of the songs?

DM: We have songs like "Forged in Hell," or "Metal We Bleed," which are a bit of Hails to metal. "Black N Roll" is a kind of homage to all the great metal bands of the past that have influenced us. Of course there's a taste of Lemmy in there, because he was my hero and that comes out. "Preacher Man," "I Kneel to No God," "Dein Fleisch," and "Time To Die," they're all dealing with human nature, in a way. "Blood Stained," explores what would happen in a millennium, when someone finds what used to be a blue planet floating in space, maybe it's a red planet now, and when they get in there and they pulled up the soil, they realize it's not red dust but actually blood-soaked earth, that's the only trace we've left on the planet. "Ave Satanus," the album track, people might think it's about Satanism and the dark arts, but if you listen to the lyrics, it's about that Lucifer is a light-bringer of knowledge, that's Satanus, that's what we celebrate, it's why we thirst for knowledge, and Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge. God didn't want them to have knowledge and yet Lucifer gave it to them. The idea of Hail Satanus is hail the knowledge, hail the light-bringer!

AU: It's kind of changed now that you can buy a Slayer shirt at Hot Topic.

DM: Exactly! Someone will ask me, "Do you feel that the album was trying to shock with the theme of Satanism?" And I'll say,

"No, you can't shock anybody these days" Every band and their uncle has a pentagram. So I guess the theme of ours is more descriptive, it's more about the inner turmoil, the inner darkness.

AU: Can you tell us about some of the acting you've done?

DM: When I stopped doing music I was a technician and an automation engineer in theatre. I ended up working for Queen and for Rammstein on their moving sets. Then I had an opportunity to do some acting with the Royal Shakespeare company. That led to some television. I did *Master and Commander* with Russell Crowe and Paul Bettany, I did *Judge Dredd* with Stallone, I also did a movie for HBO called *Dirty War*.

AU: Any other projects you are involved in?

DM: I'm involved with a documentary on music culture. It's focused in Italy because it's famous for it's sculpture and its paintings, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, so I wanted to deal with tattooing, how bodies are the new frescos, what was done on the roof of the Sistine Chapel, and now great Italian artists are doing it on peoples' skin. So it's just trying to deal with those misconceptions. Tattooing and body piercing is the new sculpture and art.

AU: On the Bloodstained Earth Tour, who is going to be touring with you?

DM: We've got Toxic Holocaust, Goatwhore, and The Convalescence, and I think each day we'll have a local band join us on the bill.

AU: Final words for Canadian metal fans.

DM: In the early 70s, my family emigrated to Canada and I have so much family in Canada, it's one of my favourite places to be. So I'm just so happy that we're going to get to play there finally, and I promise to God, I don't give a fuck if a volcano goes off, or if Vancouver cracks and starts slipping into the sea, I'll put my swimming trunks on, but I'm getting the band there, we will be there, because we have to be there. So I'm so looking forward to it, and I just want to thank everyone for their support and I hope you all come down and



have a great night with us.

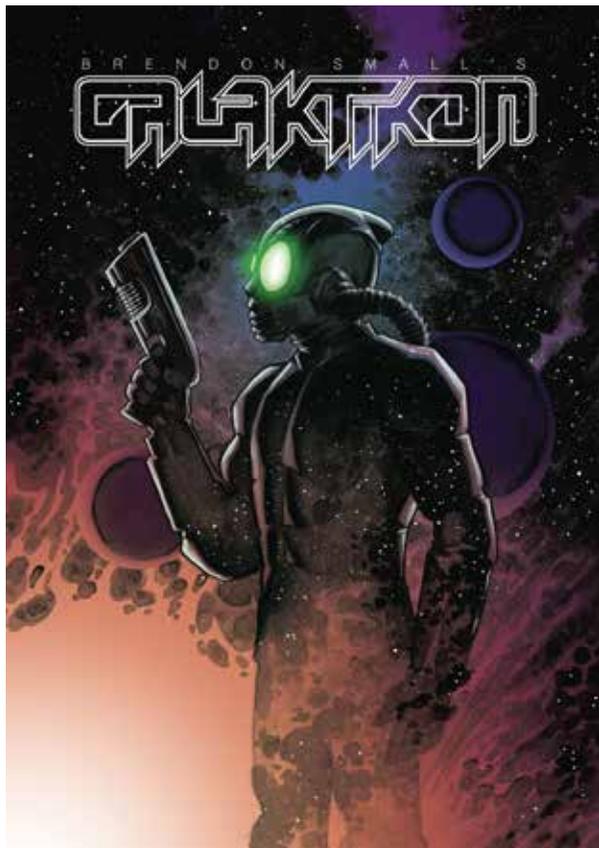
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Galaktikon

Interview with Brendon Small
 Transcribed by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Can you introduce yourself to our readers?

Brendon Small: I'm Brendon, you know me for two television shows and a pretend band. One show is Home Movies, the other is Metalocalypse, and the band is Dethklok, and now I'm doing Galaktikon.

AU: What was the origin of Galaktikon?

B: Originally, I was about to record *Dethalbum*

II, like eight years ago, and I was about three quarters through *Dethalbum II*, and the contract, as it turns out, wasn't finished, and I already rented out a recording studio and had tapped some people like Gene Hoglan and Bryan Beller to work with me, and the day came, and everyone said, "We can't record this record, the contract's not finished." So I said, "Since I've got these people available, and since I've got the space available, I'm gonna record something so I can keep these guys busy and pay them," and I had all these songs that I just didn't know what to do with because I didn't think they were Dethklok songs, so I went and I started recording what would eventually end up being Galaktikon 1. It's stuff I can't do with Dethklok, and this is fun for me, and it's a different style of music.

AU: So is it like a space opera?

B: I decided to make up a genre, 'cuz I didn't think this fit into anything perfectly, so I figured I'd invent a genre, and that genre was a high stakes intergalactic extreme rock album, and the second one, Galaktikon II, is a little bit heavy, a little bit darker, so it's more of like a, more metal, than I think the first one.

little bit darker, so it's more of like a, more metal, than I think the first one.

AU: Who's the character you've developed, and you've also got a comic book coming out?

B: The comic book is in reference to the first album that came out. I got a message from Eric Powell, who's known for a comic called *The Goon* from Dark Horse comics, who said, "I've got my own publishing company, do you think Galaktikon is a comic?" and I said, "I think I can make the first album into a comic book," because it's more of a comedy than the second album. So the first record is basically an intergalactic divorce story, and it's comedic in nature. So it's fun

to explore the notion of an invented super hero known as Triton. A guy who is imperfect, kind of an intergalactic Superman, who is basically going through a public, messy divorce with his own version of Lois Lane, he is getting his ass kicked every step of the way, and then she starts dating Lex Luthor, or our version of all that stuff. So that was the emphasis behind the story, and it's taken on its own life. We just created our own world with space lawyers and space deliberation.

AU: Do you think it'll end up being a cartoon as well?

B: All I wanna do is tell the story the way I want to tell it, and just let it exist as a comic book, and see who takes interest, you know? This is the kinda thing would also be kind of interesting as a live-action thing too. It's really nice to be able to just work in comic book form first to just kind of see it all in the storyboards and you get to fill in a lot of the gaps with your own personality. That's what I love about comic books, you get to kind of fill in the silences with your own imagination.

AU: Is it something you'll be going out to tour Galaktikon?

B: That's something we were talking about. The previous tour of Metalocalypse and Dethklok stuff, I got to put on a really cool show, and if I can find the resources to beat that show then I'll be very interested in doing it live and putting a show together that people haven't seen. I'm only interested in touring with this if I can make this the coolest show I can possibly make.

AU: Did Metalocalypse come to an end, or is there a future for the series?

B: No, it's completely done, it's unceremoniously finished, and the fans were kind of left hanging, which is kind of what got me started on doing Galaktikon II, which was to make sure that the fans, who stuck with me for all those years, this is kind of a thank you to them. Y'know, it's funny, I was nearly done with the show anyway, I always



knew I was gonna end the show during a big rock opera that we were very happy with, and I was gonna end it there, but the network said DON'T, and then, so we left the story open-ended, and then they said they weren't gonna do anymore. And the fans went crazy, and signed petitions, and hundreds of thousands of people tried to bring the show back and it didn't work out. But it got a lot of people excited about the genre of heavy metal and we got a lot of fans that had no interest in heavy metal that became heavy metal fans, and that to me was the most exciting

part, that we converted a lot of people into being caring about a style of music that I don't think they would've come in contact with otherwise.

AU: Were you a writer that became a musician or were you a musician that became a writer?

B: I was always interested in Film and TV as a teenager, and I was just as interested in music. I was also really excited by comedy, almost around the same time I was discovering my first metal

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	27 SUNDAY CAROLYN MARK'S HOOTENANNY FREE // 4PM - 8PM SUNDAY SWING FREE // 8:30PM	28 MONDAY MONDAY MADNESS MONDAY MADNESS MONDAY MADNESS MONDAY MADNESS MONDAY MADNESS MONDAY MADNESS	22 TUESDAY BLACK SHEEP COMEDY // 8PM GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE FREE // 9PM - 1AM	23 WEDNESDAY RETROWAVE WEDNESDAY LIVE DATING GAME FREE // 8PM - 1AM	11 THURSDAY J BLISSETTE (Lethbridge) PRINCE SHIMA BAD HOO 9PM // \$10	12 SATURDAY INTERZONE EIGHTIES DANCE ROLLER DERBY AFTERPARTY 9PM // \$5
			29 TUESDAY BLACK SHEEP COMEDY // 8PM GRAYSON WALKER'S KARAOKE FREE // 9PM - 1AM	30 WEDNESDAY RETROWAVE WEDNESDAY VIDEO GAME FIGHT NIGHT BIG SCREEN 80s WWF VIDEOS FREE // 8PM - 1AM	18 THURSDAY FUNK DANCE NIGHT 9PM	19 SATURDAY fifty fifty arts collective ROCK LOTTERY 9PM
			24 THURSDAY PUNK JAMS (Powell River) THE HEX HATE THE RICH RAZORVOICE SADO MANNEQUIN 9PM // \$10	25 FRIDAY SUMMER DANCE NIGHT 9PM	26 SATURDAY VANCOUVER ISLAND METAL FESTIVAL AGGRESSION LIBERATIA FRACTURED ANATOMY MALEVOLENTS 2PM - 7PM // \$15	
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band that would become “my band” that would help carve out my identity as a teenager. I was also discovering the comedy that I would identify with as well, so from Gary Shandling to Steve Martin to Saturday Night Live to Monty Python. I really cared, more than my friends did about comedy, I wanted to know how they made their stuff, just like I wanted to know how to play like Yngwie Malmsteen or Joe Satriani. I eventually found myself in the Berkeley College of Music, but then my brain would drag my body to comedy clubs. I just started realizing I want to be up onstage. I knew how to play guitar, and if I can conquer the guitar, then I can conquer comedy. I started taking writing for comedy classes and I would study scriptwriting, and sketch comedy writing, which would eventually put me onstage at a comedy club. Then I started doing stand-up, and that’s what got me into TV working with on Home Movies. The producers didn’t know I could play guitar or that I studied song writing, arranging, and composition. So it was a surprise to them that I could, I had this extra element that a lot of comedy writers didn’t have. So I definitely thought like my body split in half; one side of me is a comedian, the other side is a musician.

AU: Any stories from your signing at San Diego Comic-Con?

B: Woody Allen has a joke that goes, “I’m not afraid of dying, I just don’t wanna be here when it happens,” and I love that joke because it reminds me of Comic-Con. I know it’s gotta happen, but do I have to be there? If I’m gonna be around that many people that are fans – I’d rather be performing for them. Not just saying hi and taking selfies and all that shit.

AU: Was there any Galaktikon cosplay?

B: If you visit my Instagram @brendonsmall you’ll see that I’ve done something that’s kind of fun, that I haven’t gotten to do with Metalocalypse. Metalocalypse pretty much only existed in the cartoon world. But the cool thing about Galaktikon is that it’s been an exercise in taking art and making it tactile, so you’ll see that the back of the album cover is the character Triton’s helmet, and we built it. My brother works in

makeup effects, he’s a great sculptor, and we’re working on a live action video where we bring this whole world to life with real, live-action stuff, and I love it because in a lot of ways it’s easier and faster than animation.

AU: Is Eric Powell drawing the comic?

B: He’s drawing some covers but he and I kinda developed the world together. We kinda took a character from the first album cover and we started building him out. Then we added in the artist, a guy named Steve Mannion. I looked at a lot of artists and I zeroed in on his work because he had something that felt like a 70s sci-fi vibe around him, like *Heavy Metal* from the 70s. So he reminded me of Moebius meets R. Crumb.

We wanted to be a little rough around the edges because once you start cleaning up cool pencil work, it starts to lose its personality. So we’ll use Steve’s pencil drawings and we won’t ink them, we’ll just colour them. It’s a little dirty here and there, but I think it’s part of the charm of it, and it’s fun to have a filthy outer space.

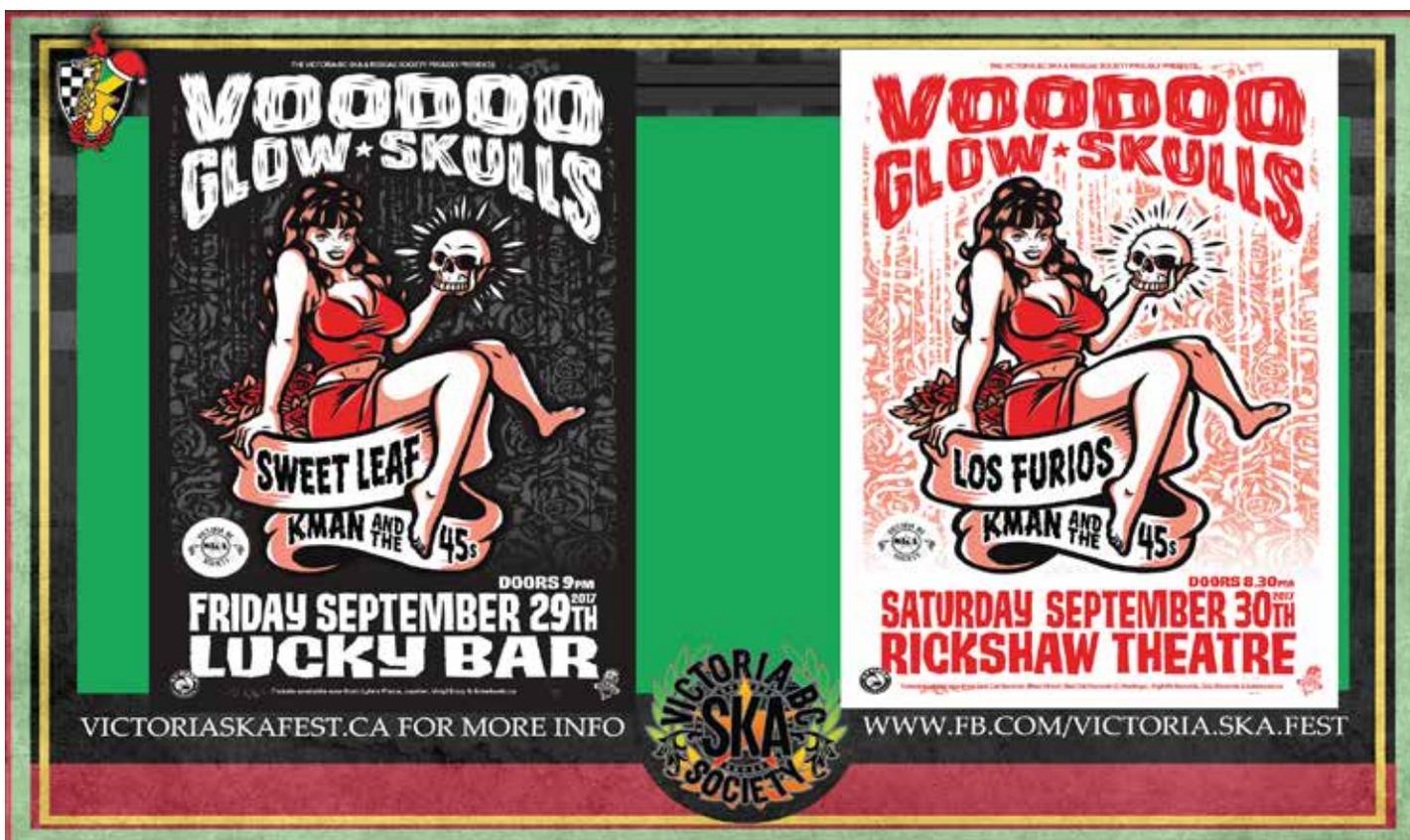
AU: Your drummer, Gene Hoglan, is one of the best drummers in the world .

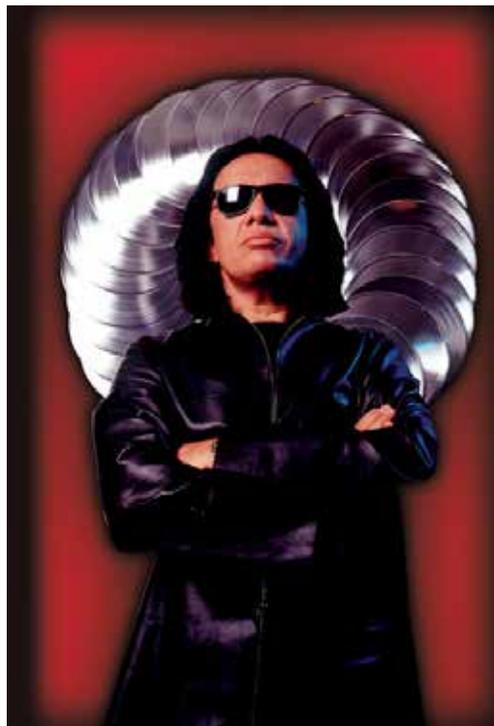
B: It’s quite true, and I have to say, I’ve listened to all of Gene’s stuff, I love the sound of his drums on this record more than any other record, like, we dialled him in in a way that we hadn’t before, and it’s really cool because he’s a big part of getting that sound up and running.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of Galaktikon?

B: For Galaktikon II, I’d say, if you’re a fan of any of the stuff I’ve done, I have a feeling you’re going to like this. It feels like it’s a little bit of new territory, but I think you’re going to hear some of the old territory in there too. And you can check out the whole world in comic books too, I think that it should all just be enjoyed together.

www.galaktikon.com





Gene Simmons

The Demon Speaks

Interview by Ira "Hotter Than Hell" Hunter

Absolute Underground: How are you?

Gene Simmons: I'm deliriously happy.

AU: That's great news. This a real honour.

GS: You are a powerful and attractive man.

AU: I learned from the best

GS: Alright, settle down. Don't get excited. You know, your heart.

AU: Who are we speaking to and what are you most famous for?

GS: You're speaking to Gene Simmons and I suppose I'm famous for the huge oral appendage probably more than anything else.

AU: Legendary. What can you tell us about Gene Simmons and the Gene Simmons Band?

GS: This happened quite naturally. I had never done any solo shows and never performed any of my solo material live. And I actually headlined a very high end business convention in Vancouver called YPO and appearing were Prime Minister Trudeau, and the CEO of Ford Motor Company, and the Samsung president. You know, very high end stuff and they asked me to jump up and do a few songs. And I said I'd do that but I don't think they can afford KISS. Let me get a few guys and maybe we can do some tunes. So I found some really cool guys in Nashville and without rehearsing or anything, we went through a set and people just dug it. They loved it. The video went out viral and all of a sudden, promoters from all over the world asked for the Gene Simmons Band to do sets. So when KISS is not playing, even

though we just came back from a European tour and we just played a soccer stadium in Chicago, you know, we're busy, but when KISS is not doing shows, I'm having a great time with the Gene Simmons Band and I get a chance to do songs KISS would never play live and never has. You can dig real deep and even use some solo stuff and we can even dig in and do "Boom, Boom, Boom" by John Lee Hooker and all kinds of other cool stuff.

AU: What are some of the deep cuts of the KISS songs that you do?

GS: "Wall of Sound." Then off my solo record, "Radioactive," "Sweet and Dirty Love," on the KISS side, "Got Love For Sale," that I originally recorded with the Van Halen brothers and all kinds of weird stuff KISS has never done.

AU: Are you excited to be a guest and to perform at the Edmonton Comics & Entertainment Expo?

GS: For sure, for two reasons. Edmonton is actually the very first city KISS ever played at the beginning of our entire touring career. We actually took the place of a band called the Michael Quatro Band. I guess they got sick and we had four Canadian dates even before the first record was released, before the first tour, before anything. The very first show we did on tour, Edmonton at the University or something. So it's a place that means something special for me and the other thing is: I'm a comic book geek and KISS has had a long, long and proud relationship going back four decades when we put out the KISS comics through Marvel. And



when those came out, they became the biggest comics of all time, up until that time.

AU: You had your blood mixed in the red ink, correct?

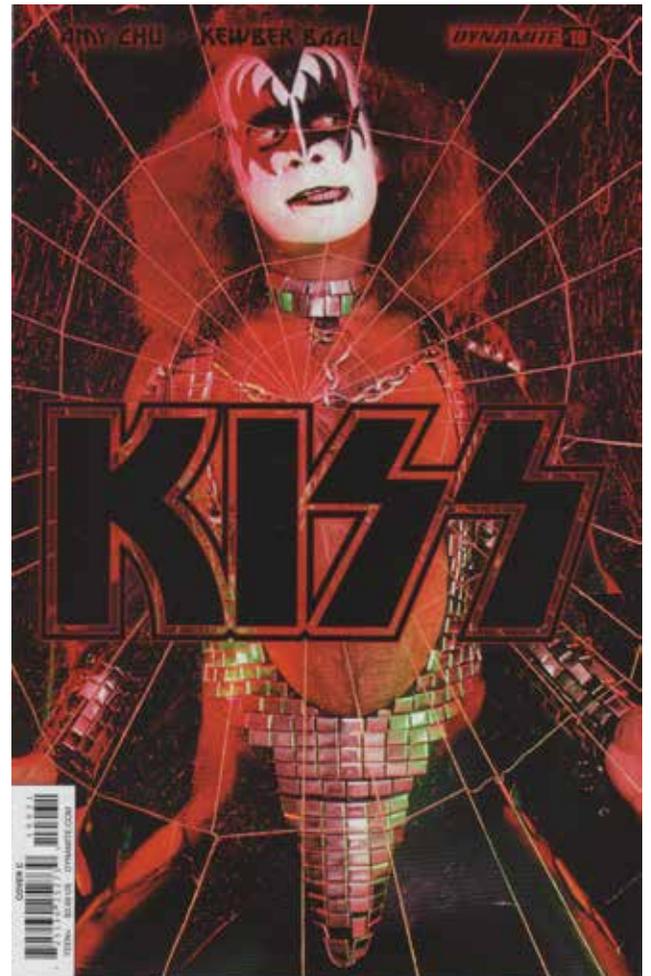
GS: Well, we did that too, sure. And another thing that had never been done was we made the comic book large so it could be put in the same rack and been seen next to *Time Magazine*. Because not everybody who was a fan of KISS necessarily goes and reads comic books, but the crossover was interesting. Those were great comics and so for me it means a lot because I can sit around with other geeks and talk about how Reed Crandall is a very underrated artist, how Al Williamson used to sometimes ink Frank Frazetta things in EC Comics. I mean I can tell you more stuff, your head will spin and most of the fans now think everything begins and ends with Hellboy or whatever the latest thing is but without roots... I mean if you've never seen the original *Magnus Robot Fighter* and the backup story *Brothers of the Spear*, now those are really exceptional comics.

AU: What do you remember about your first time meeting Stan Lee?

GS: Well, throughout my young years I used to badger the Marvel offices. I used to call Flo Steinberg, his secretary and send him letters and stuff and then one day, and I still have it, I got a postcard from Stan Lee. I'll never forget it. It was something that was printed up but he signed it, he said "You will do great things." and then it said "STAN". And I just about had a heart attack. You know like, you believe in God and all of a sudden, he appears. That was a turning point for me because when I finally reached the top of Mount Olympus and KISS became America's and Canada's biggest Gold Record Awarding winning group of all time, in all categories by the way, I wanted to give back and so I also want to meet fans who are just coming in off the streets to give them a pat on the back and give them praise. Something that will make them stand up a little straighter and take a deeper breath and go for it. Reach for the stars. And I got that from that one postcard from Stan Lee. That taught me a lot. And then of course when Stan and the entire band in makeup went on a DC3 to Buffalo to put literally our blood into the red ink of the printing plant that printed Marvel Comics, Stan had known about KISS of course because we were America's number one Gallup Poll. We were everywhere and continue to be but when we landed at the airport, there were 12 motorcycle cops with glasses and guns and all that stuff. And I remember Stan saying "Gee, I guess the President is in town." "No, Stan, it's for us." He said "It's for you?" He had never seen anything like it. You can actually YouTube it. Put in "Kiss Stan Lee Motorcycle Parade" and it will come up.

AU: Last year, they had Ken Kelly as a guest at Edmonton Expo. What can you tell us about the two different versions of the Destroyer cover he painted?

GS: I wanted Frank Frazetta and I personally called Frazetta's home. His wife answered and she said, "Well of course, Frank will do it. We want \$27,000." At that time, it was an enormous amount of money. We were thinking \$500 or \$1000. In those days that was a lot of money. I was a fan of *Eerie and Creepy* magazine so I noticed that Ken Kelly had a similar style to Frazetta. I found out after the fact that Ken Kelly is actually related to Frank Frazetta. So we got Ken Kelly at an affordable price. He did a great job and we showed him what the outfits looked like and the idea came from us. We



wanted a burning building, no guitars, no drums, just us in very, sort of, Marvel superhero poses. We wanted to be bigger than just musicians, we want to be iconic. So we did. Before we finished *Destroyer* we had new outfits that were made, and then we noticed that the cover for *Destroyer* featured the old outfits so Ken had to go back and re-draw the new outfits on the old painting.

AU: How did you first conceive of the concept of your on-stage persona, "The Demon"?

GS: I'd like to tell that it was pre-planned but we were just four knuckleheads in a fire trap loft were we rehearsed. There was literally nobody, we didn't have roadies or managers, nothing. Nobody was telling us what to do. One day, we decided somehow, Ace, Peter, Paul and myself "Hey, let's go to the Woolworth's and let's buy some stuff to put make-up on." We went "Yeah, OK, sure" without even thinking about it. Nobody used the term "marketing" in those days, nobody said "brands". "What's your brand?" It was like Martian talk, it meant nothing. We bought 15 dollar mirrors and I'll never forget, we all sat down and somehow, prophetically I guess, without talking too much, we started putting on the make-up, what became the KISS make-up. Everybody had pretty it much down what came out was very personal for each guy, except Paul. Paul Stanley out one circle around his eye like "Pete The Dog" in the "Our Gang" comedies. And nobody liked that. We said "No, that's not good. How about a star?" He goes "Yeah, yeah, I'm a star." So Paul put on two stars and then he said "Yeah, that's too difficult cause if I mess up one star, it's going to look weird. I can't do that." So that's how he settled on one star over one eye.

AU: How did you originally learn to breathe fire? Were there any mishaps?

GS: Oh, I've set myself on fire a few times. Five or six times. We were in the managers office and a bald guy comes in who looked like a magician or something and sure enough he was. He had a cape and everything. Amazo I think his name was and the manager Bill Aucoin says "Which one of you guys DON'T want to spit fire?" I thought he said "Which one of you guys want to spit fire?" so I didn't put my hand up. All the rest of the guys put their hands up. So they said "OK, Gene, you're the guy who's going to spit fire. I got up and I tried it and the fireball was so big and so dangerous, I didn't know how to do it then, that the fireball singed the ceiling. And that was the beginning.

AU: What brought about the idea to try to copyright the "devil horns" and how is that going?

GS: Trademark, copyright is a different legal term. I abandoned it. Some fans got upset. That's



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fine, you can be upset about it but I was doing it kind of "tongue in cheek." See what I did there, tongue in cheek? But there are people who will get upset about if you peel an orange the wrong way. So I abandoned it, it's not a big deal.

AU: But you own the term "OJ" though?

GS: I do not. That's been a legendary kind of thing... That's untrue. I own the "money bag" logo. The bag of money with the dollar sign on it. I've owned that for 28 years. I use it in my clothing line and all kinds of stuff in fact. A new book that's coming out in October called *Power* from HarperCollins, on the cover is my money bag logo with the trademark registration.

AU: The first pressing of the KISS album had nine tracks including a song called "Kissin' Time." Why was that song removed on later releases?

GS: We didn't like it. It was a cover of a Bobby Rydell song and Neil Bogart came to us at the beginning of the first record and said, "Look I've got an idea. I want to do a kissing contest across America and here's a song called "Twistin' Time" and we're just going to change it to "Kissin' Time."

We recorded it in one or two takes and it was just going to be used as the radio promotion song. The record company promised us it wouldn't end up on the record. Well, of course, it did.

AU: What do you remember about your first tour across Canada? Were you well received or did people just not have a clue what to make of you?

GS: They were like deer in the headlights of an oncoming truck. It just about knocked them over. People were shocked. Even before the first song kicked in we had flash bombs that scared the bejeezus out of everybody. In Edmonton, where the ceiling was low, the entire lunchroom, which is where we played, filled up with smoke. The fire alarm went on. We were on lunch tables and the amplifiers were too big, too heavy and we crashed through. It was nuts. But then, in fact within a year and a half, we were playing stadiums. Before MTV, before voicemail, before cell phones, before digital, before home computers, before anything.

AU: What entrepreneurial projects are you currently working on?

GS: You don't have enough hours in the day... [laughs] There's a film company called Erebus Pictures and a second one that's launching shortly. I have a restaurant chain called Rock and Brews. I'm launching another magazine, it's called Mogul. The Money Bag Cola line. And lots more.

AU: How was the response to the recent Scooby-Doo and KISS cartoon?

GS: It was enormous and real comic book fans will notice the homage to Kirby and Ditko and a lot of the Marvel vibe in the art and the reference points. Even Ego, The Living Planet, a version of that appears in *KISS Meets Scooby-Doo*.

AU: How do you think the albums you released without make-up stand up over time to previous releases?

GS: I have a fondness for the early records and for the last few records. *Sonic Boom* and *Monster* I thought were pretty good records and I liked *Revenge*, *Creatures Of The Night*, and *Destroyer*. We've been around 44 years but one or two records from every decade holds up for me. It's tough to like everything you do and while you're doing it you think it's the coolest thing since sliced bread. It's only when time passes on that you kind of go, "Yeah, this is better than that and that's better than that." Also, your perspective of the journey depends on when you get on the train. If you became a fan in the 80s, when we took our make-up off and those records came out, those were platinum records. In South America and those other places we were playing stadiums, so you like the 80s stuff. It depends on when you get on the train.



AU: Did you always know KISS would be one of the biggest bands in the world?

GS: Yes.

AU: I know you have new KISS comic books out from Dynamite Comics.

GS: Yeah, Dynamite puts out the KISS comics as well as *The Demon*, a solo comic with yours truly. And I have Simmons Comics Group and I created the three titles. One is called *Zipper*, kind of a stranger in a strange land alien who walks among us. *Dominatrix*, basically CIA meets TNA. And *Gene Simmons' House Of Horrors*. All of them are being developed for TV.

AU: So what is the future of KISS, a new album or new tours planned?

GS: Well, new albums are not appealing in the least, even though I just wrote two songs with Ace Frehley for his next record, because generations of fans have been weened on getting free music, downloading, file sharing and all that. And I'm not

interested in working and giving stuff away for free. KISS is not a charity. We give to charity but that's up to me.

AU: Do you have any words of advice for young entrepreneurs or bands?

GS: It depends on what you want to do. If you want to sing country music, don't live in Edmonton, go to Nashville. Right?

AU: There's a bunch of cowboys there.

GS: Doesn't mean anything. There's only Nashville for country music. It's the mecca.

And if you want to be in television or movies, don't live in Moncton, right?

AU: Move to LA.

GS: Yeah, where else? Newfoundland? And I'm married to a Newfie so I'm not saying that in any derogatory way. I think Canada is the coolest of the cool but you have to recognize what is there and what is not.

AU: What was it about Shannon Tweed that made you finally want to settle down?

GS: She bewitched me. It's tough to kind of verbalize it. I'm a male of the species and that includes you too buddy, we're arrogant and selfish and we spend all of our lives just thinking about me. I'm hungry, I want to eat. There's a hot

chick, I want her. We don't think about other people, not really. We're not designed that way. We're designed to hunt and kill. And when you do kill something, you want to eat first. It's in our DNA, it's survival. It took a long time to wake up to the idea that she's actually a better person than I will ever be, of course she's hot, and a great mother, and all the rest of that. But at the core of it, she's actually a better ethical and moral person than I will ever be.

AU: She made you want to be a better person.

GS: Sounds corny but absolutely true.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans who are coming to meet you at the Edmonton Expo.

GS: I look forward to it. I love Canada, been coming there before you were born. I could see myself living in Vancouver or Toronto. Just give me less rain, a few more deals to make, and I could easily move there. My kids, both Nick and Sophie, are Canadian citizens too.

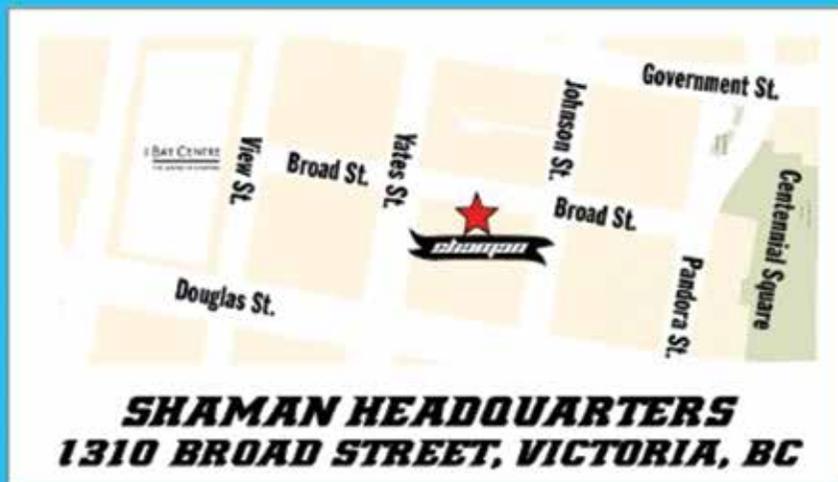
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Dead Boys

Young, Loud And Snotty At 40!

Interview with original guitarist Cheetah Chrome

By Billy Hopeless

As everyone knows I'm very influenced by and a faithful follower of the Lord Stiv Bators and hold the Dead Boys as one of the highest names in shank rock's history. I've always been very verbal and honest with my opinions and just yet fair with my inquisitions, so when I was asked to do an interview with the legendary Cheetah Chrome I was stoked. Unfortunately, I had to play pirate that day, so I had to get a surrogate Billy to do the interview. I'd like to thank sister Tara for taking up the challenge of asking the questions most writers would never have the guts or stupidity to ask.

Absolute Underground: My friend Billy Hopeless, he wrote all these questions so I'm just going to pretend to be Billy Hopeless.

Cheetah: So you're going to get on my case about why we're doing this to begin with?

AU: He might have some questions about it. So last time you played Vancouver, you were touring with Rocket from the Tombs as you had resurrected it and recorded all the old songs including the original versions of songs that later became known as Dead Boys songs. Now you've brought the Dead Boys back to life with Blitz and a whole New Rogues Gallery touring and releasing a re-recorded *Young Loud and Snotty*. I understand the Rocket Redux as there were no recordings of those versions but why would you re-record the unholy grail especially after it was just been re-released on green vinyl?

Cheetah: Okay, well first of all - the one on green vinyl was a piece of crap, the cover looks like it was xeroxed, and we did not want it out. We actually were working on getting the first two albums re-released on 180gram vinyl by a different label out of England. We wanted to do a special 40th anniversary version. Second reason is when we first recorded the album we were told we would be able to re-record it. The first album was a demo. This was not going to be the album. We had never been to a recording studio before, we recorded and mixed everything in three days, and we weren't really happy with the final product at the time when they put it out. Over the years it's grown on me and now I love it, but at the time we weren't happy with it. And so, since we had this time together we decided that we would go in together and do it kind of the way I heard it in my head. And you know, it's not

supposed to be better, it's just supposed to be a different version - plus it gives an introduction to this new band.

AU: At the aforementioned show, you sang, "Ain't It Fun," and I've got to say you have a great voice. Are you still singing any of the songs during this tour?

Cheetah: No, I'll let Jake do that. I was glued to a microphone stand for 20 years and it's fun to get out there and just play guitar because that's what I enjoy the most.

AU: This brings us to the "filling the Master Bator's shoes" question: Why did you go with the Dead Boys tribute band singer route as used by Judas Priest and Journey, instead of the game show route like INXS and Queen, the big name game like AC/DC, or my personal fave, the rotating singer guest spot, as used by the MC5 and at the Stiv Bators memorial show in Cleveland?

Cheetah: Why doesn't Billy just bite me? If he was singing he wouldn't be mad at all about it. Well, basically it started off as Cheetah Chrome solo shows, and we decided that I would get Johnny Blitz on drums. And during the course of this year, to support the 40th anniversary of the album, we would do the record in it's entirety. We went over to Japan in February, and that was the first show. I haven't replaced Stiv in 40 years, I never wanted to. There is no replacing Stiv to me. But when Jake stepped up, and he wasn't trying to be Stiv - he was being himself, but he

sounded like Stiv. That was a big plus and it freed me up play guitar. I thought, this is more in the spirit of Dead Boys anyway.

AU: Speaking of Dead Boys casting calls, what did you think of the portrayal of you and the band in the CBGB movie?

Cheetah: I thought that Rupert did a good job as me. Justin, his heart was in the right place - he did a passable Stiv but there was a lot continuity problems. Like Stiv would never be caught dead without his sunglasses on, and the guy who played Blitz didn't really sound like Blitz, just little details like that. But the heart was in the right place for the movie.

AU: Have you eaten at the new CBGB restaurant? Did you ever eat anything cooked at the original?

Cheetah: The original, we had the chilli of course, which literally - this is a true story, one of the beans got up from my chilli and walked away. We lived on Hilly burgers, we'd go down there and get out the burgers in the fridge and cook them up ourselves. The grill I don't think had been cleaned since the place had opened, probably the place before that. It was a really, really funky place to eat. But anyway there is a place in Lombard, Illinois called Brauer House that has the Cheetah Chrome burger with the Stiv Taters.



AU: Okay enough poking the Dead Boys for now. Let's get to you personally, you've been involved in a few other projects lately including some solo shows and a country bluegrass band called Plowboy.

Cheetah: First off, Plowboy was not a band. It was a record label that I started in Nashville with Shannon Pollard, who is Eddie Arnold's grandson. We put out my record on it, I produced a record for JD Wilkes, and I produce a 19-artist tribute to Eddie Arnold, with people like Frank Black and Alejandro Escovedo. My solo stuff, I've had on and off for four years. That kind of began the Dead Boys reunion because when we got Blitz involved, he didn't want to do the solo stuff. Plus we wanted to do more to celebrate the album.

AU: As a key member to a band that influenced so many, what musicians inspired you as a Chrome Cub?

Cheetah: The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, obviously. From there Steppenwolf, when *Born to Be Wild* came out, that is what inspired me to play lead guitar. Then I discovered The Stooges around 1969, and Alice Cooper and it was downhill from there.

AU: What young fresh new bands are worthy of us sinking our claws into?

Cheetah: Archie and the Bunkers, The Bourbon Saints, The McDaggers, Doctor Boogie.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've experienced with your long run as a living Dead Boy?

Cheetah: I guess probably the long line of people who have come up and wanted to "out punk" me. They bang beer cans into their head, break bottles over their head, dare me to pierce safety pins through my cheek. I just look at them like they're nuts.

AU: You've moved around a bit when it comes to lairs, where are you living now?

Cheetah: Right now I'm in Austin, Texas. It's quite different than most places, a lot more rock and roll. It kind of reminds me of New York in the 70s, there are just so many musicians out, everybody goes out all the time and it's a big scene.

AU: For all the guitar nerds out there what's

your favourite guitar and what pedals and amplifiers gives you that sharp Cheetah growl?

Cheetah: My favourite guitar is my Gibson SG Standard. 2 P 90s. I love it, it's had the headstock broken, it's had all kinds of dings put into it and it's still going. Still the best sounding guitar I've got. As far as pedals go, I don't even use the tuner if I can avoid it. Amps, live I tend to use Marshalls.

AU: When you re-re-re released a remixed version of the second Dead Boys album entitled *We have Come For Your Children*, you cut back on the dog barking in the epic "Son of Sam," track, which to me was very sacred. Please tell me on the new recording of *Sonic Reducer* that you kept the crazy effect on Johnny Blitz's drums during the break down. I know it may be looked at as error in judgement by some musical juries, to me like many other absurdities, it's a very important and perfect imperfection.

Cheetah: Well that was one of the less cringe-worthy moments, we totally agree with his call to get those on the drums. So that is on the new version. On the second album, the dog barks, sirens and hokey gun shots were not our idea, we just thought it was corn ball. The other changes we've made, we took "Little Girl" off the record because we did not want to do that one originally. On the second album, "Big City" won't be there because the band always hated that song.

AU: Do you have a personal message for Billy Hopeless?

Cheetah: I think I answered his questions pretty well. I like Billy, he's a good kid, but it's my band and I'll do what I want with it. Like it or not.

Cheetah Chrome, Johnny Blitz and their band of hoodlums will be doing Canadian dates this October. It may not be the O.G. Dead Boys, but hey, there are two living Dead Boys, right!?

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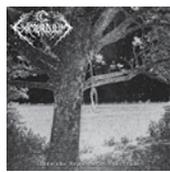
Absolute Album Reviews

Exmordium - Into the Sepulchral Spectrum Tridroid Records

"Portals Beyond the Imprisonment of Time" rips itself into existence like a nasty windstorm tearing through the Aokigahara forest. Some blackened death metal provides the soundtrack for a creepy stroll down deaths alley and more. Along with the blistering metal attack comes an eerie implementation of acoustic guitar fingerpicking which really switches up things by adding an enchanting neurosis to the otherwise evilish lead characters. The drums bash away like the skins man is trying to smash ants that are crawling all over the drumheads. A stench of death steams forth through the unrelenting guitar riffs that seemingly have no end. "Astral Visions of the Ageless Eye" is a manifesto of black metal supremacy that recalls contemporary Mayhem at its most brutal.

Quiet moments reinforce the scorched earth sonic policies that come to a boiling point on "The Sorrow of an Inverted Existence," where the rageful vocals are wretched out over extreme rhythms that could cause more serious harm to the neck than a noose hung from a tree.

-Dan Potter



to create the human race, and this fateful unplanned pregnancy would prove to be truly disastrous!

Their new album, *The Blood of Gods*, is nothing less than a sacred text chronicling the rise of humanity against their makers, and the massive battle between GWAR and the forces of all that is upright and wrong with the world. Along the way, the band challenges the sins of their great mistake, from politics, pollution, and organized religion, to fast food, and factory farming. Humans are shown as what they are: a parasitical disease that must be eradicated before they suck the planet dry. Meanwhile, Sleazy P. Martini, the crooked entrepreneur who discovered the Scumdogs, and has always envisioned them as a sort of horrific boy band, finally managed to convince the group to write a hit song called "I'll Be Your Monster." If all goes according to plan, it may be just stupid enough to work!

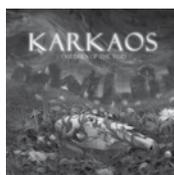
Of course, *The Blood of Gods* is the first GWAR album without the band's fallen leader, Oderus Urungus. The title of the album refers to the loss of Oderus, and the struggles and triumphs that produced the new sound of the band. Born of adversity, *The Blood of Gods* is a sonic scar...a question asked and answered... Death cannot kill GWAR. Nothing can.

GWAR LIVES MOTHERFUCKERS!
- Ira Hunter

Karkaos - Children Of The Void Independent

The girls and guys of Karkaos know their stuff, they do have the experience and it shows. They have a good idea of what the audience like in that genre. The first connection my brain did was Amon Amarth, all the elements that are added to the music, bring up the word epic in my head. The music is fast and hits hard in all of the songs. I loved this album and will listen to it again.

The drum lines of Justine are great. She is brutal and throws her energy into the songs, it sounds like war drums giving the beat to a marching army. The keyboard work of Sébastien is very good. The melodies and sound effects are very well-placed. The voice of Viki, is beautiful she comes out the most of this album and she gives it a flavour, she is the main character of that story and she answers to Vincent's growl with a clean and determined voice. They are still independent, so that means they do a lot of work that bigger bands don't do anymore to get their



album out there and they deserve respect for that.

-André Laniel

Laser Flames On The Great Big News - S/T Wood and Stone Productions

The lone-some he/she singing dynamic surfs the wave of grungy guitar swag and bash and crash drumming in the most pleasing way. "Lashes" has a stoner vibe to it, but in a Meat Puppets sort of way. The twang meets the bong is a good way to describe this band's modus operandi.

Vocal harmonies keep things groovy while the 70s rock riffs create an everlasting good time and screeching guitar solos add layers of epiphany. A guest spot by Today is the Day's Steve Austin on "Open Dead and Doomed" is a welcome treat to my ears. This disturbed and doom-laden track starts off with spooky spoken word and proceeds on with some Sonic Youth era guitar-ness and wailing Janis Joplin-like singing.

This band is incredibly dynamic, being both listener friendly and threatening at the very same time. Their adherence to memorable song craft doesn't hurt either.

-Dan Potter



story of sorrow and goodbyes to an epic backdrop that needs to be heard in order to be believed.

-Dan Potter

Metalian - Midnight Rider Independent

Classic heavy metal, clearly inspired by the early 80s, Metalian, from Montreal, just released eight new tracks. It never gets corny, it's always fun and great, they sound like a good ride down to the old days but with a modern vibe. two guitars (Ian and Simon) are duelling with some amazing solos, but never getting overboard with their talents. They have a good speed going through the songs never settling down. They wanted the album to feel like a ride and it works with the different beats they use for the songs.

The drum (Tony) guides the songs and connects the riffs with some good passes. The bass (Andres) is the instrument that never moves away from the main riff when the two guitars are playing their crazy solos, like in the song "Bastard," the bass is always there keeping the melody alive. On top of that a great voice (Ian) delivers the lyrics with a clean voice like Ozzy and pushes the high pitch voice like Bruce Dickinson.

The metal revival fans of Mutank or old school punk like ZEX will also find their craving with this album.

-André Laniel



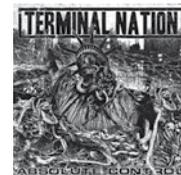
Terminal Nation - Absolute Control Deep Six Records

This power violence group brings the lead boots to the shitkicking party. The EP is a lethal combo of early Hatebreed mixed with Suicidal Tendencies, so expect some euphoric beat-downs. If all you want out of your hardcore is a one, two, three, four, straight to the point and then outta there, then this band is the ultimate treat.

All nine tracks don't go above the one-minute mark too often leaving you wondering where the nearest mosh pit is. "Violator Violated" has those fast blast beats that sandwich into dirges of doom-laden riffage and though short gets the message of destroying power structures across explicitly.

The brutal light of day shines through one more time on "Broken" as lyrical prose is belled out above the mechanized fury of a well-oiled hardcore band.

-Dan Potter



Toro - Departure Independent

If you made that snake that swallows its own tail speak, what would come out is the song "Painting with Shadows". The shock treatment of blending intense vistas of psychedelica and Hardcore beat downs bleed forth like an epiphany set to eleven. Bulldozing power riffs crush reality down to the most necessary components needed to rock out, which is where "This Hell is Real" emanates from. With its Janes Addiction meets Lamb of God aesthetic, this track will make you break stuff at the bottom of the ocean.

Juxtaposition of feelings ranging from unrelenting rage and watery calm happen a lot in modern metal, but this time around, each segment is rich in realness and doesn't seem like a dynamic gimmick. Mixed by hardcore hero Matt Bayles, whose expertise in blending Floydian dystopia in with pulse racing metal-punk is put on display here in all its drowsy schizoid glory.

The police incident starting "Bury Me and Flee" is full of pit anthem energy and wailing guitar leads that splinter off from the whiplash rhythmic intensity. Overall, this EP is chock full of ragers that could make you



Chiral - Gazing Light Eternity Folkvagr Records

This Italian based one-man band really shreds with opiate-induced guitar arpeggios and crazed drumming.

The opening track, "Part 1 (The Gazer)," gets into Burzum territory pretty fast, sinking deep into the forest and leaving civilization behind to rot. The vocals are wretched out like wolves raised the dude, which makes sense because the backing cacophony of sound seems very naturalistic.

I occasionally hear some traditional Italian melodies break through the surface, highlighting the personal expression taking place. "Part 2 (The Haze)" has a laid-back, trippy feel with a repetitive and hypnotic guitar tone drifting off into the distance. There is definitely a cool atmospheric tendency that floats through the entire album, whether it's the black metal blitzkriegs or the stoned hiking in the mountains soundscapes. Eerie recordings add a touch of absolute mystery to this release that makes it a definite return listen.

-Dan Potter



Rapheumets Well - Enders Door Test Your Metal Records

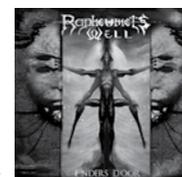
Underneath the toxic oceans of Jupiter's moon Europa lays the practice space of this band, or so

it sounds. The sci-fi epic metal that commences on "Distress on the Aberrant Planet" is truly spine tingling with electronic sirens pulsing in time to the rhythm of a full on symphonic assault.

The track "Enders Door" has a brutal Fear Factory thing going for it complete with harrowing orchestration straight from the hero's death scene in a post-apocalyptic thriller. Computer generated metal growls glitch to the surface like the star-ship is taking control of itself, and not for the greater good. Meanwhile, the guitarists chug away like a sadistic train heading to the twin sunned solar system to kill Colossus.

On "Killing the Colossus," it sounds like a new machine god has been birthed as the clanging pinched harmonics enrich the technocratic takeover and weary vocal refrains confirm that resistance is futile.

-Dan Potter



GWAR - The Blood Of Gods Metal Blade Records

The story of GWAR is carved across the history of this barren and hopeless planet,



but GWAR themselves are not of this world...Their story begins in the deepest reaches of outer space. Long ago, the beings who would become the rock band GWAR were part of an elite fighting force, the Scumdogs of the Universe. For eons, they served as thralls to a supreme being known only as the Master. But one by one, each future member of the band earned a glaring reputation for being an intergalactic fuck-up. And so, they were banished, sent away on a fool's errand to conquer an insignificant shitball floating in a dark corner of the universe: the planet Earth. Once here, GWAR shaped the face of the globe, destroying and rebuilding the natural world, and giving rise to all of human history. Aliens to some, gods and demons to others, our erstwhile Scumdogs fucked apes

Lor - In Forgotten Sleep Independent

"Dusk" starts off like it's the year 1492 and all the peasants are dancing around the campfire with sounds of lute and where the soft tones of wind instruments permeate the air. The melody is truly medieval, but then it kicks into a serious brutal metal section full of amazing instrumental prowess and extreme screaming. This band obviously wants to shock with dynamic and wicked music college know how.

Folk metal meets progressive is a bold mix and somehow these young guys can pull it off and make it seem effortless. "Requiem" has a blackened power metal feel to it, as crushing blasts of guitar meet the dark aged lullaby melodies in the most unexpected ways. The guitarist's sword is definitely the sharpest, with blazing dragon slaying solo leads flashing out across the castle turret dominated skies.

"Eidolon" has a sinister vibe to it that really brings the metal and sets the



Nekrokraft - Will o' Wisp The Sign Records

Blistering speed and pitiless brutality are the preference for these guys when brewing up some modern sounding blackened thrash metal. Dissonant weaving guitar parts converge like lava flows careening down the mountain as the witchery is cackled out with true evil possession. The sounds here are reminiscent of early Mayhem and Morbid Angel but the intricate poly-rhythms placed over the cavernous blast-beats tell of a sophistication that's almost classical in nature.

"Hellfire" starts off with a soil-scorching riff that is as intense as early any thrash classic. The vocals are strong and don't budge when it comes to being brutal and are sure to raise the hair on the backs of both man and beast. "Forestlurker" has a creepy fantasy like vibe that would fit in just right as a soundtrack to the biopic of Lucifer.

Each track is in the three to four minute range which keeps things varied



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Absolute Live Reviews

Crypticon Seattle 2017

I had the time of my life at Crypticon Seattle 2017. It was a bigger party than ever since they moved it to the Doubletree Hotel in which I had the pleasure to meet many celebrities such as Thom Matthews (*Return of the Living Dead, Friday the 13th, Part 6: Jason Lives*), Jill Schoelen (*The Stepfather*), Judith O'Dea (*Night of the Living Dead*), John Amplas (*Day of the Dead, Martin*), Scott Reiniger (*Dawn of the Dead*) and many more. These people mentioned were terrifically nice; I got a picture of O'Dea as well as an autographed picture of her as Barbara at a gravestone. Had a lot of conversations with Amplas in which I interviewed him on my Racks & Razors Blogtalk Radio Show some years ago, and I also got to chat with Schoelen, who was super sweet and easy to talk to.

As you know by the celebrities mentioned, this con's theme was about zombies. Many dressed to come and acted like zombies themselves, which was hilarious. I dressed as a camp counsellor in my Camp Crystal Lake t-shirt which got many pictures taken of me. Some people dressed as Jason; what was funnier is some of the people dressed as this hulking killer were smaller than me, which I got a kick out of.

There were free cookies and candy bars outside; some regulars there dressed up and placed their funeral cars there as always, so if you have a sweet tooth you won't be disappointed.

The distribution company Vinegar Syndrome was there, so I bought

remastered DVDs of *Slaughterhouse* and *Madman* which made my day big time.

But what really made me happy was meeting slasher novel author Ronnie Angel and bought his book *Slashed Dreams: The Ultimate Guide to Slasher Films* as I just had to read it. So far, he really knows his stuff, and is incredibly knowledgeable on slasher films. He reviews non horror films too, as they have murderous rampages as well, not just horror. Plus, he describes top killers or characters in the films that was amusing to read as well.

At night there's a dance floor which is Prom of the Dead, we all acted like kids, dancing as the first half was old school, including a lot of musicians that are no longer with us like Prince and David Bowie. Then it changed to today's stuff, which wasn't my cup of tea.

I had the time of my life and if you didn't attend you missed out a lot! racksandrazors.com/alien-covenant.html

-Greg Tiderington

Montebello Rockfest

Perhaps the most valuable tool at a music festival in 2017 is a well-charged smartphone. How else will you take that perfect snap of a red-mohawked miscreant knee deep in mud, or text your buddy to meet you at the beer tent for seemingly the 200th time? So when I popped into the Montebello Rockfest hospitality area to charge my dangerously depleted iPhone, I

was greeted by one of my favourite sights of the three-day event. The converted house featured Toronto's PUP dinking around on their devices in the kitchen, Calgary's Belvedere hydrating in the dining room, and Victoria's own barons of bad taste Dayglo Abortions kicking their feet up in the living room.

Seeing three generations of Canadian punk coexisting under one roof plastered a smile upon my face, and it's a sight like this that proves microcosmic of the event's famously attention-grabbing lineups. Established names like Bad Religion, Pennywise, and The Offspring may be perpetually found at any and all rock festivals across the planet, but it's the exclusive bookings and esoteric one-offs that make Montebello's offering so unique. Beloved Canadian hardcore crew No Warning were an early highlight, the band's chugging riffs and Ben Cook's barked vocals sounding as vital as ever. Australian punks Frenzal Rhomb joked about how they travelled 30 hours to play 30 minutes of music. The rare North American appearance showcased both adored classics and fresh tunes off their excellent new LP, *High-Vis High Tea*. Post-hardcore legends At The Drive-In seemed reinvigorated with a late-night set that saw frontman Cedric Bixler-Zavala leaping off the drum riser like he did 20 years ago, and fans of obscure 90s pop-punk were greeted with a rare reunion set from Sweden's Adhesive. However, the biggest coup of the event had to be snagging Rammstein as the Friday headliner. The band typically eschews festivals

in favour of their own headlining stadium performances, but the group's notorious live show kept true to its reputation. Their robotic industrial metal never appealed to me (I caught most of Face to Face and Down By Law instead), but my brief detours to the mainstage were greeted with billowing fog, fire-breathing circus performers, and bursting pyrotechnics.

In most punk circles in 2017, ska can be a bit of a dirty word. Clearly Montebello didn't get the memo, as Reel Big Fish, Less Than Jake, The Planet Smashers, and The Specials drew some of the most immense crowds of the weekend. After four punk and metal bands in a row, ska's bright horns and upbeat grooves mixed things up nicely. Other highlights included the sugary sweet Masked Intruder, the brutally heavy Converge, and Jello Biafra who mixed both Dead Kennedys and Guantanamo School of Medicine material in with spoken-word interludes that addressed the landscape of Trump and Trudeau.

Of course, the event wasn't without its missteps. Mother Nature didn't comply, blasting festival-goers with

flash thunderstorms, rendering much of the grounds a soupy, sloppy mess. Tesseract came off as a flimsy, corny copy of their tour-mates Meshuggah, who would absolutely obliterate the same stage a few hours later. The high abundance of skate-punk bands saturated a bit, with acts like Craig's Brother and Mute failing to rise above the pack. And while Wu-Tang Clan and the aforementioned ska bands did a nice job of offering a rest from the heaviness, perhaps the addition of a few high-profile reggae acts or post-metal bands like Russian Circles would've provided even more diverse musical options while still remaining in line with the festival demographic.

Queens of the Stone Age ultimately proved to be the least impressive of the Saturday headliners, as their "festival set in a box" felt uninspired in comparison to the career-spanning offerings from Iggy Pop and Alexisonfire. Lastly, Deadly Apples, the reunited nu-metal band of Rockfest founder Alex Martel, was so hilariously over-marketed across the grounds that it became a bit of a running gag to guess where you

would see an advertisement next. That being said, their inclusion was a quirky nod to earlier iterations of the festival that featured a dozen bands on a patch of grass.

Montebello hosts 1200 locals for 360 days a year, but for these four, the streets ran wild with thousands of booze-fuelled punks and metalheads. In a time where festivals present homogeneous lineups and experiences, Martel and his team have put together something truly special. While not free from corporate involvement (I never want my lips to kiss another Budweiser ever again), they still manage to retain a small-town vibe despite their massive scope. Hell, there was even a local family charging \$3 per use of their flush toilet. Where else on earth would you see that?

-Michael Luis

Absolute Film Reviews

Little Devils: The Birth Shivers Entertainment

VHS collecting has gotten a lot easier in the past five years. With companies like Troma, Horror Boobs, Camp Motion Pictures and now Shivers Entertainment releasing tapes onto the market, finding new movies is as simple as a click of the mouse. Shivers Entertainment, run by Brenin Barrow, out of B.C. Canada, started Shivers Video, a home video line that specializes in campy horror films that have never been available to consumers before. Their first release was the super low budget, shot on video, Canadian slasher *Massacre Up North*. They put this film out on a very limited clamshell VHS as well as DVD (the DVD is still available for purchase). For Shivers' second release they went with the 1992 creature feature *Little Devils: The Birth*, directed by George Pavlou (Rawhead Rex). This film also came out on a very limited clamshell VHS and, like *Massacre Up North*, the VHS sold out extremely fast. *Little Devils* is a low budget monster movie with some great writing and cool creature effects. Dr. Lionel, a lonely scientist, finds some primordial mud in an old tomb and uses this mud to sculpt little demons in his apartment. The mud starts to become sentient and soon the creatures start running amuck and it's up to Lionel's neighbor Ed to put a stop to them. The film is full of all kinds of wacky characters like the stripper girlfriend, the super horny landlady, the homeless helping Doctor and

Ed, who writes porno stories for a dirty magazine, plus the monsters themselves are just really odd. One carries a tiny machine gun that actually fires bullets, while another has an acid shooting squirt gun. None of it makes sense and it's never explained in the film how any of the creatures got these weapons but that's kind of the charm of *Little Devils*. It's a fun monster movie, it doesn't have to make sense. It's like if the films *Ghoulies*, *Hobgoblins* and *Gremlins* all had a baby then that baby would be *Little Devils: The Birth*. The film's special effects are all practical which isn't that big of a surprise except for the fact that it came out around the same time that CGI was starting to flood the film market. It's nice to see a low budget film that doesn't have to rely on computer imagery but instead uses props and animatronics. I'm impressed with Shivers Entertainment and their ability to find these lesser known films and put them out for collectors like me. I would never have heard of *Little Devils* if it wasn't for Brenin and Shivers Video. And it's thanks to companies

like Shivers that we can go to horror conventions and find new VHS tapes or go online and order them right to our doors. *Little Devils: The Birth* will make a fine addition to any collection and I'm very happy that I got one of the limited VHS to add to mine.

-Cody No Teeth



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of MOD, Method of Destruction. I was the singer for SOD, Stormtroopers of Death.

AU: You've just released *Busted, Broke & American*, after several long delays – can you tell us a little about the process behind the album and why it took so long to be recorded?

BM: In all honesty, I wrote the record while my dog Buster was very ill with cancer. I started to record in California with a producer who was simply the wrong guy. I came home and decided I want to redo a lot of it, so I got a bunch of friends from Austin to finish the record, and here we are. Very confident in my decisions, and the truth is in the puddin'.

AU: How does this record compare to your past releases? What can fans expect to hear this time around in terms of music or content?

BM: I don't really know what to tell them. I pretty much wrote a record that I truly love. I had no idea it would bring me here. I had no idea it was going to get a release from the Megaforce Records MRI. I am just really happy with every aspect of it, and I think that's what the fans

will hear.

AU: What were the major influences, musical or otherwise, behind this new album?

BM: I wanted to write something that spoke to my youth in the New York hardcore punk scene. This is the closest I will ever get to a true NYHC punk-influenced record. It's my youth, and I remember it and honour those memories and friends!

AU: Will this really be M.O.D.'s last album?

BM. I honestly don't know.

Method Of Destruction

Interview by AU Editorial

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

BM: My name is Billy Milano I am the singer



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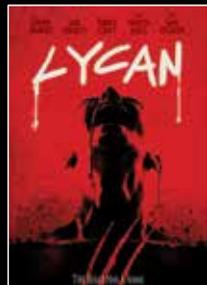
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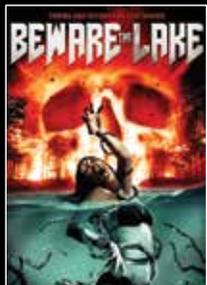
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AU: This is your first release on Megaforce records since '95, is that right? Is it good to be back?

BM: Fuck yeah, Missi and Megaforce have been awesome. It's making my dream happen and I just want to honestly be happy. I want to have some good fun, some good shows, some good beer and good memories. Megaforce was a huge part of that.

AU: How have you seen the punk and thrash scene evolve over the 30-odd year history of the band? What would you say about the current state of the scene... is punk dead, just sleeping, or stronger than ever?

BM: Punk rock is eternal... Morphing, absorbing, splitting and consolidating. In the end, a punk purist will always prevail. Punk is the heartbeat of rebellion in America. It will never die!

AU: Will you be touring for the new record, if so, where can we see you? Anything else in the works, videos or singles?

BM: We are planning a European tour in December, maybe some in the States in

February... I have some future tour plans worldwide but nothing so monumental that I am gonna set records. In all honesty, I have to do it now while the body is still willing.

AU: Do you have any other musical projects on the go that you'll be focusing on in the future?

BM: I am currently finishing the writing for my other project BBD, Billy Be Damned, as well as several industry-based items that will be announced on my website www.milanomosh.com. I would look there around September time.

AU: What should we know about M.O.D. that we don't already?

BM: Nothing. Let's just have some fun before these idiots blow the world up.

AU: Any final words for the nice readers?

BM: Every year, millions of lemmings commit mass suicide. Don't be a lemming.

www.milanomosh.com

www.facebook.com/MethodOfDestruction

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ZAUM

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Kyle McDonald: Kyle Alexander McDonald of the band Zaum.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, where and when did you form?

KM: Zaum formed in Moncton, NB in 2013 as an outlet for the ideas I'd been writing over the course of a dozen years. Joining me in establishing this vision was good and old friend Christopher Lewis on drums.

AU: Describe your music for those of us who've never heard it? What can we expect to see at a Zaum show?

KM: We consider ourselves "Old World Mantra Doom" – as a means for people to attempt to understand what we sound like. Our live show is very respectful and a quite close representation of our recorded music. We create a bit of a ritualistic type of live environment whereby we try to match the visual reality with our dark meditative depth.

AU: You're heading out on a Canadian tour this fall, are there any cities you'll be seeing for the first time? Any cities you're particularly looking forward to playing?

KM: Indeed we are – we'll actually be playing North Bay and Victoria for the first time which we're quite pleased about. I'm personally looking quite forward to the tour as a whole, I really don't know that I can single out one specific show if I'm being entirely honest.

AU: What is life on the road like for Zaum? What's in your tour survival kit?

KM: Try to keep it light, lots of jokes and foolishness. I try to live and enjoy the moment as much as possible. Lots of coffee and water and I love to hit up record stores whenever I can. Survival kit-wise for myself – I have to travel with a fan! I've slept with one ever since I was a kid and I need one to get a proper night's rest, and they come in handy on stage, too! If I were to have to guess one thing on Chris' behalf, I would have to guess a beard/hair hygiene kit!

AU: Your debut album, *Oracles*, was released in 2014 – can you tell us about the themes and topics you explore on it? Any influences, musical or otherwise, behind the album?

KM: Some themes and topics include old world-middle eastern history/society, observation of religion, and a peek into the unknown depths of the universe intertwined with the tale of a group

of Oracles. I think that album and the band in general was quite heavily influenced by Peter Gabriel's *Passion: The Last Temptation of Christ*. There was no religious or Christ influence there at all, simply just musically what exists on that soundtrack. Beyond that, we released *Eidolon* in October 2016 and that album is a dream-state-like universal trip which answers the existence and demise of the Mayan civilization. That album had a big Lustmord - *The Word As Power* influence.

AU: Do you have another album in the works? When can we expect to hear new music from Zaum?

KM: We have a third album that will be recorded in 2018, which will speak to some old world vibes of Mongolia. Most of the ideas for the album are written, we will unpack all of those ideas and progress forward this winter. I would suspect an early 2019 release for it!

AU: How do you think life in New Brunswick has shaped your aesthetic as a band? What is the state of the New Brunswick music scene right now?

KM: I think the long cold winters here give us a giant opportunity to stay inside and get creative with music. The music scene is small but quite strong here in NB... I guess maybe considering the size of the province, it is quite good! Really a ton of unbelievable bands here from our city of Moncton.

AU: What does the future hold for the band? Any tours, recording, music videos in the works?

KM: A deep creative journey for us in 2018 and tons of touring in 2019 – including



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North America, Europe and Australia. We are in talks to potentially film a music video (kind of a short film in some sense) for a song from #Eidolon# this fall, news to follow.

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

KM: I'm playing drums for two-piece crust metal band Flying Fortress on this upcoming tour of Canada with Zaum, and potentially more tours to follow! Check the band out at flyingfortresstunes.bandcamp.com

AU: Any final words for readers?

KM: Please like our Facebook page to stay updated on what's up: facebook.com/zaumn, and if you're interested in buying some music, visit zaum.bandcamp.com, which supports and comes from us directly! Thanks and praises to *Absolute Underground Magazine* for the interview.

zaum.bandcamp.com/

PHOTO CREDIT: Matteo Bassoli

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WINNIPEG



Aggression

By Casey Lazar

Aggression are a Canadian thrash metal band that was formed in 1985. Initially they only lasted until 1989, however the legacy that they created for themselves in those four short years lasts until this day. They've recently reformed, and have been taking Western Canada by storm, playing all the major festivals, and spreading their truly old-school thrash metal amongst the masses. We interviewed Brian Langley, singer of Aggression, as well as Tyrant's Blood, to ask him about Aggression's past, present, and future.

Absolute Underground: You guys have been around since the mid 80s. It's not that common for bands from that era to still be active. What's different about you guys?

Brian Langley: I think the band's initial run from 1985-1989 was very short-lived. There's definitely a sense of "unfinished business." We all love

thrash metal and as long as we keep enjoying what we're doing and can physically play the songs up to par, we're not going to stop.

AU: What are some of the big differences that you guys have seen take place in the metal community over the years, and what sort of impact has it had on you guys?

BL: Mostly just fads coming and going. Since Aggression wasn't active between 1989-2013, I don't think it has impacted our writing, a lot of our newer songs are riffs that Sasquatch wrote during the bands first years so our new material has the old school punk/thrash crossover feel. The vocals however, Denis has me doing a bit of everything.

AU: *Forgotten Skeleton* was released in 2004, however it was originally supposed to be your debut album back in 1986. Why was it only released almost two decades later?

BL: The reason it was called *Forgotten Skeleton* is because when it was recorded, the band was heavily into drugs and actually forgot that they had recorded it! Years later Sasquatch discovered it on one of his old reel to reel tapes.

AU: Your guys new album sounds very different than your older stuff. Do you have any insight into why that may be?

BL: The recording technology has gotten better, the guys are using tuners for their instruments. Vocally, there's a bit of everything. That was Sasquatch's call. Every song he'll sit down with me and say, "Ok for this song I was thinking of something like David Vincent crossed with Zakk Wylde and a touch of Paul Stanley." And then I try to sing like how I would think that's supposed to sound. After the first take Sasquatch will say something like, "Ok, so hearing it back, I think there was too much Zakk, can you dial the Zakk influence down to 72%?" That's the ridiculous methods we use when recording the vocals. Over all I just feel like the newer songs are heavier. We

are definitely playing faster too. Wait till you hear the latest recordings!

AU: What's next for Aggression?

BL: We've got The Vancouver Island Metal Fest and the show in Vancouver at the Rickshaw Sept 15th with Venom Inc./Goatwhore and Toxic Holocaust. We've got the next album recorded and ready to go. It should get good and crazy. It'll probably come out next Spring, we're planning on touring the US as well as returning to Europe in 2018.

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Absolute Horror



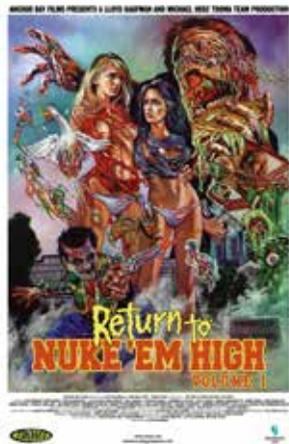
A Brief History of Troma

By Vince D'Amato

Troma Entertainment, one of the biggest independent film studios, was established in New York in 1974, which also happened to be the year I was born. Lloyd Kaufman co-founded his film company with partner Michael Herz, who, unlike his partner, has only allowed himself entry into the studio's spotlight sporadically over Troma's 43 years, while Kaufman naturally took over as the face of Troma (along with the recognizable face of the hideously deformed creature The Toxic Avenger, Troma's most famous creation). The duo of Kaufman/Herz launched the company's film catalogue by including Kaufman's student films (*The Battle of Love's Return*) and by picking up a slew of American independent feature films, including films by the late John G. "Rocky" Avildsen (*Cry Uncle*) and a few genre classics like *Bloodsucking Freaks* and the Lloyd Kaufman-produced *Sugar Cookies*, which starred Corman favourite Mary Woronov and soon-to-be cult film star Lynn Lowry. Forty years later, in the wake of a wobbly Blu-ray revolution, new genre-film distributor Vinegar Syndrome has licensed and released several of Troma's favourite back-catalogue, including the aforementioned *Sugar Cookies*, along with independent-genre gems like *Nightmare Weekend*, *Pigs*, and *Luther the Geek*. Over the years, however, some of Troma's immense catalogue of indie genre films seems to have both began and concluded within the VHS era, including such cool-sounding favourites as *Femme Fontaine: Killer Babe for the CIA*, *Haunting Fear*, and *Scream, Baby, Scream*. Other notable hidden genre gems have made it onto a few of Troma's multi-film DVD releases, like *Screamplay*, *Alien Blood*, and *Blood Hook*. And who could forget such classic home-video titles as *Dead Dudes in the House*, *Stuff Stephanie in the Incinerator*, *Surf Nazis Must Die!*, and *Chopper Chicks in ZombieTown?* The titles themselves could sometimes be even more creative than Troma's amazing and often awe-inspiring promotional artwork. When Lloyd Kaufman was interviewed for Curci Loris' 1996 book on notable horror filmmakers (*Shockmasters*), Loris explicitly noted that Kaufman's best work was the artwork for all of Troma's films. Throughout the late seventies and into the mid-eighties, the Troma founders also acted as a producing/directing duo, creating raunchy exploitation comedies for the domestic theatrical market in a time where independents could actually get their films onto the theatrical circuit, and into international theatrical film market. The movies

and Herz co-directing a baseball sex-comedy for an international market in a time when baseball was a purely American sport – but having creative, if not critical, successes with the latter comedies *Waitress!* and *Stuck on You*. These early sex comedies of the 1980s were just as good as anything Hollywood was putting out at that time in the *Revenge of the Nerds* era, and Troma was doing it without the financial backing that the Hollywood studios had. By 1984, Troma was actually starting to make a name for themselves, and founders Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz were aware enough of their own indie studio brand to start marketing

that Troma decided to produce were nearly as volatile as the film market itself, with Kaufman



it during the VHS boom of the eighties and nineties beyond what any Hollywood studio was doing with their own product. In 1992, nobody was looking specifically for Warner Bros. or Universal Studios' movies, but when it came to genre film fans, they were on the lookout for Troma VHS tapes – and if you weren't on the lookout for them, it was very hard to miss the seemingly endless stream of alluring and lurid VHS box-art and VHS spines that were adorned with the memorable TROMA studio logo. Troma was a leader in VHS home-video studio branding. Many video rental stores, including the sorely-missed Suncoast Motion Pictures retail videotape chain and Vancouver's Traxx Video (Metrotown), would actually create their own Troma sections on their VHS shelves.

In 1984, Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz were about to embark on their next stage of independent film studio success as well as their next sex-comedy; and when it came to the latter, this time they were determined to interject more social satire and some rapidly-growing eighties health-trends along with the newly-discovered post-70s environmental concerns into something of a horror-comedy hybrid entitled *Health Club Horror*. Meant to infuse the exercise craze of the eighties that produced Jane Fonda's workout videos and movies like *Perfect* and *Hardbodies*, and to a certain extent, *Flashdance* and *Rocky III*, *Health Club Horror* would also be a product of then then-new subgenre of comedy-horrors that seemed to be proving successful for both independent filmmakers and bigger studios – movies like *Re-Animator*, *House*, and *Return of the Living Dead* were getting a lot of positive attention from horror fans and film critics alike. Through the development of *Health Club Horror*, the entire idea would gradually and organically morph into Troma's keystone horror-comedy



The Toxic Avenger. The final product would be Troma's greatest success to date, and through the International film markets *The Toxic Avenger* would be responsible for two sequels (*The Toxic Avenger Part II* and *Part III*), an animated Saturday-morning cartoon series (*The Toxic Crusaders*), and a cinematic quazi-spin-off (*Sgt. Kabukiman, NYPD*). Of course, from this point forward, horror-comedy would be the name of the game and the mainstay of Troma Entertainment. Increasingly, and the films would get even more punk and anarchistic in style when Micheal

Herz backed off from the co-directing duties after the commercial failure of *Sgt. Kabukiman, NYPD*, and when Lloyd Kaufman took over the helm completely on their next cinematic venture, *Tromeo and Juliet*. 1997's *Tromeo and Juliet* marked another key turn for Troma as Lloyd

Kaufman brought their standard over-the-top exploitation style into an entirely new realm of exploitation films – *Terror Firmer*, *Citizen Toxie: The Toxic Avenger Part IV*, and *Poultrygeist* would follow *Tromeo and Juliet*, those films being as much inspired by the anarchic punk attitude of *Tromeo* as they were by Lloyd Kaufman's first foray into literary film-writing, *All I Need to Know*

about Filmmaking I Learned from the Toxic Avenger (1998, and co-authored by James "Guardians of the Galaxy" Gunn).

Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead, when released in 2007 in a special three-disc DVD edition would include in its liner notes a message from Lloyd Kaufman himself,

declaring this film to be his "swan song"; and the film itself would deliver perhaps the greatest punchline to the most epic cinematic in-joke of all time, which Lloyd Kaufman and Troma carried through five feature films (*Sgt. Kabukiman NYPD*, *Tromeo & Juliet*, *Terror Firmer*, *Citizen Toxie*, and *Poultrygeist*). Thankfully for Troma fans all over the world, this "swan song" declaration was slightly premature. Six years later, an executive at Anchor Bay Entertainment, also Troma fan, would be the catalyst for a Troma-tic reboot of one of their late-eighties/early-nineties indie franchises, *Class of Nuke 'Em High*. Despite 40 years of trials and tribulations of any independent film studio, Lloyd Kaufman and Troma Entertainment had at this point crossed every tier of success that any independent filmmaker could hope to achieve: acknowledgment and recognition by peers and critics, countless international sales and releases, a solid fan base, a long-running hit musical based on their work (*Toxic Avenger the Musical*), a Saturday-morning cartoon series, Hollywood remakes of their older films (*Mother's Day*), and redistribution deals with indie and major North American corporate studios like Vinegar Syndrome and Starz. Under alleged advice from filmmaker Quentin Tarantino, Lloyd Kaufman made the *Return to Nuke 'Em High* re-boot a cinematic "event-film," much as Tarantino had made *Kill Bill Vol. 1* and *Kill Bill Vol. 2* theatrical



"events" (a concept Tarantino had tried to re-create with *The Hateful Eight*). But of course all of this loops right back around to Lloyd Kaufman and Troma once again as they'd already pulled something like this off in the early-nineties with *The Toxic Avenger Part II* and *The Toxic Avenger Part III: The Last Temptation of Toxie*. The first volume in the *Return to Nuke 'Em High* films was something of another key point in Troma's legacy – it would mark Lloyd Kaufman's return to the director's chair for the first time in a decade, and to re-boot a the franchise that he was never going to direct in the first place. 1986's *Class of Nuke 'Em High* was produced by Troma between *The Toxic Avenger* and *Tromeo and Juliet*, and Lloyd Kaufman (under a pseudonym) was forced to take over the directing duties after only a couple of days in production before the whole thing fell apart. Following this, Troma filmmaker Eric Louzil would take over the helm for parts two and three in the early nineties while Lloyd Kaufman was working on the *Toxic Avenger* sequels.

Now, finally, after another three years (and long after a quiet backing-away by Anchor Bay Entertainment), the Troma Team has completed *Return to Nuke 'Em High Vol. 1*, the highly expected sequel to the cliff-hanging *Vol. 1*, which has made its theatrical premiere in Cannes this spring and is now slated to make its Canadian premiere in Vancouver, BC this summer. For those who are interested, this summer Lloyd Kaufman's *Return to Nuke 'Em High Vol. 2* will be making its Canadian theatrical premiere through a rare once-only Vancouver screening, and Lloyd Kaufman himself will be making an extended appearance, at the Cinemafantastique Film Festival at the Vancity Theatre on Saturday, August 26th (Vancouver, BC).

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Stepan Soroka

Interview by Malcolm Hassin

Absolute Underground: What's your first memory of skateboarding?

Stepan Soroka: Probably seeing my brother do it. Just watching him.

AU: Do you remember how old you were?

SS: I was around 9 or 10.

AU: Where did you grow up?

SS: Grand Forks, British Columbia.

AU: Growing up in Grand Forks, what was the skateboard scene like?

SS: At the time, when I was first starting, it was really good. There was no skatepark, but there were a lot of homemade obstacles people would bring to a flat area. Launch ramps, flat bars, things like that. We would get a hot session going with a bunch of people. Everybody would bring a box or a flat bar or something, kinda just do it yourself and make the scene, then shit kinda died off later on.

AU: Is that when you found yourself out west?

SS: Eventually, but it was a lonely few years of pretty much me and one other dude, skating our skate park that eventually got built in Grand Forks by Spectrum.

AU: How many skate parks are there in Grand Forks?

SS: Well there's one, we got it when I was in the eighth grade, the skate generation above me

worked for years and years to get it. Shortly after it got built, people kinda moved away, or at that time skating wasn't so hot anymore, so there were some quiet years. It was also a replica of the Crackt pipe, it was a concrete version of that.

AU: What were your influences in skateboarding growing up?

SS: My brother first of all, and my cousin. First pros I remember looking up to were some of the dudes from the first Tony Hawk game, Muska and Bob Burnquist. I remember being a huge Muska fan when I first started skating, 'cause he was hot, dude, he was the shit at that time. Those was some of my early influences.

AU: And now?

SS: My friends here in Vancouver who skate, people who skate this ramp, and people that skate Hastings bowl. And then as far as professional skateboarders, I look up to Peter Hewitt, I like his style quite a bit, Navarette, Sam Hitz.

AU: How do you think skateboarding has changed over the years?

SS: I think the biggest way it has changed since I first started skating, like fifteen, sixteen years ago, is the way that media has changed, and how a lot of skating basically happens on the internet these days. It used to be, you would see the progression month by month as the magazines came out and you would get a video premiered every once and a while, so it would kinda be progressive steps. I think that's the biggest way it has changed. And I think there is also a huge global explosion of DIY skate parks, which I think is really sick. We have seen that become a lot more common over the last ten years, which I think is a really great way that skateboarding has changed.

AU: Going back to the media thing, do you think it's positive or negative?

SS: It's different. You have access to a lot more skate media, you can share photos or videos with tons of people, but I feel it can dilute things a little bit and make it less special.

AU: It seems like it comes and it goes super quick.

SS: Yeah it's a little bit of sensory overload sometimes.

AU: What is your background?

SS: My background is Doukhobor on my father's side and Russian on my mother side.

AU: Who are the Doukhobors?

SS: Doukhobors were a religious sect, a community of pacifists who didn't agree with the orthodox church in Russia, who emerged in the 18th century. They were tolerated by some of the tsars, the kings of the empire, and by some they weren't. Eventually they were kicked out of Russia after engaging in mass civil disobedience. They all got together in 1895 and burnt all their weapons in a big bonfire, kind of had this whole ceremony around it. The Doukhobors who were serving in the army laid down their arms and started to refuse to fight. After that the authorities cracked down on them and they had to leave the Russian empire, they basically didn't know where to go. Leo Tolstoy, who wrote *War and Peace*, he financed their passage into Canada and did a lot of the political and bureaucratic work. At the time they came over around 1900, it was the largest group of immigrants Canada had ever seen, and they eventually settled in the Kootenays, which is where I am from. Basically, it's a pacifist sect.

AU: Do you find your background effects your skateboarding at all?

SS: Ah... no... haha. The Doukhobor's slogan is "Toil and Peaceful Life," which emphasizes putting a lot of work into things in order to see the fruits of your labour. Part of the culture is having a lot of patience and putting in a lot of work, and I think skateboarding really demands that, so actually, I would say yes!

AU: What does Sons Of Freedom mean to you?

SS: Sons of Freedom are some of my ancestors, they were basically a splinter cell off the

SHRED SESSION

Doukhobors who took it in more of a radical direction. They didn't want their children to learn English, so the government started arresting them and took their kids away. They retaliated and were some of the first people to be called terrorists in Canada, even though they only ever targeted property, never people. What was the question? What does Sons of Freedom mean to me? I think it means autonomy and resistance to empire.

AU: What are your favourite skate parks?

SS: Leaside, Hastings, Orcas Island, Slocan and this ramp.

AU: Why do you think punk rock and skateboarding go so well together?

SS: Because they are both forms of self-expression and there is room in both for individuality.

AU: What are your favourite tricks to do and or see done?

SS: Well, I really like stand-up front side 5-0s. That's kinda my favorite trick to do 'cause it feels so good. As far as tricks that I like to see done, I like watching Adam George do inverts, they're fucking sick. I also like watching Adam Richter do backside tailsides.

AU: Any closing words? Shout outs? Thank you?

SS: Thanks you to you and Andrew, for having this ramp here and really giving a gift to the Vancouver skateboard community. Big thank you to PD, Jeff, Sam and Mike at Skull Skates and the Hot Shop for supporting my skating. It means a lot!

AU: Thanks Step.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Jiles Barrett

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4th - Precious dudes, Beaverette, Montego Bay	20th - iron skies w/ whelming, ar stee	1st - Dj Roy's Filthy Show	20th - Art Signified presents: TBA
5th - Modified ghost presents Slough Peg	24th - bring your dead w/ corvus, archeon, 2 shadows	2nd - GOLERS, Surrounded by Idiots Old Derelicts Stink Horn	22nd - Neck of the woods CD release party w/ gross misconduct, mountain man, giants arise
11th - Nyb Presents bex phiffer's bday w/ still sprits, staggers and jags	25th - john and the whistles w/ war amp, muffeduster, kownter points, Cee u Nexx Tuesdys	8th - Nyb Presents: TBA	
12th - Denny Echo w/ Shit talkers and guests		9th - Westway, Precious Things, Nower Never	
18th - NYB presents Parnel, You Big Idiot, Anteater, Greatest Sons	26th - NYB presents Obscene being, Reds, Crab legs, Spewers	15th - Michelle Joly w/ Guests	23rd - Fableway w/ shockload, contra code, guests
19th - Art Signified presents Ninjay Spy and guests		16th - NYB presents: River Jacks, Mansbridge, Anthems, The Dead Hits	29th - Westway, Remedials, Caustic Soda Pop, Trade your Children

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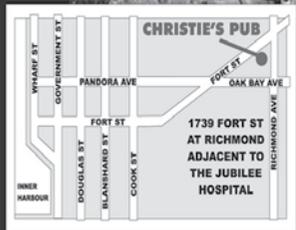
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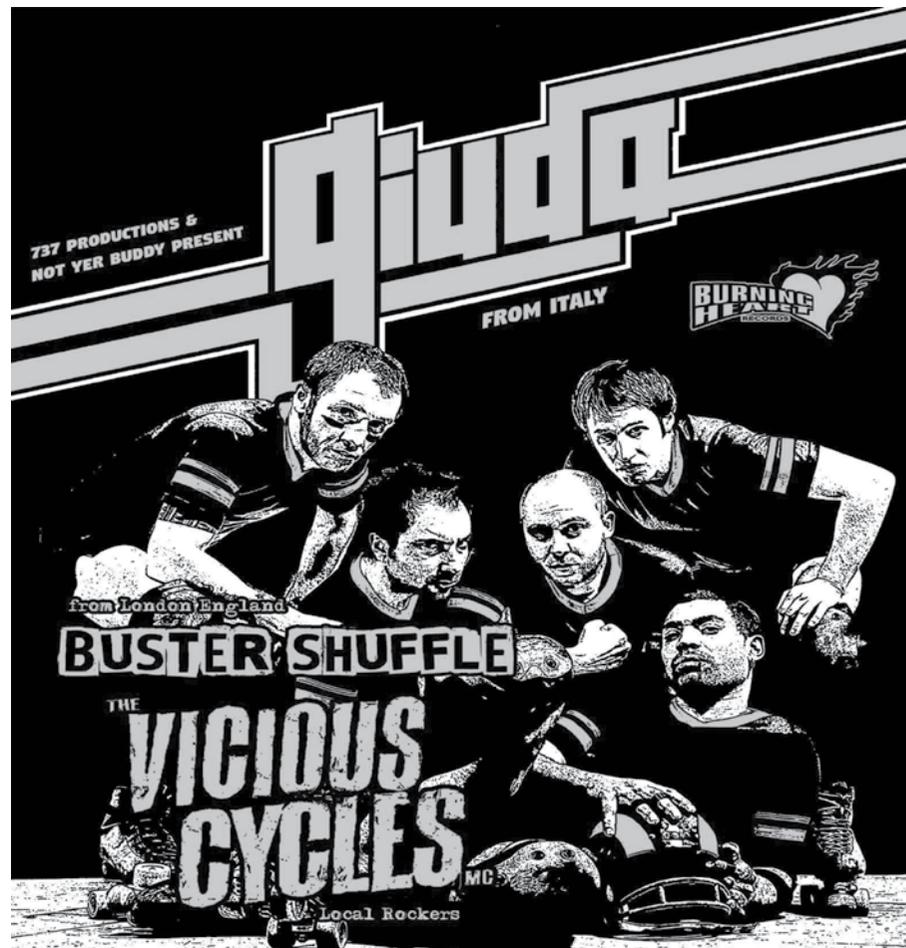
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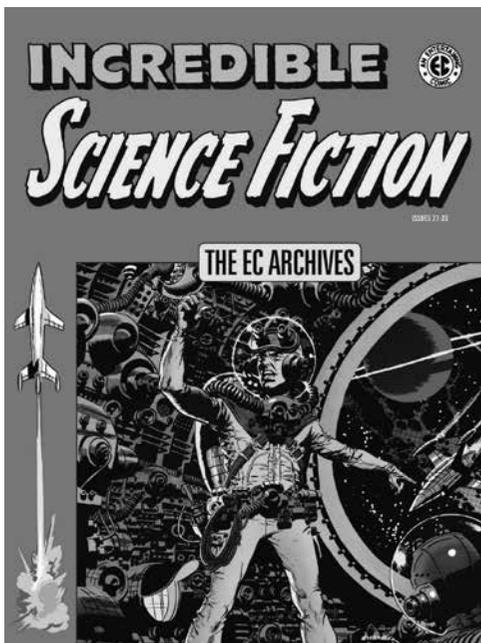
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Absolute Comic-Geekdom

The EC Archives Gets Weird with Science
 By Ed Sum

Not every newcomer or collector of EC Comics can afford to buy the original books. They helped lay the foundation for what would be the American comic book and Max Gaines, the founder of the company, is considered a pioneer. His son William inherited the throne and he expanded the line to include horror, suspense, science, military and crime fiction. During his tenure, these books saw widespread success and also suffered from scrutiny because of the art. Enter the Comics Code Authority (CCA); to understand what went on here, readers can now look at essays, or buy Dark Horse Comic's release of the next volume of a long series reprinting this company's works: *The EC Archives*. Coming August 2017, this is incredible science fiction. Issues 27 to 33 are covered in this latest volume. In total, the reprint has 232 pages of varying content! The introduction explains the climate when censorship hit the comic book world and how it affected the titles Gaines wanted to publish. William had more of a problem, and the foreword from comic book historian Mark Evanier delves



into a story about how Frank Frazetta got his work published in *Weird Science* before the book changed names to meet approval by the CCA.

Reading these books now, in this remastered edition, is a trip. The faith and dedication these masters had for telling a compelling tale can be seen in the first story I immediately flipped to, "I, Robot." The next tale I had to read was, "You Rocket." Both stories follow along similar themes, and they were the highlights as I explored the digital preview edition. The colours are bold and the art is crisp. Because of this volume, I'm tempted to pick up what I have missed. Sadly, the lack of shelf space dictates what I must have. My fondness for older science fiction narratives in comics outweighs any modern tale, and my love for traditional horror is best explored with EC's *Haunt of Fear* and *Tales from the Crypt*. Both have also been reprinted been Dark Horse. This company took over the chores since 2013 and I am very glad to see them preserve comic book history. If only I had the shelf space so I can pull all these other series together to read, I would be in cosmic nirvana. This volume offers the fantastic work from writers and artists: Jack Oleck, Al Feldstein, Wally Wood, Bernard Krigstein, Joe Orlando, Jack Davis, Roy G. Krenkel, and Al Williamson.

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B.A. Johnston

National Condiment
Interview by Ira "IKEA Hotdog" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Can we go hang out and do this interview in your mom's minivan?

B.A. Johnston: I didn't drive, I got someone else to drive.

AU: Your mom?

BJ: No! She doesn't like to drive to the shows.

AU: She's making your bed right now?

BJ: She doesn't do that either, I have my own apartment in the house, so it's not the same thing. Like the Fonz when he lived above the garage.

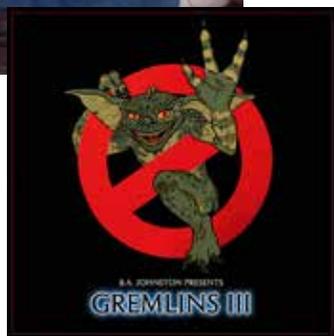
AU: Who are we talking to officially?

BJ: B.A. Johnson, Hamilton entertainer.

AU: We saw another one-man act today called Ham the One-Man Band.

BJ: That's a good name, it reminds me of my love of ham. It's not Ham from Canned Ham, is it? I've opened for him before.

AU: Do anything for Record Store Day today?



record, it's available from the trunk of my car.

AU: What about this Gremlins remake talk?

BJ: Yeah before they remake *Gremlins 3*, I jumped the gun on that, I suppose.

AU: Is it a Gremlins remake or Gremlins 3?

BJ: The original actor, he says they're going to do an actual sequel of *Gremlins 3*, not a reboot, with the original cast. I think he might be delusional.

AU: Do you have a new song about Gremlins?

BJ: No! I don't. The whole thing about *Gremlins 3* was kind of the idea of, something that should exist but it doesn't. Seems obvious, but will never exist. I just thought *Gremlins 3* was funny.

AU: You have a circle with a line through it...

BJ: Oh god no. I go to record stores, but not on Record Store Day... there's lines and it's annoying.

AU: We need VHS day.

BJ: I would actually support that wholeheartedly. I'm ready for VHS day.

AU: Last time you told me Gremlins 3 was going to be your last record and last tour.

BJ: It could be. I was getting pretty sour, I played the same set for like three years, I didn't write any new songs, so I was bummed. But now I'm not as miserable about things, so yeah. *Gremlins 3* is the new

BJ: Yeah it's a *Ghostbusters 2* logo, but with gremlins, going "three". They only have three claw finger things. There can never be a *Gremlins 4*.

AU: What are some of the stand-out songs?

BJ: It's weird, there's a lot of songs about beer. Songs about drinking in a canoe, songs about drinking in the back of a car, songs about cheap alley beers. I drank a lot when I wrote it.

AU: Any new videos?

BJ: Yeah, they made a video for "Drive Through Beef," it's about my dad, 'cause he goes to Burger King and he forgets to say no mayonnaise, and he's always enraged about it, like, "I was at Burger King and they put mayonnaise on my Whopper!"

AU: Do you have any new jokes yet?

BJ: Yeah I have like two or three new jokes, maybe? And some new songs in the set.

AU: What will be your grand finale tonight?

BJ: I go in the bathroom and sing a song. I used to shoot fireworks in the bar, out the door but I've hit an owner's car a bunch of times, and then I stopped doing it after that.

AU: Sparklers are still ok though?

BJ: Yeah I was worried about it, but I talked to some of the opening bands and was like, "I'm worried about sparklers," and the one guy was like, "Dude they put those on kids' birthday cakes!"

AU: You should play Portland with Mr. Plow!

BJ: Yeah we've talked about it. One day.

AU: You'd be a one-man band supergroup...

BJ: A two-man band, yeah that would be good.

AU: Can we expect anything special tonight?

BJ: Nah, same crap.

AU: How many sweatshirts are you wearing?

BJ: Only one man, I don't know what you're talking about, why would I wear more than one

sweatshirt, that sounds ridiculous.

AU: Any new foods that you've discovered?

BJ: I ate a sub that was salami, roast beef and gravy called the Belly Buster, it was not good.

AU: What do they call a donair in Nova Scotia?

BJ: It's like a shit bag n belly pop or belly wash or something. I'm pretty loyal to King of Donair.

AU: You ever been invited on a TV show like Trailer Park Boys?



BJ: I'm just waiting for that phone to ring.

AU: If Nardwuar is a national treasure, what is B.A. Johnston?

BJ: I dunno man, what's below treasure?

AU: Condiment?

BJ: I feel like I'm a test, you have to sit through my set at one point, it's like a national exam.

AU: What's the next album gonna be?

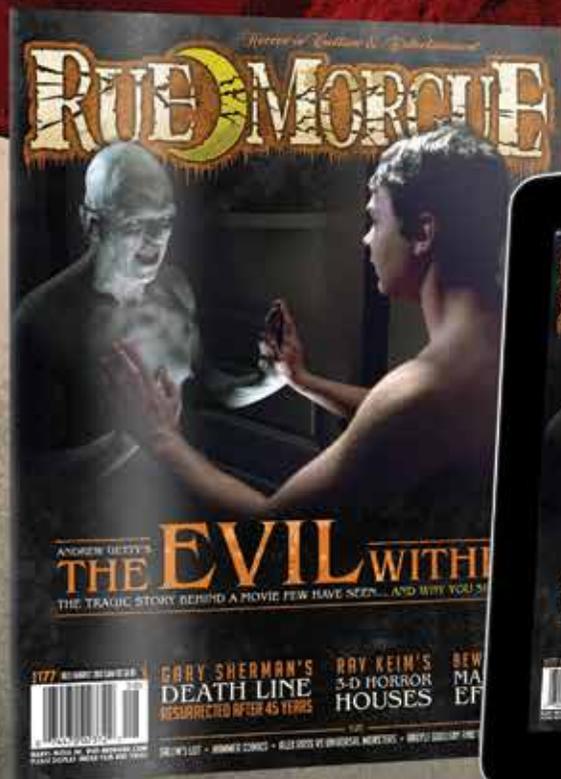
BJ: *Gremlins 4*.

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