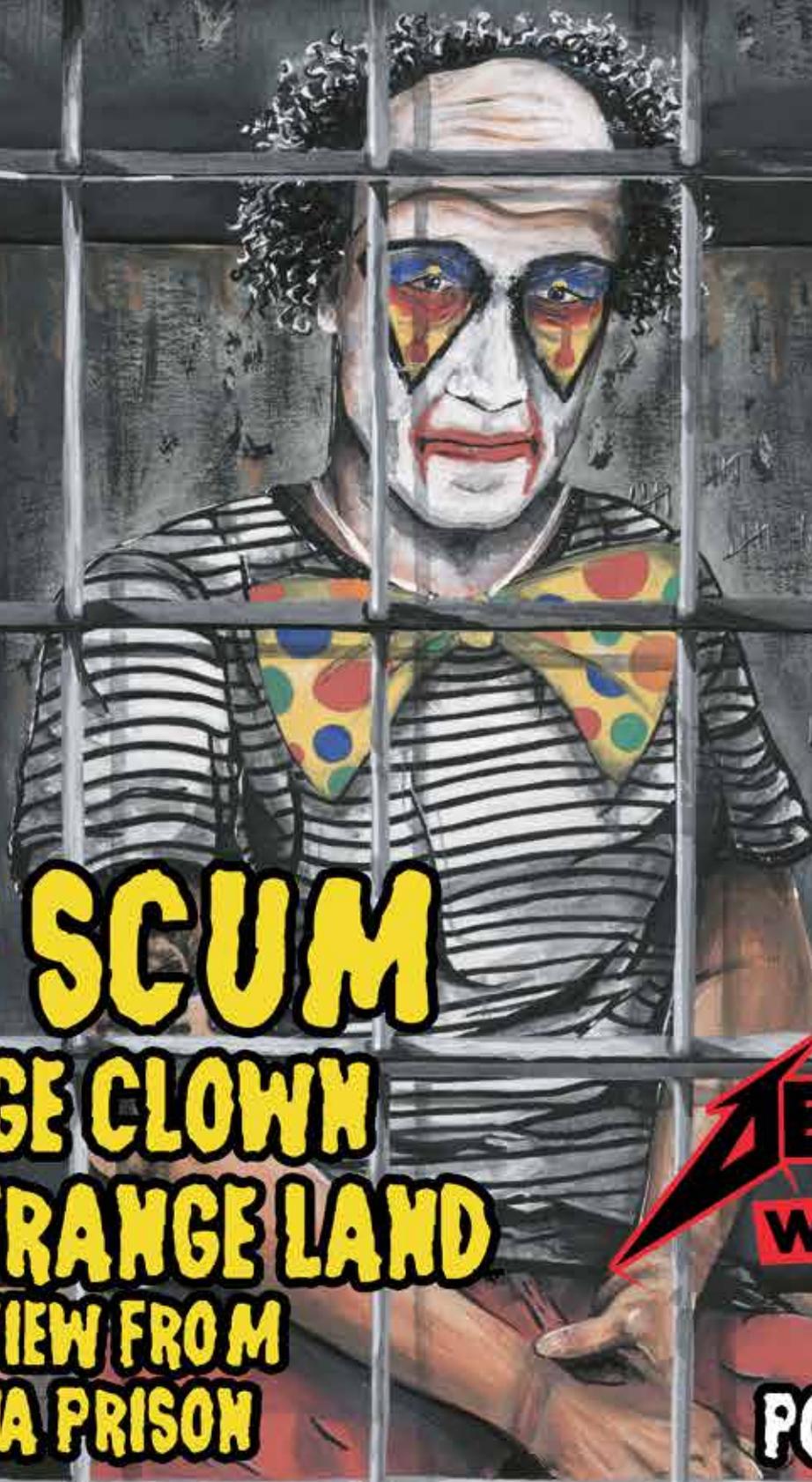


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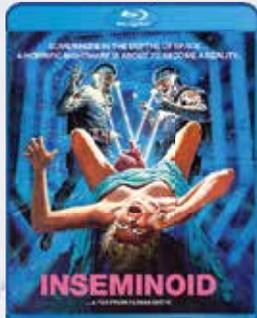
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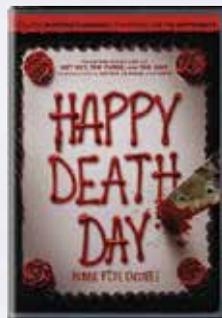
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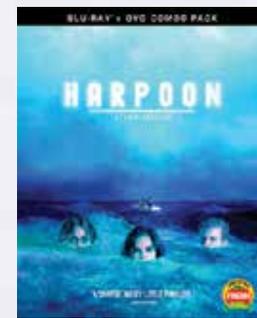
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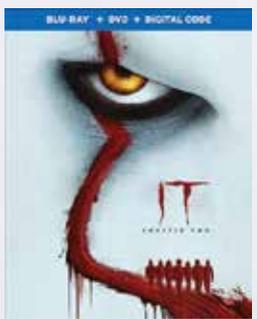
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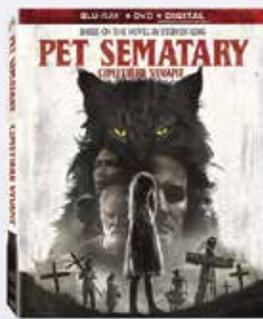
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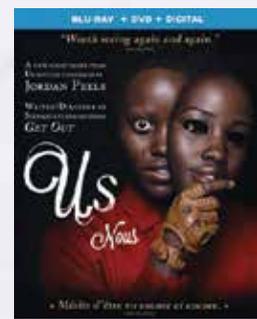
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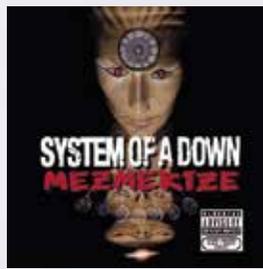
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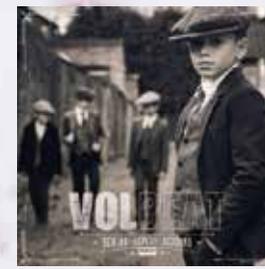
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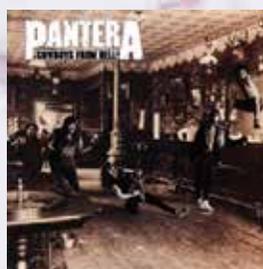
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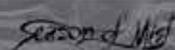
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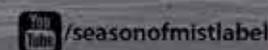
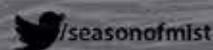
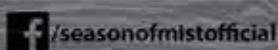


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ROYAL TUSK - 17/FEB - THE FOX CABARET, VANCOUVER  
AMERICAN NIGHTMARE - 23/FEB - IMPERIAL, VANCOUVER  
CARNIFEX & 3TEETH - 17/MAR - IMPERIAL, VANCOUVER  
DECIBEL TOUR 2020 FEATURING MAYHEM & ABBATH - 18/MAR - IMPERIAL, VANCOUVER  
THY ART IS MURDER - 1/APR - THE RICKSHAW, VANCOUVER  
TIGER ARMY - 4/APR - THE RICKSHAW, VANCOUVER  
BELVIDERE - 4/APR - THE BILTMORE, VANCOUVER  
SLEEPING WITH SIRENS - 20TH APRIL - THE VOGUE, VANCOUVER  
MUDHONEY - 30/APR - IMPERIAL, VANCOUVER | 1/MAY - CAPTIAL BALLROOM, VICTORIA  
DEAFHAVEN - 2/MAY - IMPERIAL, VANCOUVER  
BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME - 25/MAY - IMPERIAL, VANCOUVER  
CALIGULA'S HORSE - 9/JUN - THE BILTMORE, VANCOUVER

### ALBERTA

THY ART IS MURDER - 3/APR - STARLIGHT - EDMONTON 4/APR - DICKENS - CALGARY  
TIGER ARMY - 6/APR, UNION HALL - EDMONTON | 7/APR PALACE THEATRE, EDMONTON

### SASKATCHEWAN

JIMMY EAT WORLD - 12/MAY - COORS EVENT CENTRE, SASKATOON

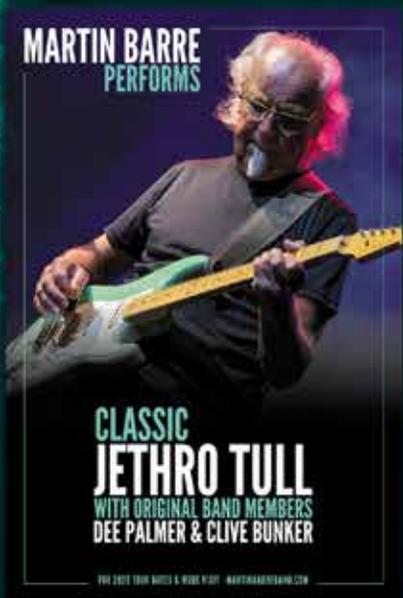
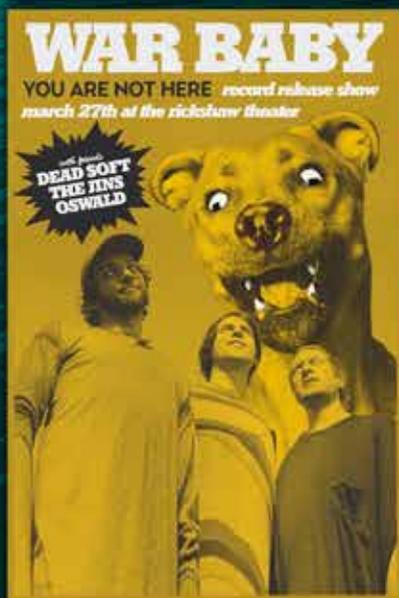
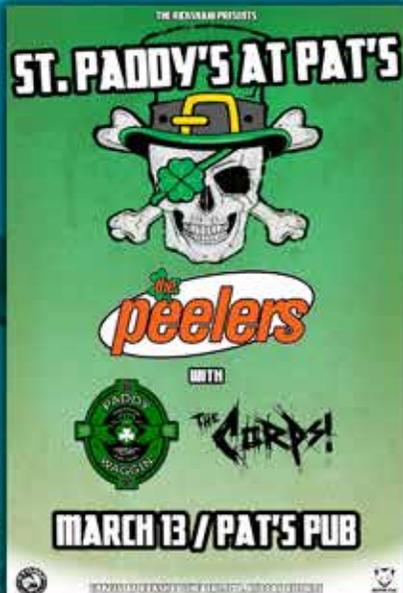
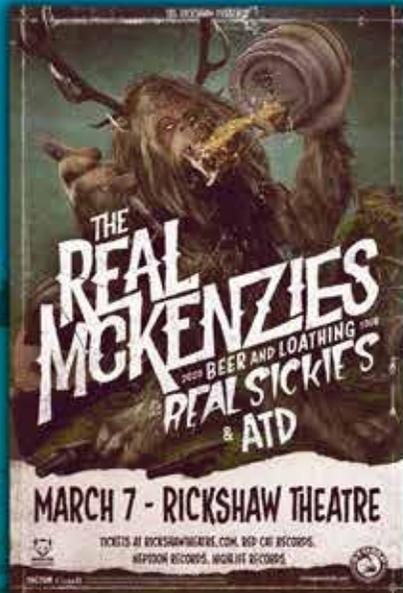
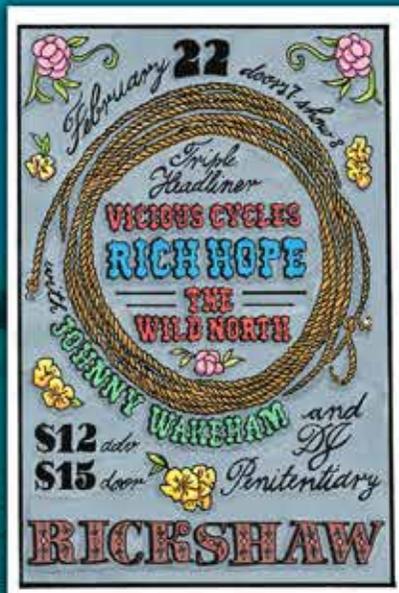
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CHURCH OF MISERY - 23/FEB - THE GARRICK, WINNIPEG

### ONTARIO

PUP - 20/FEB - THE VENUE, PETERBOROUGH  
THEORY OF A DEADMAN - 25/FEB - GUELPH CONCERT HALL, OTTOWA  
CARNIFEX & 3TEETH - 1/APR - THE OPERA HOUSE, TORONTO  
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## Alien Boys Loving the Aliens

Interview by Billy Hopeless

Hello lovers, welcome to my Valentine's Day Column. Now, I was planning on just interviewing Erin from Alien Boys, but I guess my lucky charms are magically delicious, as the whole gang of punk goddesses came to the table. Who's to complain, let's dig in to a sweet date with the Alien Boys!

**Absolute Underground: Okay, let's start with the name game, Erin Erin Bo Berrin... but seriously, you're not the 1987-1994 early grunge /metal band Alien Boys from Hamburg, so where did you get the name from, and when did you form?**

Erin: We started in 2015. They had been jamming for a while and named the band after a song by the Wipers. I joined a few months after the Rebel Spell ended. It was hard quitting music so abruptly, and I was really happy to find cool people to jam with.

**AU: I first fell in love with your music when I heard your debut cassette demo, titled "Self-Critical Theory," played over and over on a car stereo. Why did you choose the cassette format and not something really obscure and ground**

**breaking like reel-to-reel? Have you listened to your music on a yellow Sony waterproof Walkman or Teddy Ruxpin doll?**

Lindsay: Can't be that obscure of a format if you still managed to listen to it on your friend's car stereo! I've listened to the tape on a Walkman yes, but it wasn't waterproof. Cassettes are cheap and fast to make, and still as or maybe even more accessible than a CD, but more tangible than just an online release. Plus, analog formats are cooler. We've got a few band members with significant cassette collections, so there's definitely an aspect of preference there. However we did make a CD version of the demo for our Canadian tour, 'cause we wanted to make sure we had versions that were accessible for as many people as possible.

**AU: Well thankfully your latest release, Night Danger (way better name than Night Rangers) is out on vinyl. Tell our music "connoisseurs" what is, in your opinion, the stand-out track on the album that will put 'em in the mood for love.**

Sarah: I guess all of the tracks on the album are about relationships, but it's more relationships to friend circles, music scenes, drugs, booze, violence, stigma... The track "Shadow Puppets," is probably my favourite track on the album. It's definitely my favourite to perform. It's about the relationship between you and the things you hide from view. About how you cope or deal with those things and who you become in the process. What is the relationship you have with yourself? Do you love yourself and give yourself the space and time to heal after trauma? Or do you push yourself to forget? How far do you go to get there? Is it a song for love? I mean, momma said that you have to love yourself first.



**AU: Enough about the mush and music for now, let's get to know the band. Introduce us to the band, what they play, and with one word describe each member. After that use one or two words to describe the band's sound.**

Sarah: Vocalist, lyricist, melody maker. Sarah's word: word.

Erin: Guitar, solo slayer, back-up vocals. Erin's word: driver.

Alex: Guitar, riff heavy, back-up vocals. Alex's word: glamour.

Megan: Bass, hella chiller. Megan's word: squats.

Lindsay: Drums, socializer, sick hair. Lindsay's word: sunglasses.

**AU: I guess before we did the group we should have started as a one-on-one sorry, but Hopeless knows, anything goes.**

**Anyway, from your time in Rebel Spell to this band, you're one of my fave guitarists to watch because you play hard yet tastefully, and always seem to be loving every note and chord. Who were/are your fave guitarists and who made you want to play guitar?**

Erin: I started playing guitar when I was a little kid, long before I discovered punk, so I wanted to be a guitar hero like Angus Young or Slash. Once I started playing in bands, my motivation became more about how to work together in a group, and how to write music that brings out the best in everybody in the band.

**AU: You've just had your first taste of touring with this band, what's the craziest place you've played, and the worst thing you ate on tour?**

Sarah: Not the first taste of touring! We crossed Canada in the summer of 2017 in Lindsay's van. It was a solid five weeks. I think we went

## VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

swimming in over 20 bodies of water. That broke up the long drives nicely. Bonus points for keeping the van smelling mostly ok, too!

As for this last tour in 2019, we played our last show in the states at this really wild dive in

Columbus, Ohio called Dirty Dungarees. It is a laundromat AND a bar. I fell in love with the place. You walk in and there are the bright, fluorescent bulbs are reflecting off water stained tiles on one side, and then a hallway type small bar setup is on the other side. It had random arcade games scattered about. All the right graffiti in the bathroom stalls. And a very chill bartender. Great concept. 10/10. The worst thing I ate on tour? A pickled egg in a bag at a gas station. No one needs that on tour. Especially not in the van.

**AU: Since this is my Vancouver Vengeance Valentines column, if you were writing me and the other lovers out there a Valentine's Day card, what would the poem inside say?**

Sarah: "Let's put the NES back in valentines and go play Dr. Mario at my place."

**AU: Well thank you Erin and all, thank you Alien Boys, for this wonderful time. Before leaving, tell us what's next on the date book for the Alien Boys who are girls, who are girls but called boys, always must be someone you really love gang?**

Erin: We are about to go on a writing and recording binge. We wrote some new tunes for you Billy, can't wait for you to hear them!

[alienboys.bandcamp.com](http://alienboys.bandcamp.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Billy Hopeless





with faster stuff than we usually play.  
 JT: We formed because we wanted to represent VI at Jaks parties. We got sick of watching from the crowd and decided to put something together to fall back on, side band-style. And it ended up being our main band.

**AU: Who's in the band and what other bands have they been in?**

DJ: Merlin on bass, he also plays guitar in Frostbacks and bass in Keg Killers, so

the moment.

JT: We've all been in bands together. It's a fucked up family tree with only three branches that make up about 15 bands. Rent Snorter and I have played in bands together since '92, list is too long. Merlin has been in bands with both of us... not even sure which band I'm on stage with sometimes. We're from an island, what can I say?

**AU: How would you describe Fully Crazed's sound for someone who has never heard you guys before?**

DJ: We created the sound known as black punk, that was coined by our buddy Rowland Jak over in Vancouver from the band Edger. He would describe us as black punk because we're mixture of old school heavy metal like Venom, Raven, and Motörhead, and we like punk rock like Black Flag, the Germs, Circle Jerks, so we put those in a pot, mix it up and you pretty much got the Fully Crazed sound. The Keg Killers play slow, and we wanted to play a bit of faster stuff, but not overboard, nothing like grindcore. Just old school like I said, Motörhead and Venom, think that.

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

JT: Our songs are about skateboarding, running from the cops, violence and drugs.

DJ: All of our songs are about skateboarding, getting arrested, using drugs, catching sexually transmitted diseases, and just having a disregard for the law and society in general.

**AU: Do you have an album out or anything new in the works?**

DJ: We have an EP coming out to start, self-released right now, and it was recorded in Victoria by Tolan McNeil and mixed by Geza X.

JT: We have a four-song seven-inch on the way that will be out in March on DOG Records. Full length in the planning stages.

**AU: How was your recent show in Seattle opening for Poison Idea's last Pacific Northwest show?**

# VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY JT:

The Poison Idea show was so fun. Shutdown played with them back in the 90s and the Frostbacks more recently. So we've known those guys for years, but it was an honour to play that show. Seattle where the skies are ugly and the girls are grey. That was our first show there, so that was kind of neat.

DJ: Seattle totally went off. We can't wait to go back.

**AU: What's on the horizon?**

DJ: We just have a few local shows on the horizon and then TSOL for three dates in Washington and Oregon

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

DJ: Nothing too crazed... just stay out of our singer Mark's way, he may shotgun a beer, do a skateboard trick, or vomit, or itch his own testicle with the mic and then whack you with it. Not his testicle, the mic.

**AU: What is unique about Victoria's music scene? Any other bands to check out?**

DJ: What is a Victoria scene? Didn't really know there was one...

All the bands here are good, always have been... I like R.E.K. and No Heart lately, I play them a lot at 477 Tattoo. I loved Holocaust Lord, too!

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

DJ: I eat salads sometimes and have been known to listen to U2's *War*.

**AU: Anything else to share or promote?**

DJ: Shout out to Reed Mullin from COC, who we just lost!

JT: Keep an eye peeled for our self-titled four-song seven-inch and upcoming 12-inch called *Off The Hook*, coming this summer on DOG Records.

[facebook.com/Fully-Crazed-874158482763868/](https://www.facebook.com/Fully-Crazed-874158482763868/)

## Fully Crazed Crazed and Confused

Interview by AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Who dis?**

JT: Jak Tripper here- Guitar player of Fully Crazed and JAK's team skateboarder.

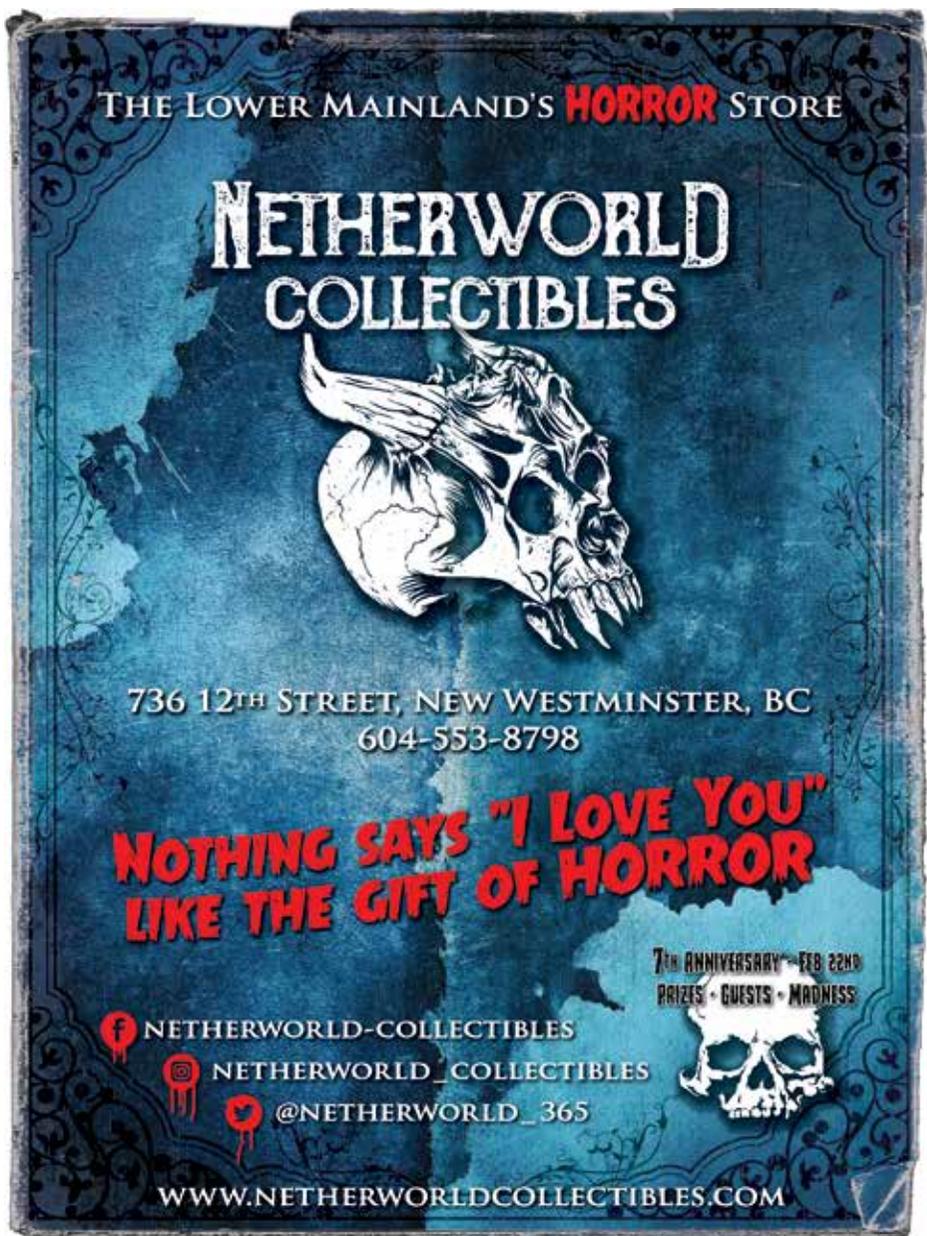
DJ: This is Rent Snorter, a.k.a. Dustin Jak, drummer from Fully Crazed. I also sing for the Keg Killers and tattoo in Saanich... sometimes I skateboard, too.

**AU: What was the origin of Fully Crazed? How did you form and what are you all about?**

DJ: Fully Crazed was Willy Jak's idea because we wanted to have a band of all guys from our Jak skateboard crew that would play shows at some of the parties up and down the coast and also I think that Willy had just seen Venom live so he called me the day after he saw Venom and said, "Let's start a band!" Pretty much something like that. We had been messing around for a bit with heavier stuff... we were jamming with Kelly from OOC and Blasphemy at one point, fucking around



we lock in pretty good on the rhythm section. Mark was in The Banned and Code 19. Willy was in Dayglos forever and Frostbacks, and me and him played in Assbackwards, Don Teflon, and The Pricks together, so we were no strangers to danger! I was in Shutdown and The Excessives and still do Keg Killers, too... we are just resting at



# CALGARY CARNAGE



## Third Chamber

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

Jamie McIsaac: Guitar, infamous for wearing long johns year-round.

Jay: Best known for being Kranky Jay a.k.a. Kranky Jay IPA.

Shane: Vocals, I've been told from a former band member that I'm infamous for joining bands and, once they become popular, quitting.

### AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

Jamie: We are made up from former members of other well-known Alberta metal projects such as Thorazine, Disciples of Power, Exit Strategy, WAKE, We Found The Body, as well as current members

of After Earth, Culled, Megiddo and more. We've all known each other for years. Jay, Dustin, Russ and I have all been in bands together before, so the four of us locked up tight and then recruited Shane and dragged him down to Calgary from Edmonton to jam. After one jam we clicked, and Third Chamber was born!

### AU: You released your debut album in November 2019, how has the reception been so far?

Jamie: Reception has been great. Jon Asher has helped us spread our seed

worldwide and the reviews and feedback have been awesome. We did an Alberta mini tour late last year and it was a success. We are looking forward to keeping the train rolling in 2020.

### AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

Shane: The lyrical content is a brutal reflection of the current state of the world. From negative motivations of religious organizations, the effects of social media on mental distress, the ever-growing pride of ignorance, the exploitation of our natural resources for the profit of the wealthy and the manipulation and lack of actual truth in most media consumed by the ever-growing bewildered herd.

### AU: What does 2020 hold for you as a band? Will you be touring to promote the new album? Doing any more recording?

Jamie: We want 2020 to be a year for writing and recognition. As the reviews of the EP come in, we are starting to get a bit of a following. Hopefully we can get onto some decent shows and festivals in order to get the music out there.

Jay: We have already started writing the follow-up full length, and we are super excited with the direction it's going.

### AU: What are your hopes for the future of the band?

Jamie: Near future, as mentioned, is to get on some decent bills so we can spread the word but for long term I think we are all on board to see what we can do with the full length and get some small tours going in



North America and eventually venture onward and upward to all parts of the world!

Jay: Record some more music that people hopefully enjoy and just have fun rockin' out.

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

Jamie: Hmm, one thing I've noticed about myself is that I write some of my best riffs while my two-year-old daughter is napping or sleeping after a busy day. I put my family first, but it seems that with the little time I have to write these days, I really make the most of it and the creative juices have been flowing nicely!

Jay: We are very hard workers and have been known to enjoy partying and letting loose. But we do our best to bring the heaviness to every show!

Shane: I have been very fortunate to have an amazing wife and little boy in my life. Professionally I've been making video games for the last 16 years and between the extra effort it and the bands require, they've always been there for me.

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

Shane: We hope you enjoy the music and that the meaning behind the words evokes change, freethought and empathy.

Jay: Cheers to all the beer drinkers and free thinkers out there for taking the time to read this article and check out the band. Cheers!

Jamie: Reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost!! But upmost... Don't be a dick!

[thirdchamber.bandcamp.com](http://thirdchamber.bandcamp.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Derek Sampson

### FEBRUARY 2020

- 05 TKRS: MUSIC TRIVIA NO COVER
- 08 ROSS THE BOSS
- 09 TALESPIIN TRIVIA NO COVER
- 10 LIVE D&D
- 11 GOGO BATTLES
- 13 FAKE MUSTACHE
- 14 VALENTINE'S DAY DRAG BALL

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+ FATHER MOON
- 22 RIOT CITY  
+ TRAVELER + ROAD RASH + CADAVER DOG
- 23 RPG ALLIANCE MINI CON
- 26 CHURCH OF MISERY
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- 16 CRITICAL MISSES
- 18 ELECTRON
- 19 SIX DEGREE OF MOVIE TRIVIA NO COVER
- 20 BONDS OF MARA + INVERTIGO

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- 10 GOGO BATTLES
- 17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY  
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- 19 FAKE MUSTACHE
- 27 INSOMNIUM NO COVER BEFORE 10PM
- 28 HANG THE DJ RETRO • NEW WAVE • CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE • GOTH • INDUSTRIAL • BRITPOP

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## Choices Made

Interview by U Editorial

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

A: You are talking to Andrew from the band Choices Made. Infamous... hah, not sure I'm too infamous here in Canada, but I'm sure where I'm from in South Africa they might have some stories to tell.

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?**

A: Choices Made are a Toronto-based hardcore/punk band consisting of Josh on vocals, Steve on guitar, Mike on drums and myself on bass. Started in 2018 with us all coming from different parts of the world (Josh and Steve, originally from Ontario, returned from Vancouver and Mike from Cleveland) and meeting up like a lot of bands do, via Craigslist. It's a bit tricky to try explain the band's sound but it's a mix of old school NY hardcore with California punk rock. Good-time punk rock with some heavy hooks.

**AU: You have some rad gigs coming up this spring, tell us about them? Where and when can we see you play live next?**

A: Yea, we have a few set in stone and a lot more in the works. Right now we have Saturday April 4th at Ellen's Bar in Brampton, Saturday April 18th at Bovine Sex Club in Toronto, Saturday April 25th at The Atria in Oshawa and then back to The Atria for the "Black Eye Fest" on Saturday 20th of June.

**AU: What can we expect to experience from your live show? Why is live performance**

**so important, particularly in the hardcore world?**

A: Loud, fast, energetic and sweaty. We want everyone to have a good time. Enjoy themselves and let loose. Those 30-40 minutes on the stage are the most fun and exciting times for all of us in the band so we put 110% into it and get stoked when we see others enjoying it whether they're just tapping their foot or going off.

Live shows are important because that's what hardcore and punk have always been about. The community and the camaraderie. That's how you really experience a hardcore band. There's a feeling you get at a live show that you'll never get listening to it on your iPhone.

**AU: You have one EP up online, released in 2018 - are you working on new music right now, and when can we look forward to hearing it?**

A: Yep, you can find our first EP called *Don't Settle For Them!* on all streaming platforms, and yeah, we're in the final stages of mixing and mastering some songs for an EP that should be out Feb/March.

**AU: What else does 2020 hold for you as a band? Will you be touring at all? Shooting more music videos?**

A: We're really looking forward to 2020. We felt like the last year has been a year of us just finding our feet and now we're really ready to hit the ground running and do as much as we can. Like I said, we have this EP coming out in Feb/March, and we'll have another one mid to end of the year ready to release, too. Definitely going to be trying to get a music video or two released and absolutely want to

get touring and playing as much as we can. So if anyone wants to see us in their city, just get in touch and we'll try make it work.

**AU: Where can we keep up-to-date on your music and touring schedule?**

A: You can catch us on Instagram at @choicesmadeto and Facebook at www.facebook.com/choicesmadeto. BandsInTown and Songkick, are always updated with all our shows and tours and then obviously Spotify and BandCamp (www.choicesmade.bandcamp.com/releases) etc.

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

A: Hmmm, everything's already been said. Choices Made are a band who were brought together by a mutual love for hardcore and punk music. We create music that what we want to hear and hope that others enjoy it too.

## TORONTO TRASH AU:

**Any final words for our readers?**

A: Thank you *Absolute Underground* for the interview and a huge thanks to anyone who has ever come to a Choices Made show, bought merchandise or just came and said hi. We really appreciate the support we've had over the last year and we're looking forward to some more good times. Come on out, come and say hi, let's have a drink and let's build this punk and hardcore scene up and support each other.

@choicesmadeto

facebook.com/choicesmadeto

PHOTO CREDIT: J.J. Collins



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## The TV Dead

Interview By AU Editorial

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

TVD: Larry, guitar and vocals, Scoco, drums and vocals, known for playing shows all over the island as Street Sweeper, and Mark Lag, bass.

**AU: Give us a brief history of your band, who are you and how did you form?**

TVD: Out of the ashes of Street Sweeper, we became the TV Dead.

**AU: What is the band all about? What can we expect to hear/see at your performance?**

TVD: Bring your board and join the skate pit.

**AU: Where and when can we see you play next?**

TVD: We are always playing here in Ukee.

**AU: Tell us about the Ukee punk scene! For such a small place, you guys seem to throw some seriously rad gigs.**

TVD: Ukee is chill it's a small scene but everyone is very supportive, plus there is the Ukee Bowl.

**AU: What's next for TV Dead? Will you be touring or recording this year?**

TVD: We have two EPs out, and will have another by summer. There will be some mini island tours, look for posters at your local record store and skate shop.

**AU: Where can we keep up to date with your music/ events online?**

TVD: thetvdead.com, no social media.

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

TVD: Mark Lag can't kickflip.

**AU: Final words for our readers?**

TVD: Thanks to *Absolute Underground*, listen to Modern Terror, go surf with the Tubuloids, keep your wheels down and remember, halfpipe, not gaspipe.

thetvdead.com

PHOTO SOURCE: The TV Dead



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## Sasquatch Brothers Ask the Questions

### 1. As a Sasquatch in disguise as Donald Trump, you would...

- a) eat KFC on a gold-plated plane while tweeting "Sasquatches definitely don't exist."
- b) Move to russia
- c) continue work on the biggest nuclear bomb, and upon success blow up the world

d) snort cocaine off strippers asses, spend 7 billion dollars on fast food, drugs and imagine you were the President of the United States.

e) do suicide

### 2. As a Sasquatch, what would you rather eat?

- a) Shit
- b) human brains sauteed in a organic vegetable medley. Ingredients such as freshly chopped peyote buttons, diced magic mushrooms in a slow baked whiskey irish creme sauce and THC butter garlic toast.
- c) week-old sushi
- d) nothing because you'd be starving yourself

in protest of the great gorillah hunt and other animal atrocities world wide

e) baby maggots (steamed)

### 3. If you were a Sasquatch, who / what would you rather have sex with?

- a) an alien
- b) hairy stinkin' Sasquatch
- c) any member of the Gnar Gnars
- d) Kaitlyn Jenner
- e) Sharon Osbourne

flesh-eating and god-hating

c) selling drugs, being a dirty gangster, nightclubs, drugs and being a thug

d) being attracted to super fat, bed-ridden women (back fat)

e) being famous and nothing else, and a lot of fuck you's

### 6. If you were a Sasquatch and you spotted a photographer trying to snap a photo of you, would you...

- a) shoot him / her in the face and disappear into the woods
- b) run as fast as you can
- c) show boat / shake your ass, hope for the glamour shot
- d) attack the human and cut off his left foot, likely leave it on a beach somewhere
- e) try to fuck it

### 7. If you were a Sasquatch and you found out Justin Trudeau was in the looney bin, would you...

- a) laugh and celebrate, claim you knew he was a raving nutjob all along
- b) go to the bin and put him in a straightjacket, steal his sedatives
- c) hope he gets consumed alive by a pyscho cannibal
- d) join him
- e) run for Prime Minister of Canada and show the people what the words "AWESOME EH" really mean

<https://sasquatchbrothers.ca>

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## subculture

By *wendythirteen*

Right wingnuts vs. loony lefties.  
 Psychopathic narcissists vs. attention craving virtue signallers.  
 Rectal ostriches vs. people who simply stand the fuck up.  
 Everything divisive is amplified to eleven.  
 Equality seems a pipe dream.  
 Convictions. I just have to shake my head at those that all of a sudden seem to become shrugging bystanders. I embrace the occasional occurrence of shadenfreude that actually happens once in a blue moon to reinstate your belief in belated karma and that there may be order in the universe.  
 I think as you age you become hyperaware of the absurd audacity of humans that thrive, courtesy of being reckless assholes. Yet, as an attempted member of the integrity gang, you self-chide when you are even close to crossing a line. Patience wears thin when you watch people blatantly scamming, abusing or enabling bullshit, yet they seem to be thriving in this fucked up world.  
 Am I going to recommend musical activities that support event spaces with dangerous and predatory assholes ingrained in the infrastructure? Fuck no.  
 Am I going to put any extra effort to secure a gig for a band with members that have stale, anti-humanitarian views? Nah.  
 I'm sick of this uncaring shit that is sliming our

planet, including the music scene.  
 Corrupt governments and corporations, exploitive industries, scammers, and I'm sick of people sharing debunked misinformation, rampant consumerism and most of the existing 'ism's.  
 I'm livid that greedy developers are vapidly gentrifying the shit out of cities and driving artists out of our dwindling, barely affordable space situations where we created our community hubs.  
 For every heart and soul, cooperative minded, creative minion there is a gaggle of predatory vultures waiting to exploit their blood, sweat and tears industry.  
 Pay to play scamming promoters, venues that fleece percentage fees from performers, evictions on underground spaces that get pig lipsticked into cookie cutter, distressed shabby chic bistros or condos.  
 I guess I have to thank Donald Trump for being the perfect example of 'fuck this shit' for the world. I fucking loathe him. He is the epitome of all the deadly sins, and I'm not even a Christian, but these supposedly moral Christians love him. What the fuck. It's blatant. I find his fanbase of hypocrites despicable. I lost it last night and finally commented on one of his outrageous tweets, stating that he needs to just "Shut the fuck up!"  
 Is social media wreaking havoc on my mental health and sanity? Possibly. The exasperation is real. What started as a promotional gig awareness tool and Scrabble access has turned into an eyerolling, steady stream of bated breath, expletive fuelled tirades. Sitting on my hands doesn't work most days. Malignant political intentions are being normalized, liars are rewarded and as society suffers, it turns a blind eye because no one can be bothered to stand up.  
 Recipe for zero fucks given. To distract from any slippery government gibberish, the mainstream brain is imbedded into their tech gadgets, with side of hyper-sexualized pop culture influencing fast fashion over-consumerism. Wants and

needs have become comingled which leads to wasteful excesses.  
 I appreciate all the people, using any platform they have access to, that speak out, especially those that take to the streets in protest rallies. As a born-again introvert, I guess the internet will have to be that wordy protest platform for me.  
 Maybe my sobriety has ripped off my protective cloak of giving less of a shit and being gregarious. I am noticeably less 'fun' but being a shut-in homebody with home based hobbies is crucial to staying sober. I test myself by still working at a bar and throwing the odd show. It's all I've known for two decades. In / Out. No lurking near temptation. Door gal-ing also doubles as my socialization quota.  
 wendythirteen.  
 Critters, cave, comfort.

## ABSOLUTE SUBCULTURE

Alone yet not lonely.  
 Might be time to become slathered in acrylic paint again. Chalk that up to shit you can do alone, a proper way to vent and possibly eke an existence from.  
 So here I am. I work enough to pay my bills, I volunteer, I'm fortunate enough that my mom throws me some cash every once in a while to help with pesky shit like new teeth courtesy of my lifelong, zero dental plan. I have a place to call my own. Grateful on many levels but still I'm fed up with the bullshit inequality festers on society.  
 This column is brought to you by the rigors of self employment, a solitary yet solidarity oriented psyche, art and music.  
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MAY 12	Swallow The Sun   Infected Rain   Wheel RICKSHAW THEATRE. 254 East Hastings St. Vancouver, BC
MAY 15	MONOUMENTS   Skyharbor   Vespera Venue Nightclub. 881 Granville Street. Vancouver, BC (Early show)
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## Tessitura

Interview by AU Editorial

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

Gord Alexander: Drummer. The only "infamous" member of the band is our mascot, Chelsea. She is a blow-up doll who has earned quite a reputation around the summer festival circuit.

### AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?

GA: Tessitura was originally formed in 2008 by Stephan Ceña, Leilyn McColman, and myself, all of whom are still in the band today. The three of us met in high school and formed the band around our mutual musical tastes. Over 11 years, three albums and a few lineup changes later, we're still kickin'! Our current lineup is: Cyn Mercredi (Lead Vocals), Stephan Ceña

(Guitars, Vocals), Adam Sweeney (Guitars), Leilyn McColman (Bass) & Gord Alexander (Drums).

### AU: Can you describe your music for those of us who've never heard you?

GA: We define ourselves as death/thrash. Our style is made up of a plethora of influences ranging from prog metal, to power metal, to black metal, but the primary bulk of our sound is mostly reminiscent of death metal and thrash metal. If you're into bands such as Revocation, Skeletonwitch and Goatwhore, you might like Tessitura, too.

### AU: You have a pretty badass show coming up this month, tell us about it!

GA: We're honoured to be opening up for Soulfly and Toxic Holocaust! Friday, February 14th at the Starlite Room in Edmonton, AB.

### AU: Any other shows coming up this spring?

GA: Nothing planned at this time. After the Soulfly show, we plan on buckling down to finish and produce our next record.

### AU: What else does 2020 have in store for Tessitura? Any tours, videos, recordings on the horizon?

GA: We are in album mode. Our plan is to release our next record in the fall, so our focus will be primarily dedicated to that project.

### AU: What's the state of the Edmonton metal scene right now? Any up and coming bands or venues you're stoked on?

GA: The Edmonton scene is, as always, small but strong. It's a tight community, and those of us who are a part of it are very loyal. There are a few newer bands that are making waves. Rising Sun and A Modern Prometheus are the two bands I'm really watching for currently. The venue situation, however, isn't quite as strong. The last few years have seen the closures of most of the venues that play underground metal. Luckily, we still have the Rendezvous Pub, Starlite Room/Temple and Shakers Roadhouse to host our shows.

### AU: Where can we find your music online?

GA: YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, BandCamp, Amazon, CD Baby... essentially everywhere.

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

GA: Our latest release is called *Unearth the Underworld*, and was released in 2018. On our various social media pages, you can find a lyric video and play through videos that go alongside the album.

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

GA: We sincerely appreciate everyone who supports underground art.

[www.tessiturametal.com](http://www.tessiturametal.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Dana Zuk Photography



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## In Memoriam: David del Castillo

By Ty Stranglehold

On the afternoon of Wednesday, January 15, 2020 the world, but more particularly, Victoria BC, lost David del Castillo.

Dave, who also went by his stepdad's surname of Knight in his early years, became entrenched in Victoria's tight-knit punk rock and skateboard

community in his early teens. He spent the late 80s to mid 90s shredding local spots and playing in bands such as Onionhouse, The Uniks and Don Teflon. His quick wit, charisma and golden voice made him a natural frontman. In 1992, he met the love of his life, Tara. By the time I met Dave and Tara a decade later, they were married and had three children, Elias, Mia, and Diego (joined a few years later by Benicio). Dave had stepped away from bands to focus on his family and going to school to become an electrician, but by 2002 he was ready to get behind the mic again, forming The Ingrates (which quickly morphed into Three All Campaign). His most recent musical outings were a Don Teflon reunion to raise money for

Alma Libre Futbol Association, the non-profit soccer society for underprivileged children that he co-founded, and Landline (a Victoria punk rock super group that formed for the specific reason of paying tribute to a mutual favourite band of ours, the Big Boys).

To know Dave is to know true friendship. For someone who was so intelligent and well-spoken to also be so inclusive and downright hilarious is a rare commodity. He always listened and made you feel that your opinion mattered (even if it didn't). His musical knowledge and taste were encyclopedic and diverse. He would simultaneously espouse to why Negative

Approach was the quintessential hardcore band while hitting repeat on Gerry & The Pacemakers' "You'll Never Walk Alone" for the millionth time. His eclectic playlists are the stuff of legend, but not nearly as legendary as his unflappable love for his family and friends. His departure has left a giant hole in our hearts and in our community.

So hoist a pint, throw a chorizo coil on the grill and crank up Los Crudos (or Bruno Mars, or Hot Snakes, or Dinosaur Jr., or Black Sabbath, or Lizzo... whatever music makes you happy) to celebrate the life and memory of Dave del Castillo. The best friend a guy could ever have.

We feel ya, Dave. We feel ya.



## Tobe Hooper Appreciating a Horror Underdog

By Vince D'Amato

It was the summer of 2009, and I found myself in a very tiny pub on the outskirts of Soho in London, arguing with a very good friend of mine regarding the merits of Tobe Hooper's cinematic repertoire. My good friend, right up until the day this argument had taken place, had maintained that Tobe Hooper's "only good film" was *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, which he believed was the result of pure accident over any sort of talent. I love my friend, but I honestly couldn't believe that he'd actually thought that – and I told him so. He asked for proof. Reactively, I blurted out, "Lifeforce."

"Okay," he said... "Tobe Hooper made two good films."

Even now, a mile over ten years past that initial argument, my friend will stand solidly behind his opinion that Tobe Hooper only made two good

films during his forty-year career in filmmaking. Fans like myself will tell you differently – fans of Tobe Hooper's Cannon years – fans of *Lifeforce*, *Invaders from Mars*, and most importantly, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2*, which really embodies Tobe Hooper's work with Cannon in the 1980s and showcased that the man really did have a wonderful sense of humour (further evidenced by his one and only novel, *Midnight Movie*). To me, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

*Part 2* is epitomic of Hooper's post-*Texas Chainsaw* work. Although, yes, *Lifeforce* is one hell of a crazy, wild, and sexy ride, too!

Of course there are also fans like myself who consider *Poltergeist* to be part of Hooper's top echelon, and not the result of producer Steven Spielberg's influence. I had been lucky enough to have met Tobe Hooper years ago to hear his side of the *Poltergeist* controversy. It's shitty that an article from the UK was published just weeks prior to Hooper's death in the summer of 2017 where a minor player in the production crew claimed that it was really Spielberg who had directed the film, despite Spielberg's own comments to the



contrary. One with an attitude favourable to the works of both filmmakers can clearly see, with their own two eyes, when watching *Poltergeist* that Tobe Hooper directed the main movie, while Spielberg obviously popped up to direct a few of the second-unit scenes or specific shots. But I admit that I am digressing

here. The whole catalyst for this article was me reminiscing about last year's death of indie genre film auteur Larry Cohen, who, like Tobe Hooper, appeared to have a great sense of humour when it came to his own genre work. His work was always constantly engaging – much like Tobe

Hooper's. Even Hooper's *Eaten Alive* was charming in its won very low-budget way, and his television take on Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* was a solid affair. Ironically, it would be Larry Cohen who would direct the tongue-in-cheek (and preferable, if you were to ask me for the truth) sequel *A Return to Salem's Lot* for Warner Brothers several years after-the-fact. And very much like his creative kindred spirit Larry Cohen, Tobe Hooper would dabble heavily in genre television throughout the eighties and nineties. In fact, after a small falling out with Steven Spielberg post-*Poltergeist*, they would reconcile when Spielberg would hire Hooper to direct episodes of his sci-fi television mini-series *Taken*.



But several years between this, in the later part of the 1980s, post-Cannon films and pre-*Taken*, Tobe Hooper dove into horror television, directing the most terrifying episodes of *Freddy's Nightmares* and the best segment of (sorry, John Carpenter)

*Body Bags*. He then hopped over to the *Tales from the Crypt* television series to direct the very memorable episode "Dead Wait." But it wasn't his episodic television that was a standout, per se, (other than his segment in *Body Bags*, which really made that film), it was his work in made-for-television horror/thriller feature films, that amazingly, nobody talks about. Other than Mick Garris, who discovered actress Madchen Amick and cast her as the lead in Stephen King's *Sleepwalkers*, no other director was able to cast such an attractive light on the up-and-coming starlet until Hooper featured her as a devilish and sexual anti-hero against Anthony "Psycho" Perkins in 1990's *I'm Dangerous Tonight* – Madchen Amick was the iconic "Devil in a Red Dress" for television of the early 90s, up until David Lynch then cast her perfectly for a key role in his new series, *Twin Peaks*.

But all this was just a lead-up to Tobe Hooper wading deeper the world of television movies (1979's *Salem's Lot* notwithstanding), because he was about to quietly unleash a television-thriller masterpiece on Showtime called *The Apartment Complex*, starring Chad Lowe, Tyra Banks, R. Lee Ermye, and Amanda Plummer (which Hooper would frame in a very strange nude scene, completely against type). *The Apartment Complex* was about the protagonist (Chad Lowe) caught in a *Rosemary's Baby* type of murder situation and conspiracy, all set – and completely shot – within the titular *Apartment Complex*, which is designed like a 90s version of a high-fashion laboratory rat maze, complete with a cool courtyard and pool. *The Apartment Complex* is Tobe Hooper at his most

# Absolute Horror



humourous and his most experimental, in a very "Showtime 90s" sort of way that only that time period could explain or commercially support. But it is, in fact, some of his best work.

As Tobe Hooper then began swinging from television movies to direct-to-video films, his style somehow seemed to bulk and expand; there were less restrictions with direct-to-video productions. His style that was carrying VHS movies like *The Mangler* (another Stephen King adaptation) and Tobe Hooper's *Night Terrors* (both film starring Robert Englund, from Hooper's *Eaten Alive*), were far beyond the average direct-to-video horror offerings in the early 1990s, but Hooper never seemed to get credit for that. His hugely successful take on *The Mangler* spawned sequels that went to no-name directors who were willing to make the sequels for peanuts, lacking all of the



boisterous style that had made the first one a home video success. But Hooper would move on to another direct-to-the-video-store production, and one of his best films, just as DVD was coming in and replacing VHS as the mainstream format – *The Toolbox Murders*. This is one of Hooper's more experimental films, harkening back to *The*

*Apartment Complex* from years earlier, and what was so ironic about this film was that Tobe Hooper was directing a remake of a film from the 1970s that had been directly inspired by his own 1974 film, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Was Hooper's remake of *The Toolbox Murders* just as good as those 70s drive-in horror staples? Well,

it was different – it was a look at 1970s iconic horror drive-in cinema as filtered through years of commercial studio horror for film and television and the boom of the home video industry, which saw seemingly endless productions of new direct-to-video films that were



required to maintain the slickness of theatrical Hollywood films, with the help of new and updated cameras, filming techniques, and post-production technology never available in the 1970s. So yeah, it was good, but it was different. Could I tell that Tobe Hooper had directed 2004's *The Toolbox Murders* if his name hadn't been at the top of the DVD box when I'd rented it? Not so much – not like I could tell he'd really directed those scenes in *Poltergeist*.

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## Dan Scum: An Interview from Yokohama Prison

By Nasty from Crackwhore

On December 11, 2017, Dan Scum, a veteran Vancouver punk/metal musician of three decades, emerged from a plane in Narita airport with a guitar case full of illegal cargo. His doomed walk through customs would lead him directly into the arms of Japanese officials and straight to jail. Following eight months in solitary at Chiba prison, a trial would culminate in an 11-year sentence and a transfer to Yokohama prison where Dan resides today. Now, for the first time since his incarceration, here is the interview, on Scum terms, you've been waiting to read.

### Abolute Underground: Dan! How the hell are you?

Dan Scum: All things considered, I'm actually not too bad. I read stories in books and in the paper about other prisons in the world, and count my blessings that I'm here and not there.

### AU: What can you tell us about how you ended up where you are?

DS: The facts in my case state that I was busted at Narita Airport with several million dollars-worth of crystal meth. It is also a fact that I was never told I would be smuggling said crystal meth. Unfortunately, this doesn't constitute a reasonable defensive argument in the Japanese criminal justice system, so I was sentenced to

eleven years and issued a fine, which I have paid.

### AU: What are the main differences between the Canadian and Japanese justice systems?

DS: The morality of the Canadian system is that sometimes the guilty must go free in order that the innocent don't wrongly go to jail. The morality of the Japanese system is that sometimes the innocent must wrongly go to jail, in order that the guilty don't go free. In Japan, the guilty also includes the mentally ill, and mentally handicapped, unlike in

Canada.

### AU: When will you return to Canada, and when will you be a free man?

DS: I become eligible for transfer to a Canadian prison in spring 2022, after one third of my sentence; then it takes six months for them to come get me. Hopefully, I'll be paroled by Christmas 2022, and be able to spend it with my family, but with many variables in play, it's hard to say.

### AU: What's it like being abstinent from drugs, booze, and sex?

DS: Who says I am? Just kidding. It's actually not as bad as I thought it would be. In the beginning, it was hard quitting my vices all at once, but you get used to it. I've led a life rich in such experiences, and so I've always got my spank bank full of memories.

### AU: Are you able to jerk off in such a strict environment?

DS: Indeed I am. We can even order adult magazines through the prison. After all, this is Japan. Sexual release is part of the culture. What we

can't do is touch other inmates, which is fine by me.

### AU: What's the best thing about Japanese prison?

DS: The inmates and staff are all polite and respectful. Again, this is Japan, manners are part of the culture.

### AU: What's the worst thing about Japanese prison?

DS: Take your pick: Culture shock, Having to sit and sleep on the floor, inane radio and TV shows, overhead light on all night, forced labour, Sword of Damacles strictness, military regimentation, hot, humid summer/cold, frigid winter, lack of

privacy, social isolation, the language barrier.

### AU: How is your Japanese anyway? Are you picking up the language? Is it hard?

DS: It's not easy. There are many "Japanized" English words, but the grammar and sentence structure is unlike English, or any other language. It also uses some Chinese words and writing, and I speak some Chinese, so that helps. I attend weekly classes, and have my own study books, and so am steadily learning to read, write, and speak Japanese. It's made a huge difference.

### AU: Are you able to work out?

DS: Yes, but I developed an abdominal hernia from too many push ups, planks, and crunches. I had to have an ultrasound and afterwards, I asked the doctor in Japanese, "Is the baby healthy?" He did not smile. There was no English translator available, so the Chinese translator was there instead. He just grinned, and told me in Chinese, "You don't have a baby!"

### AU: What keeps you going and helps to pass the time?

DS: Many people find religion while in prison. I am not one of those people. My gospel is that of evolutionary biology, cultural and paleoanthropology, physics and cosmology. My prophets are Richard Dawkins, Jared Diamond, Stephen Hawking, Richard Feynman, and Carl Sagan. I also enjoy watching fat guys in G-strings slap each other around. No, I'm not watching some Japanese BDSM porn, I'm talking about sumo wrestling. I've become a rather big fan. What keeps me going is the knowledge that this is only temporary, and will all be over some day.

### AU: What does your day consist of?

DS: Most weekdays I work sitting on a stool in a factory, assembling computer cables or ballpoint pens. Rigid discipline and following the rules are the main themes. There's a little crew of foreigners that consists of me, an American, a Mexican, and a Croatian. When we're allowed to talk, the banter is generally hilarious. Recreation activities include softball, badminton, and ping pong. On weekends I try to answer some of the 150 letters I've received so far. I'm most grateful for all the letters and books from people.

### AU: How's the food? How are the guards? How are your cellmates?

DS: The first eight months were spent in solitary confinement at Chiba Prison. It was the saddest and loneliest time of my life. The next six months were spent in group rooms at Yokohama Prison with three to five Japanese guys at a time. My cellmates were mostly normal guys in for minor offenses, one was a Korean bank robber serving life. I now have a private cell. The guards all have "cauliflower ear" from extensive Judo/Jujitsu training, but here they call it "gyoza" ears. It's



telling that we call the guards "sensei" (teacher). Violence all but never happens, because they'd hand you your ass. The food is healthy, but weird. Like natto, the slimy odiferous alkaline ferment of soybeans. Tea and rice with every meal of course. It's good enough, but I'd kill for a pizza or a plate of nachos.

### AU: What are the most bizarre things you've experienced?

DS: A Kenyan and Nigerian speaking fluent Japanese to each other; the multitude of Yakuza members with their fingers in various degrees of amputation; once a month we have to submit to a penis inspection to make sure we haven't been sticking things in the end of it. Apparently, this is enough of a problem to warrant monthly inspections. Only in Japan.

### AU: Any instances of reverse culture shock?

DS: My Mexican amigo here at Yokohama was four cells away from me at Chiba and told me that the staff there asked him if I was dangerous. The reason? They thought I was crazy because I'd whistle to myself in my cell, and in Japan, that's a sign of mental illness. It's not clear why they thought he'd know if I was dangerous or not, since communication between us was strictly forbidden.

### AU: What do you miss the most?

DS: My American Bulldog, Mabel. She's now over 100 in dog years, and will be dead before I get out.

### AU: What will your first 24 hours of freedom consist of and what are your long term plans?

DS: For the first 24 hours, I'll either be a good boy, or a bad boy depending on my parole conditions, which I have no intention of breaking. I want to be a teacher, and have ambitions to write books, as well.

### AU: Will we be seeing you on the stage again?

DS: You bet. Music is my life's passion and I miss it almost even more than my dog. As a founding member of Powerclown, I can't wait to put on the grease paint again. I've played in over thirty bands in my life, playing all kinds of music, and I'll play until the day I die.

### AU: What advice would you give all of us who take every day for granted?

DS: Don't sweat the small stuff. No matter how bad things in your life may seem, it could always be much worse. This experience is teaching me to accept things that are out of my control a lot better than I used to. The support I've received from my family and friends has been overwhelming. Nurture these relationships in your life, and appreciate them, because one day you could end up sick or in jail, and needing the support and generosity of your family and friends.

### AU: Thanks again for doing this man. Any final words of wisdom?

DS: In the wise words of my friend, Mr Plow, "Never trust someone who says 'Trust me.'"

Dan Scum's bands include Powerclown, Death Sentence, Cum Soc and Scum Element, among many others. One of the first shows I ever played was at the Old American back in November 1995 opening for Scum Element. Since then I've played many shows with Dan and I'm sure most of you have as well. Write to him and tell him you remember. He also loves to receive non fiction books. Email me for the address: Radovan Vencek: the.essence.of.class@gmail.com



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# MONTREAL MASSACRE



## BOIDS

Interview By AU Editorial

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

Mike: Hey! You are talking to Mikey from BOIDS. I'm most infamous for unknowingly transporting a live bedbug from Golden to Revelstoke... my bandmates were thrilled.

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?**

M: We formed in 2011. We are Andy, Patrizio and Mike. We started off as a four-piece but Dennis is no longer in the band. We were all playing in various bands in Montreal in different styles but didn't necessarily have an outlet for some louder, edgier music, which we all had a desire to play. It's like our 14-year-old selves met up and it just progressed from there.

**AU: Describe your sound, for those of us who've never heard it?**

M: I would describe our sound as a blender full of delights. It's something that has definitely morphed over the years, then it morphed again on this album partly because we wrote it as a three-piece instead of a four-piece, which was a completely different experience. I

imagine our sound will continue to morph, also because we draw on so many influences. That's what's fun about being in this band. At the end of the day we are all melomaniacs. A playlist in the van can feature ABBA, Ol Dirty Bastard, The Briefs, Paul Simon, just about anything else.

**AU: You're releasing a new album on Feb 21st! Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear, musically speaking?**

M: YES! We are quite excited about it! It's called *Quel Drag* and it will be out on STOMP Records at the end of February. You can expect to hear something a little different from what you may be expecting. Does that make sense? We took a little more time to write songs and had a blast doing it. And again writing as a three-piece is very different than writing as a four-piece. It really was quite an ear-opening experience and forced us to get out of our comfort zones on our instruments. We also brought in Tom Thacker (Gob/Sum 41) to produce! We had toured with Gob a few years back and got along great, and we

just felt Tom would be a great fit.

**AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?**

M: We explore many topics on this album. They all intertwine to form *Quel Drag*... and they are all painted on the album cover by Jeremy Bruneel.

**AU: What does the rest of the year hold for you as a group? Will you be touring?**

M: The rest of the year looks to be quite busy. Shows in Canada, some festivals, Europe in the fall and possibly some action in the States. We would love to get up to the Arctic, like Dawson City or something. Can someone help get us there? Other than that, some music videos and keep on writing songs.

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

M: What you should know about us that you don't already know is that most people think we are Boys Of Intelligent Design and Style, but the truth is we are Bumped Out Imbeciles Drinking Sambuca.... actually we are neither. Can we just be BOIDS? Can we be your BOIDS?

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

M: I would love for the music fans out there to listen to our new album *Quel Drag* in its entirety, as an album. It's 30 minutes. So yeah, take 30 minutes, turn up the volume and enjoy!

<http://boids.bandcamp.com>

PHOTO SOURCE: STOMP Records



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# BLAST FROM THE PAST



## Lee Aaron Metal Queen

Interview by Anthony Nadeau

**Absolute Underground:** I have been a longtime fan of yours, from the early days of seeing you on MuchMusic and "Metal Queen" being shown on there quite often.

Lee Aaron: Thank you! That's a long time ago now! I have to say, it was very fun to be part of that whole MTV/Much Music era when it started out. It was such a novel, new thing for artists to be using video as another creative format. Making videos as an extension of the music was another cool way to have the audience understand the meaning behind the songs.

**AU: This being your first live album, any thoughts on why this was not done years before?**

LA: There have been live performance DVDs out there but yes, never a live album. During my tenure with Virgin (ten records in England) we totally had plans to put one out and had recorded an entire show on our 1987

German tour with Dieter Dierks' mobile recording studio. Unfortunately, the label who A&R'ed that endeavour went under by '88, so the tapes ended up in some bankruptcy archives somewhere. I'm so happy that we've finally been able to put one out for the fans now. It includes a lot of our newer material, as well. The DVD companion makes it a real authentic concert experience. We

are still an old-school band that plays with no assistance from backing tracks or click tracks so what you're hearing is the real deal.

**AU: Do you feel the concert experience has been somewhat tarnished by cellphones, people recording the show or are you okay with it?**

LA: Hah! I have a love/hate relationship with cell phones. I love that folks can take photos and record a tune and take a little bit of their unique concert experience home with them. What really bothers me is that there is often no discernment or system to filter anyone from posting the footage to social media or YouTube where the audio is bad sound quality and the photos may be quite unflattering. It's hard to have any control over that stuff. I recently attended a Jack White and The Raconteurs show and they had a company that locked every attendee's phone in a lock bag. They insisted that everyone be completely PRESENT for the concert. I think was an awesome idea, actually. It forced everyone to be mindful during the show and not distracted by their devices.

**AU: Your song "Barely Holding On" is one of my favourite ballads and your vocals are so incredibly strong on it. You even sing it on the live album as well, it seems so personal when you sing it.**

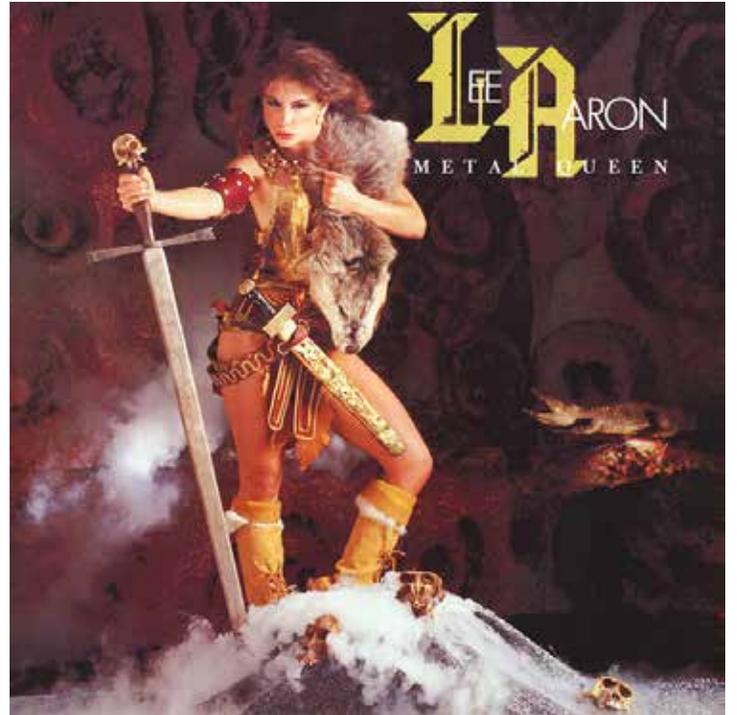
LA: Thank you! I still love to sing that song, and I'm aware that it's a personal favourite for many fans. I think the message of that song resonates with anyone who's gone through tough times, I mean, we all have by this age, right? It's not too hard for me to find an authentic emotional place for sing from when I perform it.

**AU: Outside of your music, any jobs or hobbies you have going on?**

LA: I do have LOTS going on but don't usually talk about it too much. Firstly, I'm a parent, along with my husband John to our two children, and like it or not, they take up a lot of time! I also manage most of the 'behind the scenes' stuff with the Lee Aaron machine - merchandise, writing, recording, production, videos, record partners, media and tour organization. Music and songwriting ARE my hobby! Any spare time I have I'm recording little ideas or writing down lyrics. I also work with special needs and gifted children in my local community who require individualized programs to learn. I help design and implement them. It's quite rewarding as well as fun!

**AU: Do you have any new Canadian artists that you are listening to, also who would you say is your favourite singer?**

LA: My tastes are pretty eclectic. Lately, I'm really



digging The Raconteurs and the new Waterboys. I saw the Waterboys live recently and Mike Scott still has an incredible voice still. I don't have a favourite singer... I like a lot of vocalists. Ann Wilson and Stevie Nicks were definitely early influences, though.

**AU: I personally consider you to be a legend in the Canadian heavy metal scene, any thoughts on that?**

LA: Wow...that's quite a compliment. When I think of legends, I think of artists like the Stones or Dylan or Iggy Pop. The nice thing about legends is that they usually continue to keep making new music. I hope to continue to do that so, thank you.

**AU: What has it been like for a woman in a predominantly male genre of music?**

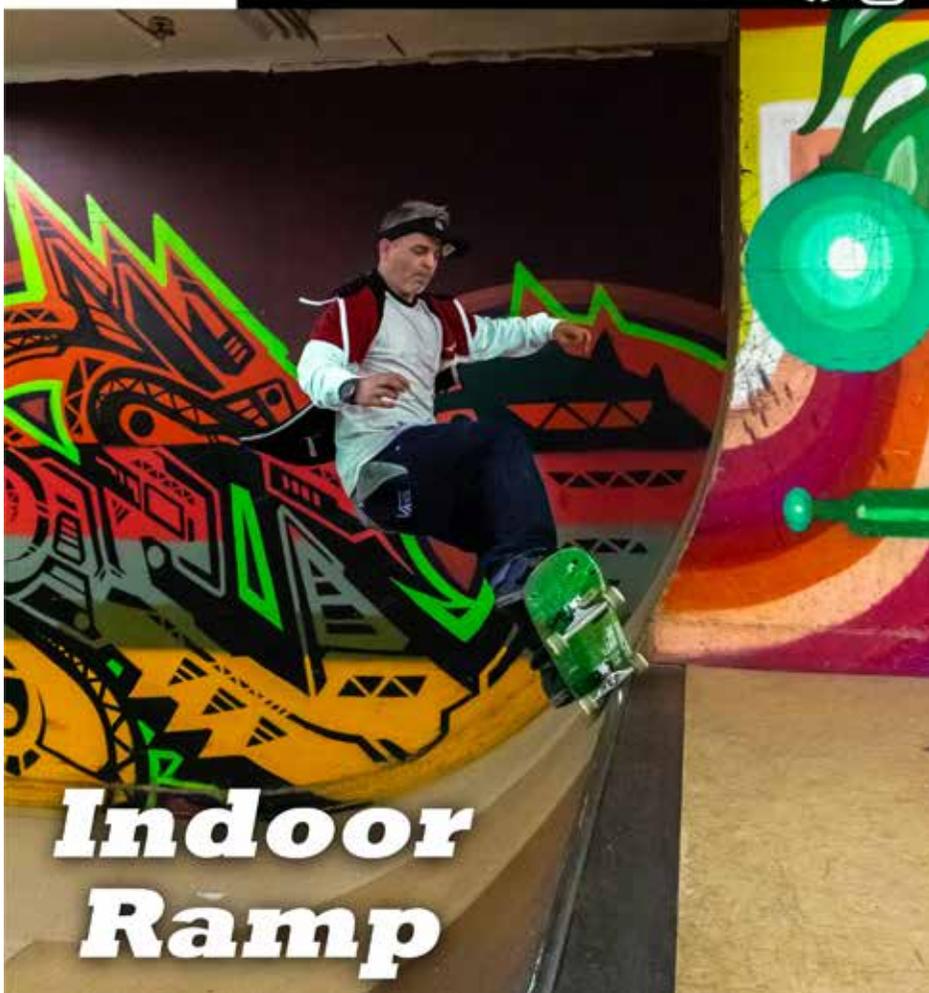
LA: It's changed a lot over the years. Things that passed as 'normal' in hard rock scene the 80s - like women in bikinis being sprayed down with hoses



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and draped across fast cars as decorations - would outrage this new generation. That rampant sexism has been turned upside down and that's a good thing. Back then I was constantly battling to be heard and taken seriously, the idea of a woman producing her own albums or even being the principle songwriter was often dismissed. Today I work with an amazingly talented group of guys (in my band) who are mindful and respectful. We're all equals...and they aren't threatened by the idea of a girl-boss!

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- 1 cup **fine almond flour**
- 1¾ cups **powdered sugar**
- 1 teaspoon **salt**, divided
- 3 **egg whites**
- ¼ cup **granulated sugar**
- ½ teaspoon **Vanillablossom™ Vanilla Extract**
- 2 drops **pink gel food coloring**

### How to Prepare:

Using a food processor, combine the **almond flour**, **powdered sugar**, and ½ **teaspoon of salt**. Process on low speed until extra fine. Sift the mixture through a fine mesh sieve into a large bowl and set aside.

In a separate large bowl, beat the **room temp egg whites** and **remaining salt** with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Add the **granulated sugar** gradually until fully combined. Continue to beat until stiff peaks form. Add the **vanilla** and **food coloring** and beat until just combined.

Add the **sifted almond flour mixture** about a third at a time to the **beaten egg whites**, using a spatula to gently fold until combined. After the last portion of almond flour, continue to fold slowly until you can make a non-breaking figure 8 "batter trail" dripped from your spatula.

Fill a piping bag fitted with a round tip with the batter. Pipe the macarons onto the parchment paper in **1½-inch (3-cm) circles**, spacing at least 1-inch (2-cm) apart. Tap the baking sheet on a flat surface 5+ times to release any air bubbles.

**Let the macarons sit at room temperature for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until dry to the touch.**

Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Bake the macarons for 17 minutes, until well-risen and the macarons don't stick to the parchment paper. Transfer the macarons to a wire rack to cool completely before filling.

Fill with a dollop of your desired buttercream filling and top with another.  
**Place in an airtight container for 24 hours to "bloom". Enjoy!**

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## Michael Schenker Fest Revelation

Interview by Clark Mantei and Ira Hunter

Intro by Clark Mantei

Michael Schenker. 'Legendary Guitarist' is quite the title indeed. It's reference conjours up the regular names of Page, Clapton, Hendrix, or Beck. Yet moving over to Germany we find the brothers of Rudolf and Michael Schenker. When Rudolf received an electric guitar in the 50s his brother



Michael immediately started learning how to play it to create his own style. At one point he actually stopped listening to anything else but himself in hope of finding his own originality. It worked!

By the time Michael Schenker was 11 in 1966 he was performing live and together he and his older brother formed the SCORPIONS.

After they released their debut album in 1972, Michael broke free into the European and American recording and touring scene when he joined the band UFO. This band gave him a vehicle to tour and become recognized and by 1979 he returned to record again with the Scorpions. And brought them into the North American market. However he did not stay with them. Instead he made his own band The Michael Schenker Group and that gave him a vehicle to experiment with his guitar like never before. He considers himself a trendsetter of sorts. Metaphorically he sees his musical canvas as a Sandbox of his very own Battle Ground.

His tattoos read 'Born to be Free and Born to Overcome' and he has indeed kept those ideals.

Around 2008 after a 25 year hiatus from touring and a few decades of experimental albums he returned to the live arena through his Rock N Roll to which he describes as 'A calling' and since then he has been recording and touring steady with no signs of stopping in sight. This is great news.

To date Michael has recorded on almost 50 studio albums and at 65 years of age his enthusiasm is as vibrant as ever. 50 plus years and going strong. His current project 'Michael Schenker Fest' has been in full swing since 2017 and already has 2 new studio lps with Resurrection and now 2019s Revelation. The albums feature several singers from past projects with Schenker.

So yes Michael is a 'Legend indeed. He is most recognized as the Guitarist with the now famous Black and White Flying V. To his fans he's

renowned for pioneering the legendary Metal Sound. His body of work is recognized today as nothing short of iconic. And lastly, for a guy who never even dreamed of fame or stardom he remains happy to be humble and very grateful to be so well received. Best wishes to Michael Schenker and let the journey continue. Enjoy the interview.

**AU: Hello Mister Micheal Schenker.**

MS: Hello, your talking to Micheal Schenker who is known for playing the black and white flying V and was the lead guitarist with UFO.

**AU: What first inspired you to start playing?**

MS: Basically I was always interested in banging things and touching instruments and trying to play them. There was guitar standing in our bedroom one day and I just did the same thing with that. I was kind of curious as to what I could do with it and I kind of put a couple of notes together and then another one. I went, 'Wow! That really works!' and I never stopped playing.

**AU: How did you become so proficient?**

MS: I was fascinated with the single string and that's why I play lead guitar more than anything. And I used the rhythm guitar more to create the

the metal sound of the music that I liked, like the happening sound of Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath. And I used that style of music rather than jazz or pop as a screen to paint my lead guitar playing on. I was inspired by Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, and Leslie West but I decided when I was 17 not to listen to music anymore and not to listen to other guitarists because I realized that we are all unique and if I make a choice to open up myself I can create new colours that are unknown to the world. And that's what I've done for almost at half a century and as a result of that of course you create your own style. I was just a kid in the sandbox. Not expecting anything. I didn't compete with anybody, I didn't have dreams of being rich and famous. I just had to keep playing guitar.

**AU: What was the very first band you were in?**

MS: I was 11 years old. There was a band in Sarstedt, Germany where I was born. Then I was asked by a band from Hanover called Cry Express until I was 13. Then I was introduced to Klaus Meine when I was 14 and we put a band together. Then the Scorpions asked Klaus and me to join. I was 15 and we did our first song



together Klaus and I, 'In Search of Piece of Mind'. And I have two tattoos on the back my shoulder, one says, 'Born to Overcome', and one says, 'Born to be Free'. So if you put it all together you understand where I'm coming from. In my middle years it was the life of school and the school of life. So anyway that's when Klaus and I made the first music that I actually wrote and recorded. So that's coming up in 2020 it's the anniversary of Klaus and I writing that song. I actually wrote most of the music for the album *Lonesome Crow*.

**AU: What made you want to leave the Scorpions and join UFO originally?**

MS: It was very simple. It could have been any band as long as it was British. Germany was boring. Disco music. With the management I wasn't respected as a professional. People didn't understand what I was doing. I just wanted to get out of Germany. I wanted to get to England and with any band you know? It was UFO who asked me so I ended up with them.

**AU: Iron Maiden plays the UFO song 'Doctor Doctor' before they take the stage every night. What do you think it is about that song that inspired them? Was it the galloping beat?**

MS: I think that it is the whole thing together. It's the saddle beat (da dun da dun da dun). It's a poppy song. The lyrics. It's about being on the road. I think that's one of the main reasons probably. That's what I'm imagining from my point of view. The instrumental part is an attractive part for the guitar players. I created that in the 70s and there was something about the vocals and my guitar playing that had an unusual effect on people. And when Paul and Ron joined the chemistry was complete. That's when 'Lights Out' hit the charts.

**AU: Tell us about Micheal Schenker Fest and who else is in the band?**

MS: It's all the 80s musicians that I was with. The singers Graham Bonnet, who used to be in Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, Robin McAuley, and

Gary Barden. Then I put the musicians together, the obvious ones and was very happy with the addition of Steve Mann. So it was a very well balanced overall 80s thing that was put together. We've been together four years now. Steve Mann said in an interview, "This could have gone so wrong, but it didn't." I just thought it doesn't cost to ask. and that's all I did. I just wanted to play the most popular music of Michael Schenker with the original singers and it worked. We took it step by step all the way up to actually making a world tour. It's really refreshing and the music is written snappy and energetic. It's melodic and dramatic at times. I like the part when it comes down to the coloring with the keyboards and putting some guitar licks in and solos and vocal harmonies.

**AU: What's your new album?**

MS: *Revelation* is the new album that's come out the 20th of September. And we have the first single 'Rock Steady' and it's a kind of behind the scenes video and we released a second video too for 'Sleeping with the Lights On.' It's about a nightmare and it was quite spooky at times.

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

MS: I love Canada. They are always ready for us. It's kind of interesting because even you know with Temple of Rock we played smaller places but the people were really keen and happy to see us. If somebody would ask me the difference between the audience in the 70s and today? I'd say that in the 70s we had the *Strangers in the Night* album cover where we all open our mouths, screaming like the audience do. And that's what you'd see when you were onstage back then. And today when I look into the audience I see smiles, and it's fantastic. So I've turned screaming crazy people into smiling happy people. Keep on rocking, Canada!

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## Bev Davies

Interview by AU Editorial

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

BD: Hi, my name is Bev Davies and I am a photographer. I became a photographer at Vancouver punk rock shows, and supplied photos to the *Georgia Straight* so I also photographed music acts that came through Vancouver.

### AU: When did you first take up photography?

BD: I was an art school brat where I majored in photo etching. I was a photographer looking for subject and on March 24, 1979 I went to a D.O.A. concert. Damn, that was what I wanted to do, take photos of the bands and everyone around the bands. Yippie Yippie.

### AU: What first drew you to the punk rock scene?

BD: It was the energy, the music and the kindness of those in the scene and it was electric, sparks of creativity and genius, and a very good soundtrack in my head.

### AU: Were you in the right place at the right time as all this amazing music was happening?

BD: Yup I was. That said, it was a lot of work in those film days, developing and printing. I used to go to the next show and give out photos from

the last one.

### AU: What are some of your most memorable photo shoots?

BD: Well Chicago, June 9, 1979 comes to mind. D.O.A. were playing at a Rock Against Racism outdoor concert and they said why not show up? I flew in, stayed at the Y in downtown Chicago and showed up in Lincoln Park. Love some of the photos from that day.

Going to England with D.O.A. in 1981. Each show was inside clubs and though they were all on film I thought nothing said London, England, so I talked them into going to Trafalgar Square. We fed the pigeons and when there was a crowd of birds D.O.A. ran toward me and the pigeons flew into the air in front of the band.

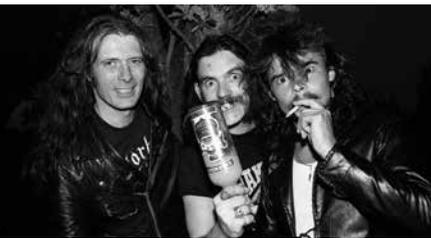
Motörhead. I had seen them in the day and got my pass and when I tried to get into the show Ozzy was headlining, but I was turned away. The record company talked to Ozzy's people and it was still a no. So Motörhead decided to come out back of the Kerrisdale Arena and let me take a roll of film of them.

### AU: Who are some of the bigger bands you've photographed? Who was the coolest to hang out with?

BD: Coolest, Motörhead and Lemmy. I adored Iron Maiden, and it was nice to spend time with Duff when he was in town with Velvet Revolver, sweet memories of Randy Rampage and Zippy backstage, too.

### AU: What's the difference between the music scene now and when you first got into it?

BD: There are so many great photographers here in Vancouver. Way more photographers and nice



band equipment. I noticed at a D.O.A. show a while ago at the Commodore that Shithead was really good. But in the very early 80s, it was a family. I shoot for the portable-infinite.blogspot.com out of LA. I shoot colour, too. I may have been the last person to buy a colour TV. I saw everything in black and white in those days.

### AU: Do you still get excited about shooting bands from the photo pit? Describe the experience.

BD: I shoot using a zoom lens, so I am always looking, deciding and arranging the image I want. The one I see, that shows what I see. I never crop after. It is what it is. It makes me happy to be there.

### AU: What makes some of your photos unique?

BD: Well, having them, think how long ago that was 1979, damn. I like that a lot more of people's photos from those days are starting to show up, with scanning available and FB. What makes them unique, I love them, those early photos are apart of my life. Love the people here and those gone too soon.

### AU: What's unique about the Vancouver music scene that's kept you so involved?

BD: They put me on the list with a photo pass, haha!

### AU: Any newer bands people should check out?

BD: All of them, go to see bands. I never went to disco bars, live on the stage bands are best.

### AU: Any techniques or advice to share with new photographers?

BD: Be kind to other photographers and figure out a way to keep track of your photos. Strips of film made it easy, but now...

### AU: Any upcoming projects or exhibits to promote?

BD: Not really, but you can reach me at bevdavies@shaw.ca with any ideas.



### AU: Anything else we should know about you that might surprise our readers?

BD: I was born in an earthquake in Southern Ontario and my mother said she was not surprised, because if there had not been one, there should have been. Also I need to mention that both of my parents have passed, but I must say they were very supportive of my photography. They were both potters. Artist family, very lucky.

### AU: Any words of wisdom to share?

BD: Love your photos, it shows. Love the music, it helps.

### AU: Website?

BD: Nope, but please enjoy my Flickr site.

[www.flickr.com/photos/bevdavies](http://www.flickr.com/photos/bevdavies)

PHOTO CREDIT: Bev Davies



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<p>9 <b>HOOTENANNY OPEN MIC - 4PM</b> SUNDAY SERVICE INDUSTRY NIGHT 8PM</p>	<p>10 MONDAY MYSTERY MOVIE NIGHT <b>CELLULOID SLIME</b> 8PM / FREE</p>	<p>11 <b>BLACK SHEEP COMEDY OPEN MIC - 8PM</b> <b>KARAOKE</b> 9PM - BOTH FREE</p>	<p>12 <b>MAINSTAGE OPEN MIC</b> SIGN UP 7:30PM STARTS 8PM / FREE</p>	<p>13 <b>BONDS OF MARA ALICE HARDY</b> 8PM</p>	<p>14 <b>BLOTTOAD BIG FLAKES TENT CITY</b> 8PM // \$12</p>	<p>15 <b>HAND CIRCLE OF CARE VIBRANT VISUALS GEYST</b> 9PM // \$10</p>
<p>16 <b>HOOTENANNY OPEN MIC - 4PM</b> TOMMY TONE 9PM REDRESS \$10 THE THIS / YEP</p>	<p>17 <b>HAPPY HOUR MONDAY TO FRIDAY</b> 3PM TO 5PM</p>	<p>18 <b>BLACK SHEEP COMEDY OPEN MIC - 8PM</b> <b>KARAOKE</b> 9PM - BOTH FREE</p>	<p>19 <b>FACTORY ELECTRONIC DANCE PARTY</b> 9PM / FREE</p>	<p>20 HOUSE OF OCCULT PRESENTS... <b>DEATH BY DRAG</b> 8PM the lgbtq+ variety show</p>	<p>21 CITY OF THE DEAD PRESENTS <b>THE RAMORES RIFFHEIST VIC CITY REJECTS</b> 9PM</p>	<p>22 John &amp; Noel's GIANT ROBOT Birthday Battle <b>TORREY SCIMITAR</b> TERMINAL SEQUENCE BADHUMANBEINGS 9PM // \$15</p>
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**Absolute Underground: This is Ira Hunter from Absolute Underground Magazine up in Canada. Who are we talking to?**

JW: This is James Williamson and I'm best known as the guitarist and songwriter for Iggy and the Stooges.

**AU: When did you first hook up with Iggy and the Stooges?**

JW: I started in the band in 1970. So it was just after their second album *Funhouse* and the band was going through lineup changes. So I started with the original lineup and me added as a guitarist, and then the band more or less that 'was' the Stooges, broke up and reformed as 'Iggy and the Stooges' and that's when we went to London and recorded *Raw Power*.

## James Williamson Leader of the Punk

Interview by Ira Hunter

Intro and transcription by Clark Mantei

We travel back in time to find a great icon in the world of punk rock and the reformation of early Iggy Pop group The Stooges into Iggy and the Stooges. The style of *Raw Power* formed so many bands at that time. The synergy between Michigan and LA was very tight. Bands like The Runaways also emerged. The innocence of the 50s and the outcry of the 60s morphed into the resurgence in the 1970s. Rock found a home within the spirit of so many songwriters. Enter James Williamson, born in 1949, the guitarist and songwriter who wrote and recorded so many great songs with Iggy Pop that it's a good thing he granted *Absolute Underground* this interview.

**AU: And that process was facilitated by David Bowie?**

JW: Well, indirectly, I mean, he had wanted to meet Iggy one time in New York. So he, at that point, introduced Iggy to his manager, Tony Defries, who then proceeded to sign him and take him to CBS where we got a record deal.

**AU: Can you share a little bit more about your musical career?**

JW: Sure. Well, I'd say I guess, you know, my first album was them was *Raw Power* that I co-wrote with Iggy. And then we toured. He and I wrote another album and I ended up releasing it later called *Kill City*, which was kind of meant to be a follow up to *Raw Power*, but we weren't able to get a label for it initially. And then that band broke up. And I left music. I briefly worked in a recording studio and then later became an electronics engineer. And meanwhile, the Stooges became quite popular over the years. The band

reformed in the 2000ish timeframe and we were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2010. So, you know, we came a long way.

**AU: Were you in any other bands after you left Stooges?**

JW: No, not really. I mean, I have released a number of different albums. So I have solo albums with many different artists on them. And I guess I did form a kind of a band called James Williamson and the Pink Hearts. We released an album last year. And you know, I've got various different record projects going on, but nothing that I would call ongoing.

**AU: What is this latest project Leader of the Pack with Cherie Curry?**

JW: Yeah, I had done a few things with Cleopatra Records, prior to this project. I had done a project to redo Mitch Ryder's *Devil with a Blue Dress*, and that turned out fantastic. And so I think they just thought of me when they were doing this project and of course I love that record. You know, it's kind of like ingrained in me from my youth.

**AU: It was originally done by The Shangri-Las?**

JW: Yeah, Mary Weiss is a singer from the Shangri-Las that did the original version of "Leader of the Pack." And that's why I couldn't really imagine anybody covering it who could do it justice but it turns out, Cherie Currie could and she did an amazing job. So once I heard her vocals, I knew we could do it justice. And I think it sounds great.

**AU: Is it being released as a single? Does it have a B-side too?**

JW: Yeah, it does. I didn't play on that. So I don't know. I think they did "Cherry Bomb" which is what Cherie Currie was known for in The Runaways and I think Wayne Kramer played the guitar on it.

**AU: Did you take a unique approach to covering such a classic song?**

JW: Yeah, it's not that easy to cover. It's a kind of a ballad, really. At first I kind of was at a loss as to how to make it sound unique, but I was able to find one of my guitars which is a Weissenborn guitar and so it has a unique sound. And that record is played in the key of C and this guitar happens to resonate in that key, and so I put that on it, and that sounded amazing with the piano and then I sort of rocked it up a little bit with electric guitars and added a couple of solo parts into into my version so that it kind of sound a little bit different from the original.

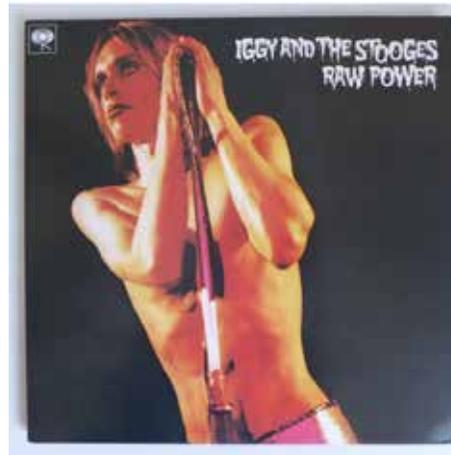
**AU: Where is Cleopatra Records out of?**

JW: L.A. Yeah, it's a good label. They're good guys over there. There's a few things I've done with them and I've always enjoyed working with them.

**AU: Any other stories from the early days of The Stooges?**

JW: We just were a bunch of guys that had our own little tribe and we made a lot of music together. I look back fondly on most of those days. I think that we finally were able to convince people that what we were doing was worthwhile and it took a long time, but we were right. The rest is kind of history.

**AU: Yeah, I guess when you're in the moment you don't know how influential something's going to be 20 or 40 years down the road. Whereas now it's fully cited as part of the spark of the really early punk stuff.**



JW: Exactly. And you never know if that's actually going to happen. It didn't happen for 99% of the bands of that time. But for us we were convinced we were making good music and doing the right thing and I think finally ultimately people agreed with us and so I guess we were sort of justified in that regard but it's never a sure thing.

**AU: When the Stooges went over to London to record Raw Power, do you feel that eventually influenced the birth of punk rock there down the line?**

JW: Oh, there's no question about it. I think that album that we made over there influenced everybody. So there would not have been the Sex Pistols. Certainly all of the bands that came later usually cite that album as being one of their biggest influences.

**AU: Were you with The Stooges when they did their**

**reunion?**

JW: I played from 2009 through 2014. There was an earlier reunion with an earlier version of the band that played from 2003 I think. By the time I came back the band went into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame the next year and we didn't play anything smaller than 30,000 people.

**AU: Was it cool hanging out with Cherie Currie in the studio?**

JW: No, I recorded it independently of her but I do remember her a little bit from back in the day when she was in The Runaways. They were living in LA and so was I. But she was a lot younger than me.

**AU: Jailbait!**

JW: They were. They were not like The Stooges. It was a lot different but they made great records.

**AU: Do you think there is a chance that you would play this song live with Cherie at one point maybe?**

JW: You know, why not? I mean, I think it would be fun. But I don't know if it's in the cards. But if it could work out, I certainly wouldn't be opposed to it.

**AU: So how do people get this Leader of the Pack record?**

JW: It's a seven-inch red vinyl record and you can you can order it though Cleopatra Records.

**AU: What was it about that time when you guys started in Detroit?**

JW: The original Stooges started in Ann Arbor, Michigan, all of those guys are from Ann Arbor. I was from Detroit. And so I when I started with the Stooges it was because I had moved

up to Ann Arbor, but we had known each other prior from various bands in our teenage years.

**AU: Detroit had the MC5 and so much more.**

JW: Yeah, well, it was a cool scene. I mean, Detroit is a music town. So, if you're a band, you sort of get a 'trail by fire' in Detroit because the standards were so high back in those days, there were so many good bands that 'you better be good' or you wouldn't last very long, haha!

**AU: You guys were real close to Canada, so you just could jump across the bridge to Canada. Do you remember ever doing that to play?**

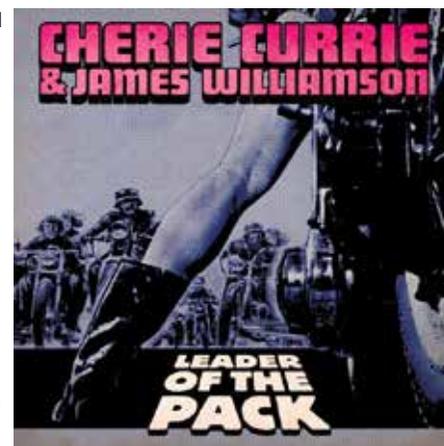
JW: Yeah, we played Canada. We played Vancouver and Toronto and later we played in Montreal and all over the place up there. I always liked Canada.

[straightjameswilliamson.com](http://straightjameswilliamson.com)

[cleorecs.com](http://cleorecs.com)

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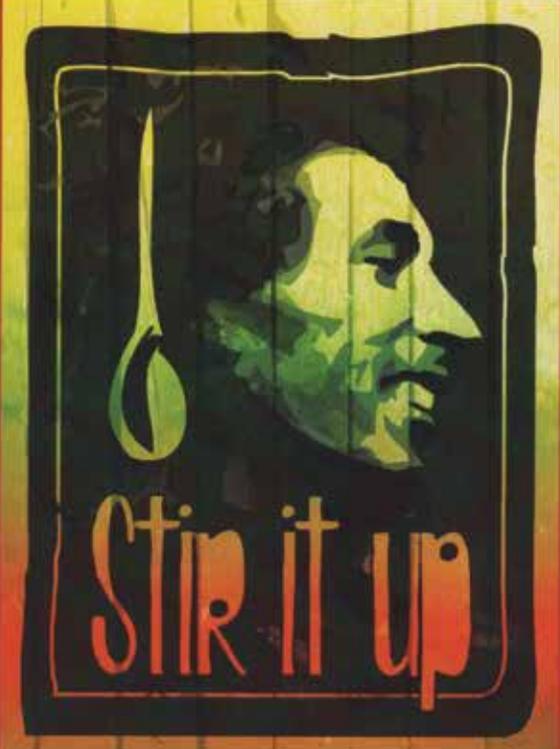
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# Sleepwraith

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For full transparency and stoke, and whether a soapbox or a trowel is your preferred weapon, I would like to share a speech that I wrote. I spoke it aloud many times on behalf of Victoria's Westshore Skatepark Coalition, and it has made a difference. It's my hope that it may inspire you to support other skateparks getting built, any way you can.

After so many years of pitching, this testimonial is the most personal I've ever gotten. I did so for the greater good, but I also did it for me; part catharsis, part therapy, but also as a love-letter and thank you to skateboarding. Enjoy.

"Honorable council, before I start my formal speech to you, I would like to reveal a personal truth that I feel is relevant for the sake of perspective. I am a byproduct of early-life trauma. My father died when I was very young and the dramatic way in which he passed has had an irreversible

effect on me and my life.

Until I found a peer group that accepted me, and a way to express myself, I was an emotionally lost child. The love of my family and the yearning idealism of sci-fi movies could only go so far. I attended many schools as my family struggled to set roots, and sadly my studies faltered. Being four years behind my growth percentile meant that conventional sports had no place for me. In fact, if I was any taller I could maybe claim that I "stood out" but honestly, I blended in.

Additionally, oftentimes when someone experiences trauma at a young age, their resting heart rate gets set at a higher idle. Simply put, their tempo differs than their peers and they tend to stick out during times of stress. This means that an idealized sense of calm or self-regulation is sadly that much harder to find for people like me.

So how did I find my way? You may have guessed that it was a silly wooden toy with wheels: my skateboard. It gave me freedom when I needed to escape, it gave me a goal when one was sought,

and it gave me a much needed sense of purpose.

Upon reflection, after thirty years of skateboarding, I am happy to claim that the friends that I have made through this fringe activity are lifelong. My memories and current resolve is as solid as the concrete ground that I roll upon. This mended yet stable foundation is the base of my thought process always and this is how I start my speech to you today.

Honorable council, thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. I truly believe that skateparks belong and they are an underutilized resource for recreation and community.

Approximately four years ago, the skatepark at Belmont School was destroyed. There was no consultation about a replacement park by any municipality or the school district. The land was sold and poof it was gone.

The take-home feeling for all skatepark users was this: you are a nuisance, your self-supervision management model has failed and you are being punished. To this day, the skateboard community feels frustrated, confused and saddened by the way we were treated. I think it is fair to say that BMXers, scooter-enthusiasts and other skatepark users likely feel the same way.

This is why I speak to you now: the west shore needs a place for people to safely roll, free of charge, and we are past due to have it happen.

The Olympics are on our doorstep. Skateboarding is now an officially recognized sport. Come summer 2020, you will be able to watch it broadcast live from Tokyo, Japan. Regardless of how you feel about this inclusion, it does signify how far skateboarding has come as an athletic pursuit and also as a means of artistic expression. Even though there is still room for further growth and reflection, I am proud of the strides we've made as a culture.

Skateparks have many redeeming qualities, please allow me to list a few:

- Open access regardless of family income level with minimal equipment cost, both in introduction and in long term.
- A socially inclusive location for girls of all ages, with a steadily growing scene ...not only for ladies but also the LGBTQ+ community.
- A zone where racial boundaries & age restrictions become reduced.
- Although not touted as such, they oftentimes become a substitute for childcare, and as such, at-risk kids can be safer and more visible in a known environment.



do-gooders alike) is to keep the knowledge of the Belmont failure in mind as we proactively plan a better skatepark suited for our future.

Therefore, two years ago, the Westshore Skatepark Coalition proactively approached West Shore Parks & Recreation for guidance with regards to starting afresh: this was the suggestion of every municipality we spoke to.

We also met with the public and conducted an exhaustive consultation process and we came up with a design that serves all levels of skateboarding, as well as other activities, for all ages.

An ideal location was graciously offered on Juan De Fuca land and our skatepark design was successfully bid upon and finalized by New Line Skateparks. It should be added that we also patiently waited for internal audits and new efficiency structures to be created at Juan De Fuca Rec. since we last spoke.



So, where are we now?

Recently, the West Shore Parks & Recreation board was provided examples of funding options our skatepark and you too have had time see and review these reasonable suggestions of ours.

With this information fresh in mind, we now have our official asks: How can you assist in getting this park built? What portion of funding will you offer? Will you add this project to your annual budget?

In summary, hindsight is twenty-twenty in life and perspective is key. This is very much true when applied to the now defunct Belmont skatepark. The west shore is becoming a Mecca for elite sports activities, as well as a burgeoning area for families with children, so it seems completely out of step to eliminate something that helps so many people. I truly believe that skateparks belong and they are an underutilized resource for recreation and community. The west shore needs a place for people to safely roll, free of charge, and we are past due to have it happen.

Thank you for your time.

Jimmy Miller

Westshore Skatepark Coalition President

PHOTO CREDIT: Norma Ibarra

## In Support of the Shred: An Essay

By Jimmy Miller

My shoes are not caked in mud and my hands are not calloused from shoveling, yet I pride myself as someone who helps to get skateparks made. My version of DIY is the countless hours of unpaid work that I clock behind the scenes. This isn't just me though, many skateparks have unsung advocates that lobby tirelessly to create them. Regardless of viewpoint, or any perceived differences, we all need to remember that the end result makes cities and communities stronger because of the sweat and diligence of people who care.

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**CAUTION** this is a story about bad behaviour and marking territory with auto graffiti (alcohol and often drug-fuelled psychosis) I in no way condone the actions of bad driving or driving under the influence, but I do appreciate art in all its forms and great driving.

## Nesting... Auto Graffiti

By Brydon Parker

Commonly thought of as what birds build to provide a home for their young. Or when a human couple moves in together, one half of the equation often goes into nesting mode, building a nice home.



Nice and Nesty (not a real word). This article is not about any of that crap, this is about how the male dominated folks in my

neighbourhood mark their homes and the homes of others.

Auto graffiti is what you find on the road in front of cool peoples' homes in my hood. Leftovers from a smoke and beer fuelled party of epic proportions? Yes, that and much, much more. To be a respected auto graffiti artist is not cheap or easy - you often have to be an expert in many fields to attain the high art form, fields



such as physics, mechanics, alcohol consumption, pharmacology, and possess a high degree of stunt driving

skill. The costs associated with screaming rubber blasting machines is HUGE. You need a good job or other source of income to afford this pursuit and very few auto graffiti artists actually make money. The repairs and cost of tires alone is enough from keeping most graffiti artists from pursuing this art form.. When someone adds to the nests in front of your place, this is not a fuck-off neighbours' gesture, it is a pure form of respect to the home owner from a loyal friend. Upon close inspection of the nest after the sweet smell of



burning rubber and metal on metal transmission gears dissipates, you can often see the tread of the tire, and boom there you go, you know the artist; their signature is identifiable to all. The cops can also tell there is someone cool living at that house, not because they get calls there, but because cops like art AS WELL. The more nests, the more respect that home owner has in the community. Burn out is a derogatory term that should always be followed with the word "artist." Then it's okay. Some of my favourite auto graffiti artists are Jay P, KC, BraizR, Neighbour Brian, Aussi Moike, and of course, the beauty Kurtastrophy. These are just my neighbourhood homies.. there are many more kickass nest burners out there. A true nest is not a straight line, it is circular, resembling a bird nest. The curvy burnout streaks that go in a straight line with direction of the road is called a branch or branches. Next time you are out in the country or even your neighbourhood, keep a sharp eye out and you might see some really cool nests or at least where the party was.



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# SOUNDTRACKS FROM HELL



## SOUNDTRACKS FROM HELL

### Christopher Young - Part 1

by Ira "Hellbound" Hunter

#### AU: Who are we speaking with today?

Christopher Young: My name is Christopher Young, I'm a film composer. I would love to say I'm most famous for my romantic comedy scores, but that's not the case. More my horror scores, which are numerous, the earliest of importance was probably *Hellraiser*. The most recent of importance was the remake of *Pet Sematary*. In between, there's been 50 to 60 scary films.

#### AU: How did you first become interested in music? What were your early influences?

CY: Before I was a music writer, I was a drummer. People who get involved in music, we can't remember the day we didn't have music in our heads or music surrounding us. My favourites were The Birds, The Beach Boys, and The Beatles, the three B's of rock and roll. I was six when I started drumming but I had rhythms in my head consistently. I was always attracted to rhythmic patterns that I'd hear in nature, or from machines. Sitting behind the drum set and playing along with some of these rock songs made me feel like I was in another world. I was a misfit goofball in grammar school and whenever I was behind the drums, the girls at least, took me a little more seriously. I felt sanctuary in the world of music. I studied with a very important drummer, Alan Dawson, who was Dave Brubeck's second

drummer at Berkeley School of Music. I don't think I knocked him out because by the end he said, "Maybe you should think about doing something else?" I was crushed. Ultimately that was a blessing in disguise and encouraged me to think about non-rhythmic stuff that was going on in my head, that being the creating of pitched material. Slowly but surely I became, first of all an arranger and then a composer. Shortly thereafter I fell in love with film music. A chance intersection with a record called the *Fantasy Film World of Bernard Herrmann*, which is a collection of fantasy scores that he'd written. I dropped the needle on that record and within seconds, I felt like I'd seen the light, or heard the mystic chord, the lost chord that I'd been searching for all my life. I became obsessed with his music and made the connection with movies. I never really paid that much attention to movie music, but now I zoned in on it with super clarity. Ultimately I moved out to Los Angeles and was lucky enough to make a career out of it.

#### AU: What was your first movie project?

CY: My first feature I scored while I was still a student at UCLA. It was called *The Dorm That Dripped Blood*. One of the students, Jeffrey Obrow, got together enough money to turn his senior thesis into a feature, low-budget horror film. A number of people that worked on that film have gone on to do some remarkable things. The actress Daphne Zuniga (*Melrose Place*, *Space Balls*), Scott Alexander (screenwriter *People vs. Larry Flynt*, *Ed Wood*). The guy who did the monster makeup, Matthew Mungle, actually won an Oscar for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. It was a good start for a lot of us and the director being happy with it, he gave me a second movie to score, again I was still a student at UCLA. It was called *The Power*, it was a supernatural thriller. The director screened it and invited music department people and agents. I came to the attention of the two people who were heads of post production at New World Pictures, and then at New Horizons Pictures, Roger Corman's companies. They took me on board. I was the luckiest guy in the world. And that began the career of me as a film composer.

#### AU: My favourite horror film and score is from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*. How were you first introduced to the project? And how did you achieve such a resonating theme?

CY: Wow. I'm honoured to hear that. How the thing happened with Clive was actually through Tony Randel. Not the actor Tony Randall, Tony Randel, who was then head of post production at New World Pictures. He felt that I was a guy who was talented, who could take very little money and turn it into a big orchestra scores. New World was all about taking low budget movies and through the aid of music, creating the illusion that they were bigger budgeted pictures. So I did a number of pictures for Tony. When *Hellraiser* happened, he was sent over to England and he met with Clive to talk about the music. It was Tony who said to Clive, "You should meet this guy Chris, I think this is going to be a great match." I think Clive had already decided that he was going to have this group called Coil write the score. They were a great industrial ambient style kind of music but they had never scored a film before. I think Tony proceeded to talk Clive into realizing that to write a successful film score you really have to understand how to write music, especially for a horror movie, you need to write music that coordinates or joins itself with the picture in a way that ambient music necessarily wouldn't. So Clive agreed to go with me, even though we didn't meet at the beginning. We finally met in a hotel in Central Park West, when he'd come to visit. He talked about the movie, what it's real meaning was. He told me, whatever I did, he didn't want me to write a score that was nothing but scary music like *Nightmare on Elm Street 2*, which I had just done. He pointed out that the film was truly a tragic love story and that I had to sell that. I

had to make sure that somehow the music would highlight the fact that Julia was so in love with Frank that she would be willing to go out and kill people to help bring him back to life. That was the exciting thing about that movie. It was a horror film with a tragic undertone. All great horror stories I believe are ones that have this tragic undertone. The great ones are tragedies, like *Frankenstein*. *Nightmare on Elm Street* was great, don't misunderstand me, but we don't really care that much about Freddy in an emotional way and the characters we care about, but not as deeply as Clive was trying to create in *Hellraiser* with Julia.

#### AU: How did you take the film score to the next level for *Hellbound: Hellraiser 2*?

CY: That one was directed by Tony Randel and Clive produced it. It's the new and improved and bigger and better version of *Hellraiser*. They had more money for the score than they did on the first one. I wasn't making any real money doing these projects back then. I always thought of them as investments in the future. I remember Clive saying, "I want this score to be a celebration of horror. It has to top the other one. The moments that are really visceral and hideous, I want the music to be really aggressive and over-the-top, and these nightmare sections in the underground like when Tiffany meets the Leviathan and she goes into the hall of mirrors at this demonic amusement park, and I want the music to be as twisted as twisted can be."

That gave me permission to make things bigger. So I added to the orchestra, more woodwinds, instead of four French horns, I had eight. I had a massive percussion section on *Hellbound* that I didn't have on *Hellraiser*. Most importantly, was the addition of the choir, that really elevated the sound for *Hellbound*, it became more like a gothic tidal wave of sound. I orchestrated and wrote that whole score myself. Part of me prefers the *Hellbound* score, only because of the fact that it's an overdose of sound. At that time, I was very much into that Phil Spector approach to orchestral writing, that wall of sound that would crush you to death like a tsunami.

#### AU: You're also credited with working on *Trick or Treat* (1986). That soundtrack has a lot of heavy metal music by Fastway on it. What was your involvement with the project?

CY: By then I'd gotten a name for myself as being a guy who could do low-budget horror films. *Trick or Treat* was produced by Dino De Laurentiis and directed by Charles Martin Smith. Yes, there was a lot of heavy metal music but they needed some score. What I remember most about that movie was that Gene Simmons and Ozzy Osbourne were connected to it.

I think in my eagerness to make sure the score turned out well in the dub, I remember being kind of hyper about wanting the music to be perhaps louder than they wanted it to be. I was actually kicked off the dub stage on that movie, because I was pushing too hard for the music to be heard. I learned a lesson, which is, it's not a composer's world on the dub stage, it's a director's world.

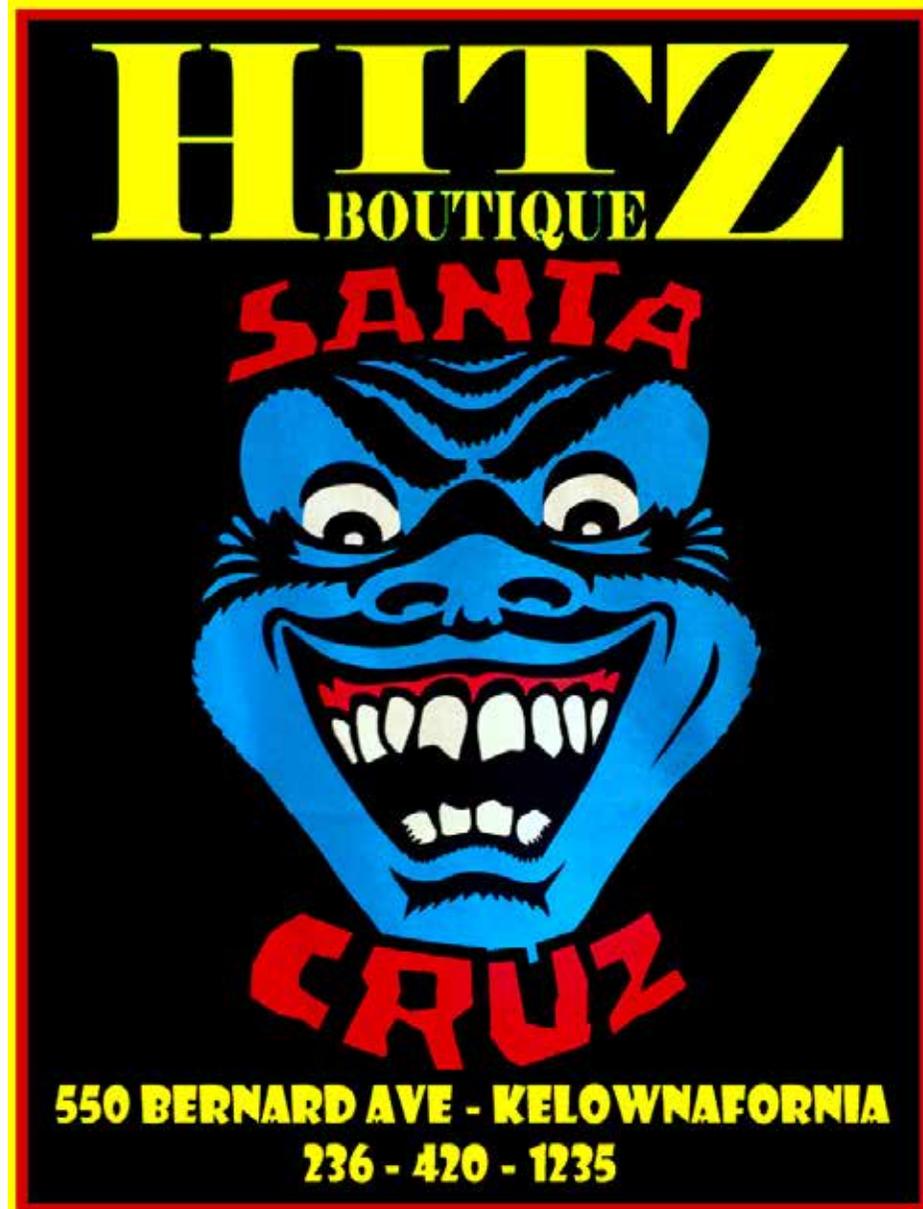
There is an electric guitar in some of my cues, not many but that was played by Rusty Anderson. He plays in Paul McCartney's band now, but back then he was just starting off.

#### AU: How do you approach each project? Do you prefer working from a script or footage?

CY: You get the script, and you read it to get ready for the interview. Without the script, you wouldn't know what to talk about with the director. I read it and I will think about the music that's needed. But here's what I realized. In my case, whatever ideas I might come up with by reading the screenplay, I'm never going to use ultimately. Because what I imagined it's going to look like and what the film actually turns out to be are so entirely different. At the end of the day, a film score has to integrate itself in with the visual essence of the picture. Though I've come up with some nice ideas while reading the screenplay. To me, it's all meaningless until my musical imagination is stimulated by the actual moving picture.

to be continued next issue...

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# TOUR CHEATS

with Jayne Black

## Telford Germyn

By Jayne Black

Here on Tour Cheats, we wanna grab as much of the dirty, downright magical shortcuts and sneaky tips from road-hardened badasses, with answers to the questions nobody asks but everyone wants to know.

**Title and credentials:**

Telford Germyn a.k.a. Juan Badmutha... vocalist for SprëadEagle, bassist for The Hookers and Savage Master, and musician for hire.

**Absolute Underground: So Telford, you have been on the road in the deep south, home of amazing BBQ and spicy margaritas. If, and**



**it's happened to us all, you were to indulge in some southern delights and Johnny Cash's hallmark song came calling, what are your hints and tricks for too much spicy food and the aftermath?**

TG: First off, make sure you're not in the middle of The Hollywood Forever Graveyard (LA), 'cause if you're looking for a toilet, you're shit outta luck. Always be scoping out restroom options while on the road, especially if you're like me and indulge in the spicy foods too often.

**AU: What is the best way to keep fresh in between shows when a hotel just isn't a possibility?**

TG: Hotels? Damn... that's luxury days/nights! Haha... I've spent most of the time as a musician crashing at friends' places across the globe, using random showers and sinks along the way. Unless you're in Europe, then they treat you amazingly. If only North America gave a damn about bands like [Europe does], things would be a lot different.

**AU: Weirdest or most creative food stuffs you've had to improvise on the go?**

TG: Well, we used to hit up Golden Corrals a lot when we're down south... it's the best of everything for everyone in the band, and one of my favourite things is coming up with new things for existing meals at buffets. Boring old fries? Why not pile up some chili and cheese and whatever else comes to mind, boom... loaded fries. But I'm always looking for good eats while on the road ... Especially good wings.

**AU: Without names, unless you wanna, tell us a story of a fellow bandmate who had it coming and why?**

TG: Damn, if anyone had it coming it would probably be me, haha, or maybe ol' John Littlejohn for his sneak attack photos of bandmates when they aren't lookin'.

**AU: Best cure for a banger?**

TG: Nothing cures a good banger like more bangin... and/or mezcál.

**AU: Worst thing you've had to do for money when you ran out?**

TG: Haha, had to eat at AM PM and got brutal food poisoning while touring the south. Man... had to continue playing two more weeks like that. I think there was an actual picture of this time and I was literally green in it... awful. Kids, no matter how broke you are, DON'T eat the hot dogs at the gas station!

**AU: And now the speed round! Best city for dive bars?**

TG: San Francisco

**AU: Best excuse to leave in the morning?**

TG: 'Cause you stayed out across town (insert any city here) and you gotta make it back to the band, especially before people wake up, haha!

**AU: Best party trick learned on tour?**

TG: Throwing away the bottle lid so y'all gotta finish that bottle.

**AU: Favourite drink that you can drink all night?**

TG: Mezcál and PBR

**AU: Worst hangover?**



TG: Anything involving Hey Y'all's and tequila.

**AU: Any last words for our fellow road warriors and enlightenments for aspiring tour animals?**

TG: Just don't go into this expecting to be rich... do what you want, play what you dig and fuck the rest.

The Hookers play in September at the Muddy Roots festival in Cookeville TN, and you can check us out on Spotify or Bandcamp... or whatever music thingy you feel good using.



Savage Master are on tour LOTS, unfortunately I won't be playing with them for bit. But go check them out 'cause they fucking rule.

On Spotify, or if you know how to use Google, check out:

- SprëadEagle
- The Hookers
- Savage Master

## Psycho Las Vegas Hangman's Chair

....from the  
underground of Paris,  
France

Interview with  
drummer Mehdi  
Birouk Thépegnie  
By Erik Lindholm

### Absolute Underground: Can you introduce yourself and what you're all about?

Mehdi Thépegnie: Of course! I'm Mehdi with Hangman's Chair from Paris, France. And I'm the drummer, the original founder of the band. Good to meet you!

### AU: How is the metal scene in Paris, or the music scene?



MT: France, the whole, is not famous to be a rock country. But we do have a lot of massive bands like Gojira, which opened the gates worldwide. So, everything is fine, we started in the punk and hardcore scene in France. There was a scene in Holland, Germany, England. We did our time and watched that scene grow, and we know the other bands from there, and we are friends, and brothers from other mothers. We grew up and learned music together, so that created Hangman's Chair. We started in 2005, now after five albums and three LPs with other bands. We are here to promote the last album, *Banlieue Triste*. We are very happy and delighted to be here and talk with you about it!

AU: What a great place to meet and mix with some diverse bands and friends and all kinds of people.

MT: Definitely. This is our first time in the US and this part of the world, so we've really enjoyed it, and here we played quite early, it was great because we felt something with the audience and they discovered us, a lot. But then, there are even a few people singing the lyrics, and people waiting for us.

We had a really great time! And feel relieved, we were a bit stressed, like kids, you know? We are here for the first time in the US, it's like living a kid dream, you know? We really wanted to do it. We are happy, man!

### AU: We are all kids in Las Vegas, it is like Disneyland for adults.

MT: Disneyland, Freakyland, Sin City... call it how you want it man! [laughs] I said yesterday with the guys, "They shouldn't invite us here!" because we are crazy guys, we like to eat, we do everything, we love it. We heard about it, we saw movies about Las Vegas, I saw *Casino* a thousand times! I'm happy to be here.

### AU: Are you going to try some gambling?

MT: We already did, man.

### AU: What did you try?

MT: Machines and roulette. I played that with my father when I was young. He was a big gambler. It was a fun time. We did that yesterday and partied a bit yesterday. That is why I am alone talking to you, not the others! We already enjoyed it. Tomorrow I have to fly back to LA and stay a day, in LA and see friends and then back to Paris on Sunday. So it is a short journey.

### AU: You've made a name for yourself and connections here.

MT: We have a good connection here, as well. People are working for us here, which is new for us, we have agents, PR, and labels. We just signed with Spinefarm Records for this album, and we will see how it will be. For the moment we could not expect better. We are supposed to make a tour in the US and Canada as well, with

Royal Thunder and a Scottish band called DVNE, but unfortunately, we couldn't make it. Probably next time, we will make it!

### AU: We love to see new bands in Canada, and of course, we have Quebec, which is our French-speaking province, and you will find some kinship there.

MT: We have actually, a few years ago, we had a proposition to come to Quebec. But we couldn't make it as well! As you know, we come from France, it is quite far. And things are getting better because we have people working on it, and it is getting bigger as we meet people all around the world. We've made 100 shows this year, that's fair enough for a band like us! We toured all over Europe with bands of many styles like Samael, who have different styles than us, crazy, all over Russia and Europe. And now this part of the world.

### AU: Imagine for a listener who has never heard this band before, what inspires you, and how would you describe your band's music and what you are trying to put across?

MT: That's always a hard question to answer. Just think of very good magazines, we made the cover when we release the album, and they told us, we can be classified as something like "cold doom." A combination of cold-wave, and low tuned, slow music, such as doom. I liked the term, because I try and describe it myself. As well, there is an energy coming from our background in hardcore punk music. So, just a mixture of all that stuff. Energy of the hardcore. And slow, low tuned music from the doom. And the gothic, cold-wave dark music, that cold energy that we love to listen to. "Cold doom" is the easy way to describe us.

### AU: We'd never seen you before or heard a single song. No expectations. It was very emotional an interesting interplay between the hard drum hits and keyboards, and melodic singing.

MT: That's the point for me. For me playing music is that. Pure, unique, honesty. We are not like, too political, in our lyrics. We have no message. We use voice as an instrument, and that is how we compose our music. Everything is energy. I think when you see us live, that is the main part of our job, to share the energy with the audience. That's the best present I can get. We are true people, you know? We play truly. That is the most important. We have in a set, like today, we had an hour which is quite great. Sometimes in a festival, only half hour set. You cannot express, so easily. It was great to have an hour today, to express what we



need. And we had a really great time.

### AU: Your drum sound today was incredible. What is a key piece of drum equipment for you in your drum kit?

MT: I like it like that. I like all the space of sound. I said, we play slow music. I need to take all the



space with the drums, and we had our soundguy here with us, so we offered him the setlist, like we always do, in a club or festival show, everywhere. Our soundguy is always with us, that is important for us, for the first time here to propose and offer a performance, something like that. And the sound is like it is, it takes a lot of space, a lot of reverb, a lot of effects. And all the guitar is played with a lot of effects. And I think that comes from our love of the gothic scene. Bands such as Sisters of Mercy, or Type O Negative, we listen to that a lot. Type O Negative for us is really important, because they come from also a kind of urban mood and atmosphere, they have that punk background like us, and they made it with a lot of atmosphere.

### AU: It can be pretty... beauty can be skin deep.

MT: Exactly! Darkness and light meet. And that is music for me.

### AU: What's your message to Canadians reading this a couple months from now?

MT: I would say, I wanna come to the country and share my music with you. That's it! I can't wait to have some shows in Canada and US. Listen to our music on the net first and we will come soon.

<https://hangmanschair.com/>

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

PHOTO SOURCE: Erik Lindholm





# Imonolith

Interview by AU Editorial

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

RVP: This is Ryan 'RVP' Van Poederooyen. I'm most infamous for some nasty bunk alley flatulation after consuming Taco Bell! Needless to say, I rarely eat Taco Bell!

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?**

RVP: Imonolith is Jon Howard (Vocals), Brian 'Beav' Waddell (Guitars), Kai Hupponen (Guitars), Scott Whalen (Bass) and myself on drums. Beav and I started writing tunes together in 2015 in anticipation of doing something down the road. We both played in The

Devin Townsend Band (2002-2007) and Devin Townsend Project (2009-2018). Devin broke the DTP up in early 2018, so Beav and I decided to take the music we wrote over the years and form a new band to represent it. Imonolith was the result. We became a full band in 2018.

**AU: Can you describe your music for those of us who've never heard it?**

RVP: Imonolith is a metal band. The music varies from crushingly heavy songs to catchy and hooky songs and everything in between. Our goal has always been to write memorable riffs, with slamming drums and catchy vocals (singing or screaming). We always aim to write the best songs we can that can apply to a wide audience of heavy music listeners.

**AU: You're releasing your debut album in late March, what can you tell us about it? Does it explore any particular themes or topics? What can we expect to hear on it, musically speaking?**

RVP: Our debut album is called *State of Being*. As the title implies, it's about a person's state of being. The album's about the many things we personally face in life and the various ways we deal with each situation. Life is up to you. The choices you make in life eventually shape your life into what it's become today, whether you like it or not. That's something you have to always

recognize, that's your personal state of being. The lyrics throughout the album take you through various scenarios and journeys we all face in life. Musically, it's a heavy album with a lot of hooks. Some songs are heavy, others are more moody, and then there are the straight up ass-kickers. It's got a little bit of everything and we feel that this album takes you on a musical and lyrical journey.

**AU: We read that you have some seriously rad guest artists on the album, what can you tell us about them?**

RVP: Yes, we have Jens Kidman guesting on the song "The Reign," and Johannes Eckerstrom guesting on the song "Becoming the Enemy." Both singers absolutely killed it! We're stoked they agreed to appear on the album and we're hoping people will dig their guest appearances as much as we're enjoying them. We were very selective with who we wanted to guest on the album. Both of their voices and performances lined up perfectly with Jon's vocal performances. We're excited for everyone to hear their contributions.

**AU: Will you be touring this year to promote the new album? What does 2020 have in store for Imonolith?**

RVP: Yes. We already have booked a headlining Euro/UK run starting on March 27th to April 27th, 2020. We want to tour Imonolith to as many places as we possibly can. It obviously depends on support from people around the globe. We do have followers globally, so we'll do our best to tour wherever the demand is. Europe, UK, USA and Canada are our biggest followings so far, and will be the places we hit first throughout 2020. We also have support in Australia, Japan and South America and would eventually love to tour to all those places, and anywhere else, too.

**AU: You're all experienced touring musicians, what's your secret to surviving such a long touring season?**

RVP: For me personally, it's all about taking care of yourself. Eat properly, drink lots of water, get enough sleep, exercise and definitely have a good diet for touring. Unfortunately it doesn't always work out exactly that way, but that's the goal

and it's helped get me through some long tour cycles over the years. The last thing you want is to get sick on tour or feel like shit every day from not taking care of yourself. So, I try to stick to my routine as often as possible. It works for me. Keep in mind the odd hangover on tour is obviously expected... You gotta have fun, too!

**AU: What are your goals or hopes for the future of this band?**

RVP: To simply do it as long as we possibly can. This is a dream band for all five members. This isn't a side project for any of us. We're playing music we love and it's a great group of guys. We're brothers and we want to take this band as far as it can go. We're all excited for the future of Imonolith.

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

RVP: Here's an answer for ya about all of us: Beav is a Boston Bruins hockey fan but lives in Vancouver (traitor), he also loves his weed, Jon is a vegetarian and pretty damn laid back, Scott loves weed... and more weed, Kai is an insane painter and incredible with arts and crafts. I'm a workhorse who needs to take a break every once in a while, but hey, I'm doing what I love, so I'm not bitching! Oh yeah, I collect Starbucks Collector Mugs from all over the world... but that's a whole other story! Haha.

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

RVP: Thanks for checking this interview out. Thanks to all our followers for the awesome support, you ALL rule. For all of you that don't know... you can pre-order our debut album now at [www.imonolithband.com](http://www.imonolithband.com). We have a limited 500 Vinyl pressing that's selling right now, along with CDs and tons of T-Shirts and other merchandise. Check out the personalized pre-order bundle pack! You can also access our global tour dates and buy tickets for these shows from our website as well. Thanks for the support and see you on the road!

[www.imonolithband.com](http://www.imonolithband.com)

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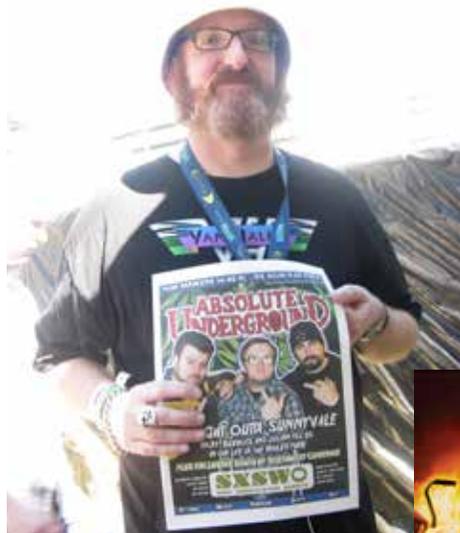
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## Brian Posehn Grandpa Metal

Interview by AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Who you are and what your most famous for?**

BP: Brian Posehn, and it depends on who you ask, as far as what I'm more famous for. Your grandparents might know me from *Big Bang Theory*. But I'm more into *Devil's Rejects*, *Sarah Silverman Program*, my comedy, *The Comedians of Comedy* with Patton Oswald, *Mr. Show*... things where I actually get to be myself, those are the things I'm really proud of.

**AU: How did you first break into the business?**

BP: Just moving to LA. I started in Sacramento, California and then moved to San Francisco and really worked on it, got funnier and did stand up all the time. I made a good group of friends that I'm still friends with, and we all moved down to Los Angeles, in the early 90s. I had a pretty easy go of getting into TV. I mean, for me, I never wanted to be on a million sitcoms but it worked out. I came down and just immediately got cast on stuff while I was also writing *Mr. Show*, working on other things and doing stand up. People started putting me on sitcoms, just because I'm six-foot-six and look like a shaved Sasquatch.

**AU: I've listened to your new album it like 20 times in a row. It's funny as hell. Tell us about it.**

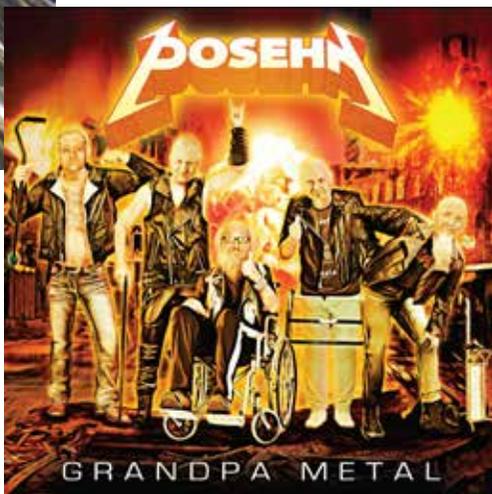
BP: It's called *Grandpa Metal*. I've done funny songs before with Scotty Ian, "Metal by Numbers," and "More Metal Than You," on my stand-up records. There was always the idea of [doing] a full comedy metal record down the road and about six years ago now we signed with Megaforce and it took that long to make this first record, and I'm super proud of it. It's all these things I'm into, I filled it with guest stars and I feel like it hits a lot of topics that are familiar to metalheads. There's a Satan song, a Viking song, a monster song and it sounds like a Halloween type tune that Rob Zombie would do. I feel like there's something for

everybody if you like metal, and you like laughing.

**AU: Is there an actual band or is it? Or is it all special guests?**

BP: It's me on every track, Brendon Small from *Metalocalypse* did guitars. He's one of my closest buddies. And then Scott Ian did the guitars also and we had Joey Vera on bass. The drums are programmed by Brendon Small, too. We're the primary members of the band. Then Joe Trohman too from *The Damned Things*, and *Fall Out Boy*, he's a buddy of ours and he wound up writing some of the stuff with me.

**AU: Why don't you like Hell? Because they don't play Slayer?**



BP: No, I mean it's just a silly song but it was taking metal conceits you know? I grew up with this thing where Satan and Hell were glorified in heavy metal and so it just felt like an older dude making fun of that, of those conceits and tearing it down. If any metal head thinks Hell would be fun I say, "No, they don't play Slayer there. It's not going to be what you picture."

**AU: It's Lawrence Welk.**

BP: Yeah, or as I say at the end of the song, it's Huey Lewis. Because that is his hell, to play his own songs forever.

**AU: What's your family heritage? I understand you are part Viking?**

BP: Yes... So my grandmother on my dad's side is 100% Swedish. Then my grandfather on that side was German. And then my mom's side we're just a mess... German, Irish, Italian and I think some English. But yeah, that's a joke song. I've always made fun of myself for being kind of a mutt. It just felt like a funny thing to make fun of, that I'm one quarter Viking and then, as I say in the song, three-quarters pussy.

**AU: Are you any good with a sword?**

BP: No, I'm really good with the sword in *Dungeons and Dragons*, depending on the roll. I have a character that's pretty proficient in it, but not in real life, nope.

**AU: I noticed your appearance on the first episode of *The Mandalorian*. Did you get to**

**hang out with baby Yoda?**

BP: No, but I was made aware of what happened in that first episode. I love it, it's such a cool thing to be a part of. Once they told me that it's *Star Wars*-meets-*Lone Wolf and Cub*, I was in.

**AU: Are you really a big fan of the song "Two Princes," by Spin Doctors?**

BP: No, that came about from Sarah Silverman's writers busting my balls. I would be on set with my iPod and they would make fun of me, like "There's no way you're always listening to metal," and I'd be like, "Yep." That became a joke of me playing "Two Princes," instead of listening to metal.

**AU: Has Trump ruined the word 'great'?**

BP: He's ruined a lot of words...

**AU: Do you play any instruments?**

BP: Not on the record. I have a bunch of guitars and I love guitars, but I can't play them very well. But I collect them.

**AU: Is this new album something you could take out on the road on tour?**

BP: Well, yeah, but not maybe what you're picturing. It was never the intention of this band becoming like Fozzy with Chris Jericho. I love him but I don't want to be the frontman of a band. This was a fun project and something that I really love and I'm really proud of. What we're going to do is make a couple of videos, hopefully I'll get to do another record down the road. But really for touring it'll probably be Scott Ian and myself going out and doing a show at a rock club. We did it on the Megadeth MegaCruise this year where he'll do spoken word for about a half hour I'll do a half hour storytelling and then bring him back out and then we'll do a couple of songs together.

**AU: Is the song "Big Fat Rock" the evolution of cock rock?**

BP: Yeah, for sure, it's taking songs that talked about your wiener and double entendres or single entendre and innuendo, and just getting rid of the innuendo and it's just straight up about my wiener. It came from, growing up with cock rock, like growing up with Mötley Crüe, KISS and Aerosmith songs that are clearly about one's genitals. Or when they would say doctor, "They call me Dr. Love," you know, because I'm a doctor of sex. Where it was so on the nose, but is supposed to be clever, we just wanted to make the most unclever song about a wiener ever.

**AU: Canada is fully legalized coast to coast. Have you had the opportunity to partake yet?**

BP: Yeah, I was up in Vancouver since that's happened.

**AU: Was it true that you stopped smoking marijuana?**

BP: I did a while ago and then...I still partake. It's so hard now with it legal. Why not? It's right there.

**AU: Do you have a favourite strain?**

BP: No, I've never been one of those guys, I like both indica and sativa, I don't have a wine that I like either, it's all enjoyable.

**AU: Do you like to smoke a pipe or joints? Are you a shatter guy?**

BP: No I'm definitely not that. I'm old school, I prefer a J. If somebody rolls up a blunt, I'm not gonna say no to the 90s, I'm gonna jump right in and yell some Cypress Hill and Redman lyrics at you.

**AU: Are you buddies with Weird Al? And did he let you cover one of his songs on the album?**

BP: We didn't do a song, but I did have him do a sketch and we're friends. Yeah, it's pretty cool when you say it out loud.

**AU: What cover song did you choose to record on this new album?**

BP: Oh, we did "Take On Me," and "The Fox (What Does The Fox Say)," song from that sketch show from a couple years ago. They both felt like pop tunes that would be better if they were metal.

**AU: What is your definition of "Grandpa Metal"?**

BP: In the song it's making fun of Scott Ian, I call him "Grandpa Metal." I think a lot of guys my age can be Grandpa Metal. We're not open to listening to new bands, well I actually do, but a lot of guys my age don't, they only like the stuff that they grew up with. It's "get off my lawn," but metal style.

**AU: What would it say on your Tinder profile if you weren't married?**

BP: No promises. You could do better. Why are you even doing this? We're both better than this.

**AU: Any other new projects on the horizon?**

BP: Yeah, I'm always working on something, so more comic books coming, another stand up special coming and I'm writing a horror novel.

**AU: You were in two LARPing movies, *Lloyd the Conqueror* and *Knights of Badassdom*. Do you LARP in real life?**

BP: No, I haven't, but I would, absolutely. I play D&D, so I would definitely give it a try.

**AU: Have you ever Wacken-ed it at any of the big European metal festivals?**

BP: No, I still want to Wacken it. Me and Jamey Jasta talked about getting a tent and going to Wacken for a couple of days, just in the pit with everybody, but then we never did it. But I'd still like to do that sometime.

**AU: Do you enjoy meeting random fans on the street? What's the weirdest thing you've ever autographed?**

BP: Wow. Yeah, most people are cool. I've had some memorable interactions. I've signed people's breasticles before, both male and female.

**AU: Why does new music suck?**

BP: I don't know. Ask the people that make it. I'm grandpa metal. I'm a crusty old man. So of course Post Malone is gonna sound terrible to my ears. I'd much rather listen to pop music that I hated from the 80s than the current pop music.

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

BP: Take off, eh.

[brianposehn.com](http://brianposehn.com)

[megaforcerecords.com](http://megaforcerecords.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Seth Olenick

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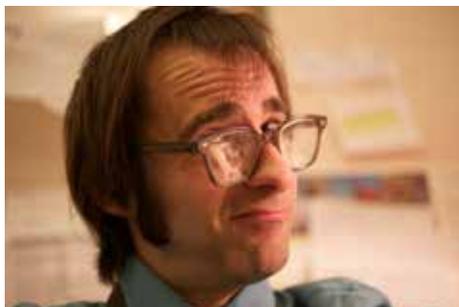
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## Douche Bag

Interview with director Phil Osborne  
By Ira "VHS" Hunter

**Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you most notorious for?**

Phil Osborne: My name is Phil Osborne and I guess I am most known for my animated videos and strange homemade toys.

**AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?**

PO: I have always made things. My earliest memory of being influenced to make art is seeing the dinosaurs at the museum when I was about three. I came home and drew my version of a brachiosaurus, which I still have to this day.

**AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?**

PO: Topps trading cards like Wacky Packages and MAD magazine are the two big ones. Discovering those things changed my perception of reality forever!

**AU: How did you first become obsessed with monsters and puppets?**

PO: Strange creatures have always been around me. Films like *Dark Crystal*, *Gremlins* and *An*

*American Werewolf in London* are some of the things that really pushed me to make my own stuff.

**AU: How would you describe the art you create?**

PO: The horror stuff I make can be described as colorful cartoony psychedelic mutations with a hardware store supplies aesthetic.

**AU: You had a store called Monster Party in Victoria many years ago and then you moved to Montreal. What have you been up to?**

PO: Lots of animations for various bands like Fuck The Facts, Bonnie Doon, and Giallos Flame. I'm mostly concentrating on live action shorts and my bands, Church of Aquarius and Born Winner.

**AU: Tell us about the short film you just directed called Douche Bag.**

PO: It's the story of a young woman who is disillusioned with love. One night, a little UFO comes through her window and a creature comes out. It possesses her and uses her repressed vindictive feelings to transform her into a dangerous venus fly trap woman. She leads her ex-boyfriends to their deaths one by one and then eventually comes to her senses to realize she has been used by the alien to carry out his plans for world domination...



**AU: Tell us about the special effects and creatures you created for the movie.**

PO: I made all of the practical effects: silicone puppets, maquettes, stop motion, on camera lighting tricks, and miniature models. My favourite thing to make was the little city scape that appears near the end. It took two days to make and only appears in the movie for maybe five seconds.

**AU: What are some of the themes you explore in your movie Douche Bag?**

PO: Disappointment with relationships. Using

other people for your own personal gain. I show a few examples of what a douche bag can be. The human douche bags and then the mutant from space version of a douche bag. From one extreme to another!

**AU: Was this movie just a way to live out your fantasy of seeing half-naked women in space helmets?**

PO: We are both into retro sci-fi so when I told her to come up with a space girl outfit, I guess she was fulfilling both of our fantasies!

**AU: You did a special screening in Victoria recently. Any other screenings or festivals planned?**

PO: Showing it at the Theatre Outremont in Montreal, which is where I work. I am currently trying to submit it to any sci-fi or horror festivals.

**AU: Any other hidden talents unrelated to art?**

PO: Nope! If it's not artsy, I'm useless!

**AU: What's the strangest thing you've ever created?**

PO: A huge spinning dildo hooked up to a lawnmower jet pack. It was a prop for a movie shot in Victoria.

**AU: What are your aspirations as an artist? Any long term goals?**

PO: Just keep myself busy making the things I believe in whether they have success or not.

You can never really know how something you make will be received by the world. Just make stuff and put it out there. Keep moving no matter what they say, kid!

**AU: Any other upcoming projects to promote?**

PO: A secret TV project has been in the works for a while now. I hope it gets off the ground this year. I want to concentrate on playing lots of shows for my Born Winner project and release a few things that have been in the works for way too long. Two



video clips are in the works: one for a band called Night Lunch and another for Cindy Lee.

**AU: VHS or Blu-ray?**

PO: I am making a VHS of *Douche Bag* for sure at some point. It makes sense for the kind of audience it was made for.

**AU: Any special plans for Valentine's Day?**

PO: What is this strange holiday you speak of, human...?

**AU: Any final words for our readers or other aspiring artists?**

PO: Don't overthink your ideas too much. Work unconsciously as much as possible. Don't go to art



school for anything! Get a job, save some money and make the time for your art. You'll get ahead way faster, and you'll be free! I swear!

**AU: Where can we see examples of your art or a trailer for the movie?**

PO: On YouTube: on my page simply called Phil Osborne

Instagram: @osborne\_oddities

osborneoddities.etsy.com

www.youtube.com/user/rabidreels



## Color Out Of Space

By Ryan Dyer

"It was just a color out of space—a frightful messenger from unformed realms of infinity beyond all Nature as we know it; from realms whose mere existence stuns the brain and numbs us with the black extra-cosmic gulfs it throws open before our frenzied eyes." - H.P. Lovecraft

Like a South African phoenix rising from the ashes of career paralysis after his attempt to film *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, director Richard Stanley has returned to the horror scene with a vengeance with his adaption of *The Color Out Of Space* by H.P. Lovecraft. The film, while being out for only a few months, is already touted as being an instant classic of the genre, while simultaneously bringing a sense of quality back to Lovecraft

adaptions and making Stanley a name to be worshipped once again in the film lexicon. Since he burst onto the scene with the cyberpunk slasher *Hardware* (1990) and later *Dust Devil* (1992), Stanley was always a director to watch. However, when hired for an adaption of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, a novel which Stanley had a grand vision for as he was a fan from a young age, he ran into extreme difficulties on set in Australia. Weather, arrogant, hard-to-deal-with actors and the skeptical higher-ups from production company New Line Cinema were all factors working against the gifted auteur, who was fired from the film mid-production and replaced with John Frankenheimer. The film was finished and released without Stanley's involvement (other than a cameo when he snuck onto the set as a dogman extra) in 1996.

In the documentary *Lost Soul: The Doomed Journey of Richard Stanley's Island of Dr. Moreau* (2014), which explains the whole fiasco in extravagant detail, actress Fairuza Balk, who became friends with Stanley on set states that he told her, "I don't know if I'll ever make another movie again. I don't think I will."

Obviously, the ordeal troubled the young director, and for the past 20 odd years, Stanley remained out of the spotlight, living in Montségur France, though he did flex his creative muscle by releasing various shorts like "Mother of Toads" for *Theatre of Bizarre* (2011) and appearing in documentaries such as *Jodorowsky's Dune* (2013). This reclusive period actually mirrors a period in Lovecraft's life, from 1908-1917 he had shut himself in from the outside world due to his increasing xenophobia. In Stanley's case, perhaps he was biding his time and incubating ideas - waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike back.

In the documentary *Lovecraft: Fear of The Unknown* (2008), key directors in the genre gave their praise to Lovecraft's 1927 story, "The Color Out of Space," with John Carpenter (whose *The Thing* (1982) and *In the Mouth of Madness* (1994) borrow heavily from Lovecraft) saying, "It's a great story. It should be a film. But I don't know how you would do the color."

The original story "The Color Out of Space," follows

an unnamed narrator who pieces together the story of an area known by the locals as the "blasted heath" in the farmlands west of the fictional town of Arkham, Massachusetts. Here, a visitor from another world in the form of a meteor has crashed into the soil, slowly contaminating the flesh and minds of everything it encounters.

The Lovecraft-infected Guillermo Del Toro says of the story, "You go to a simple setting like a farm house and unleash a cosmic melody. A cosmic curse." While Del Toro or Carpenter's vision of this tale would no doubt be spellbinding. It was announced that the director of *Color Out Of Space* would be none other than Richard Stanley, who would be utilizing a hot-off-of *Mandy* (2018) Nicolas Cage in the starring role.

Stanley's version takes liberties with the source material, as any adaption of a Lovecraft story would. Horses in the written text are replaced with alpacas and the narrator is given a family to go mad along with him. The character of the daughter is a black magic practitioner who resembles what a young female Stanley would be like. While the original story is rather humorless, Stanley injects his film with a few kooky instances - namely Nicolas Cage drinking alpaca milk fresh from the udder and Tommy Chong making an appearance as an all-knowing stoner, inspired by Stanley's real life friend, the sorcerer of the river of colors, Uranie.

The alien color is an irresistible force which cannot be properly observed with human senses, and after contaminating the groundwater, starts to mutate the plants and animals on the farm. The mutation and psychedelic effects of the color are shown in vivid detail, with makeup effects bordering on the grotesque. Stanley takes cues from previous Lovecraft adaptations *From Beyond* (1986) and *Re-Animator* (1985) while borrowing a tad from Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982) for a certain memorable sequence, while adding his own unique blend of esoteric witchery to the palette.



The story has in fact been adapted before, with notable films depicting the story on not on such a grand scale, being *Die, Monster, Die!* (1965), *The Curse* (1980) and most recently before Stanley's vision, the German *Die Farbe* (2010), which used the color imaginatively as a way to break away from the film's default black and white style.

The reason in which Stanley chose this particular story to adapt is namely the location - it takes place on a farm, not Antarctica, and not in a different dimension, so production was feasible. It was also said to have been Lovecraft's favourite story of his own.

The resurgence of Nicolas Cage helped increase the hype for *Color*, as his unhinged performance in *Mandy* (2018) was praised and began a semi-Cageamania. Lovecraft works

have also been on an upswing in recent years, with *Annihilation* (2018), *The Lighthouse* (2019) and most recently *Underwater* (2020) taking inspiration from his works. These factors, which

have helped awaken the public's perception to Lovecraft, as well as the fact that the film is a high quality grue infested nightmare of the highest calibre, have led to *Color's* success. Was it a perfect alignment of the stars or was Stanley's witchery working its wonders? What is certain is that his resurgence couldn't have been at a better time.

*Color Out of Space* is no one and done for Richard Stanley. It was recently announced that he will direct two more Lovecraft films, starting with fan favourite, *The Dunwich Horror*.

Lovecraft has said that the oldest fear is the fear of the unknown, but with Stanley on helm to direct further Lovecraft films, there really is nothing to fear here.

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<p><b>Color Out of Space</b>                  Monday, February 3 / 7PM                  2020. A secluded farm is struck by a strange meteorite which has apocalyptic consequences for the family living there and possibly the world.</p>	<p><b>The Naked City</b>                  Tuesday, February 4 / 7PM                  1948 Film Noir. Two New York City detectives investigate the death of an attractive young woman. The apparent suicide turns out to be murder.</p>	<p><b>In a Lonely Place</b>                  Tuesday, February 11 / 7PM                  1950 Film Noir. A potentially violent screenwriter is a murder suspect until his lovely neighbor clears him. But she begins to have doubts.</p>	<p><b>Beanpole</b>                  Wednesday, February 12 / 7PM                  2020. Leningrad in 1945. WWII has devastated the city. Two young women search for meaning and hope in the struggle to rebuild their lives among the ruins.</p>
<p><b>Dust in the Wind</b>                  Thursday, February 13 / 7PM                  1986. A young couple leaves their swaying town home for Taipei where they struggle to eke out a living in an industrial wasteland.</p>	<p><b>Guns Akimbo</b>                  Tuesday, February 18 / 7PM                  2020. A guy relies on his newly-acquired gladiator skills to save his ex-girlfriend from kidnappers.</p>	<p><b>Fire Will Come</b>                  Thursday, February 20 / 7PM                  2019. The destinies of Amador, a notorious Galician arsonist and Laila, a young firefighter, are linked by the power of a mysterious fire.</p>	<p><b>The Terrorizers</b>                  Thursday, January 23 / 7PM                  1996. A metaphysical mystery about the lives of three couples in Taipei that continually interact over a span of several weeks.</p>

**Regular Screenings**

<p><b>Midnight Traveler</b> Opens Friday, February 7                  Documentary   War   Persian, English, Turkish   88min                  When the Taliban puts a bounty on Hassan Fazl's head, he is forced to flee with his wife and two daughters. Capturing the journey, Fazl shows the dangers facing refugees seeking asylum and the love shared between a family on the run.</p>	<p><b>The Raven &amp; the Seagull</b> Opens Friday, February 21                  Documentary   Danish, Greenlandic   70min                  Danish title: 'Lykkelønder'. The relationship between Greenland and Denmark is full of fantasy and myth. And these are exactly what Danish artist Lasse Løn reflects upon - and in turn documents - in his first feature-length film.</p>
<p><b>VHYes</b> Opens Friday, February 7                  Comedy   English   72min                  Featuring Kent Kerway, Mark Prochuk, and more. This bizarre retro comedy, shot entirely on VHS and Betas, follows 12-year-old Ralph as he accidentally records home videos and his favorite late night shows over his parents' wedding tape.</p>	<p><b>Corpus Christi</b> Opens Friday, February 28                  Drama   Polish   115min                  Daniel experiences a spiritual transformation in a detention center. Although his criminal record prevents him from applying to the seminary, he has no intention of giving up his dream and decides to minister a small-town parish.</p>
<p><b>Nose to Tail</b> Opens Friday, February 14                  Drama, Canadian   English   82min                  Starring Aaron Abrams. Over the course of a single day, a demanding chef faces several challenges while trying to serve excellent food without compromising.</p>	<p>Showtimes for regular screenings are typically announced 5 days prior to opening. Films play for at least two weeks after opening. Visit <a href="http://www.globe cinema.ca">www.globe cinema.ca</a> for weekly showtimes.</p>

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## Winters Reach

Interview by AU Editorial

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

Sokolov: Sokolov, vocalist. I don't know that I'm infamous for anything, except maybe drinking too much and bringing axes to inappropriate places... but is there really an inappropriate place to bring an axe?

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who are you and how did you form?**

S: I've been trying to start this thing since probably around 2009, when I still lived up in northern BC. The logo and the whole winter thing is kind of a representation of where I grew up. After I moved down here (about 2013?), I made a few unsuccessful attempts. A few years later I met

Peter Ransford. He wrote some songs and got all of us together, so everyone who enjoys our music really has him to thank that this whole thing came to fruition.

**AU: Describe your music for those of us who've never heard it? What sets it apart from other Victoria metal?**

S: We are folk metal. Like, very folky folk metal. If you've never heard of it before, try imagining Celtic music, but heavier and with distorted guitar. We don't just do Celtic-y stuff, but it's a good example. While there are definitely awesome metal bands in the local scene that have these themes, none of them actual have folk instruments or write folky music. If you want to drink more than usual while dancing, moshing, and banging your head at the same time, we're your people.

**AU: Does your music explore any particular themes or topics?**

S: Winter would be a big one. The whole idea that winter is a time of death, especially from a medieval or pre-medieval perspective, but is also very beautiful (maybe not here but in places where there is more untouched snow) has always been very metal to me. Others are war, death, isolation, afterlife, mythology, fantasy, pre-modern culture, and beer.

**AU: With six members, you're a pretty big group! How does the writing process work, do you all write together?**

S: Haha it's actually seven, so getting us all together in one place is even harder. Most often one person will come to us with a written song (usually Pete) and then we'll jam it out, I'll write the lyrics, as we get closer to a more finished product we'll start figuring out the details like what the vocal or fiddle melodies should actually be, how to better harmonize the fiddle and the cello, what the tempo should be, structure changes... etc. Now with more of us writing, we may see a bit of a change in how that process goes, but it's likely to remain similar.

**AU: You have a pretty rad gig coming up in February, tell us about it! Where and when can we see you play this spring?**

S: We are stoked for the Feb 7th show. We're playing with two bands that I personally can't get enough of. Also, I'm of the opinion that this will be our best performance, so if you're a fan of us already, you'll want to come and see that.

After that our plan is to focus on recording. We may take a show if the opportunity presents itself, but we really want to put out something for people to listen to.

**AU: You've mentioned on social media that you're working on some studio recordings, how's that going? When can we expect to hear**

**some tracks from you?**

S: We've definitely been working on it. It's very hard to coordinate a large band like this to get things done quickly. I love this band and wouldn't sacrifice any of the sound, definitely not the musicians we have, but let me tell you, seven people in a band is challenging, haha. We're unsure when we'll have some tracks ready for everyone, but be assured we're working on it and will have them out as soon as possible without sacrificing quality.

**AU: What else does the new year hold for Winters Reach? Will you be touring? Shooting music videos?**

S: That's what we're going for. We want to tour as soon as possible, but as a folk metal band in BC, finding someone to tour with can be difficult. We will absolutely be putting a music video out as soon as we have some recorded material.

**AU: What are your long term goals for this band? Any dream gigs/countries you'd like to play?**

S: Touring Europe, and making our music available to the world. We'd like to keep making music long into old age I think, and make a decent living off of it. But at this point touring Europe is what our sights are set on.

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

S: We do acoustic sets as well. You want a folk metal band, send us a message. We'll see what we can do.

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

S: Keep your eyes open for our recorded material. And anyone who knows us knows that any music video we do will be great, haha. We hope that through reading this we have convinced you to come raise your horns with us at our next shows. Thank you to *Absolute Underground* for giving us this opportunity to let people know who we are, and what we're all about.

Sincerely,

Sokolov, and everyone at Winters Reach

[www.facebook.com/wintersreach8/](http://www.facebook.com/wintersreach8/)

PHOTO CREDIT: Colin Smith

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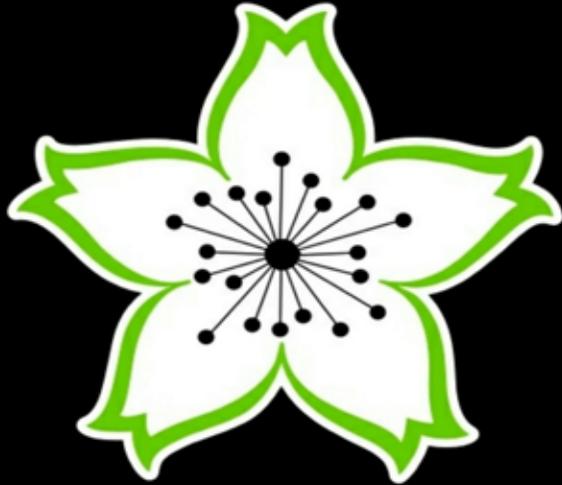
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## Hyperspace Metal Festival

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

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

JH: My name is Joey Hockin, I'm the founder of Journeyman Productions and organizer of Hyperspace Metal Festival.

**AU: Tell us about Hyperspace Metal Festival, how did the idea come about?**

JH: The year I had the idea, there were a few festivals in Vancouver that filled certain niches but there wasn't really anything that my band, Apprentice, would fit on. I realized that there was a void that needed to be filled with a festival dedicated to power metal bands that don't fit the old school "true" metal sound like at Legions of Metal, and aren't heavy enough to play festivals like Maryland Death Fest. I knew there was an audience for it because I've seen how many people show up to bands like Blind Guardian and I had been organizing metal shows in Vancouver for a couple of years at that point, so I got to work.

**AU: What bands are you particularly stoked to see in this year's lineup?**

JH: I have never seen Dire Peril or Immortal Guardian, so I'm very excited to cross those bands off my bucket list. I'm also very excited that I managed to pull Viathyn out of retirement for this. They were the band that I saw that got me excited about checking out local metal after I saw them open for Stratovarius back in 2009 in Calgary and I realized that there are kick-ass bands right in my backyard. Unleash The Archers are one of my favourite bands and they're recording a new album right now, so hopefully they'll be playing some new material at the festival, that's really exciting as well.

**AU: What can people expect to experience at Hyperspace? What will the format of the festival be?**

JH: Three nights of epic metal on the best stage in Vancouver. The sound is always incredible at the Rickshaw and the welcoming attitude of power metal fans will make everyone feel right at home. Lots of people travel from out of town for this festival so the atmosphere is always full of excitement and lots of headbanging!

**AU: What sets Hyperspace apart from other festivals? What makes it special?**

JH: The focus of Hyperspace is power metal,

which is the more melodic and epic kind of metal. Not every band on the festival fits that label but none of them would feel out of place on a bill with any of the power metal legends from Europe that we grew up with. If you're a fan of melodic metal, this is the festival you want to be at. There are only two other festivals in North America that I know of that have a similar focus.

**AU: Where can we get tickets and more information?**

JH: Tickets are available online at Eventbrite, just google Hyperspace Metal Festival and you'll find them no problem. Hard copy tickets are available at Red Cat Records, Neptoon Records and at The Rickshaw Theatre.

**AU: Is this a yearly event? What are your hopes for the future of the festival?**

JH: Yes, this is already the third year of the festival and I plan to keep it going as long as it remains popular. I hope to grow the festival and increase the popularity of the style in general, my dream is to see the festival grow large enough that we can fly bands in from Europe that you may not

get a chance to see without going to Europe yourself. So far we're on the right track!

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

JH: A lot of these bands will be very rare appearances and they are traveling very far to play here, so you don't want to miss your chance to see these bands. Make sure you check out the bands beforehand so you can sing along!

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

JH: Vancouver has one of the best metal scenes in North America, that's the only reason a festival like this is able to succeed here. Huge thanks to all the die-hard metalheads that keep the music flowing in this city! I know it's cliché, but it's true. Keep going to shows, keep supporting the bands you love and checking out new bands and we'll see you at the Rickshaw this April!

[facebook.com/pg/HyperspaceMetalFestival](https://facebook.com/pg/HyperspaceMetalFestival)

PHOTO CREDIT: Derek Carr

**III**

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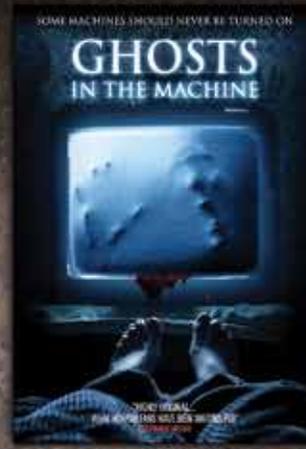
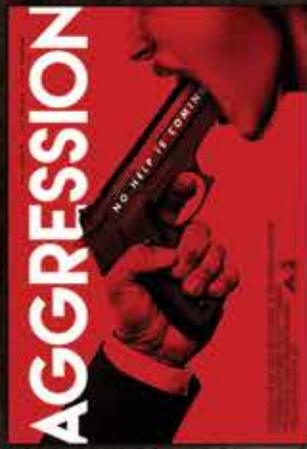
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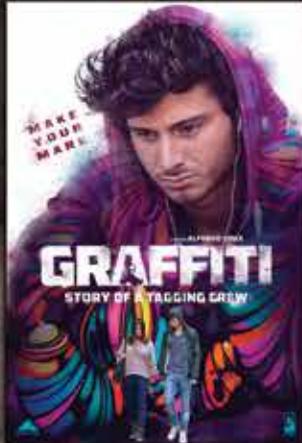
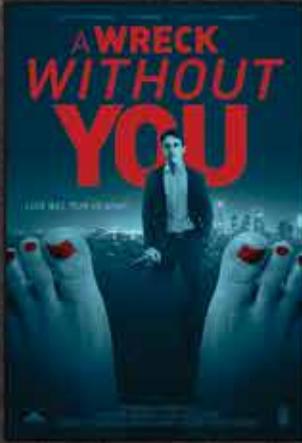
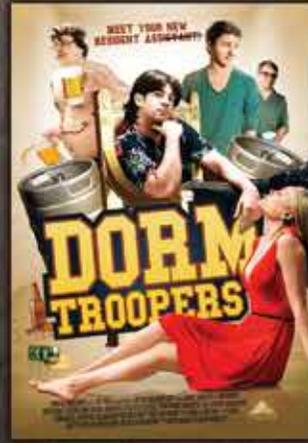
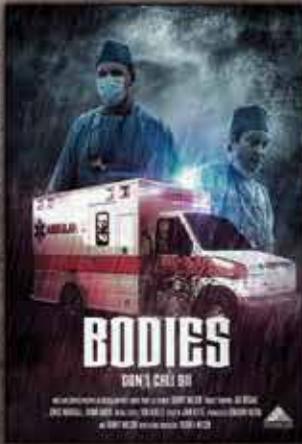
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# THE BREWS



## Great Canadian Beer Festival The 101 Brewhouse + Distillery

Interview by Ira Hunter

**Absolute Underground: I think you might have just won the media round, I've tried about 18 different beers and stumbled across Treetop Summer Ale with lemon and spruce tips.**

**Matt Cavers:** Well first of all, I'd like to thank my mom, my dad. Everybody who's gotten me to this point. I'd like to thank every brewer that's here today.

**AU: I think this is the most enjoyable beer I've had so far today. How would you describe it for people that don't have taste buds?**

**MC:** The reason we chose lemon and spruce tips together was that when you use fresh spruce tips, like the fresh green growth, you get a flavour that is very sweet tasting, not unlike liquorice root, it can be a quite sweet, overwhelming note. So we decided to use lemon there to counterbalance

that sweetness with something refreshing and tart, just a little bit, and to accentuate the citrus notes of the spruce tips.

**AU: You were up against a Moscow Mule Lime Ginger.**

**MC:** I'm aware of that and it sounds like we prevailed.

**AU: I went to like six booths and I tried to try every beer they had available but this booth**

**has nine different beers and I only tried three.**

**MC:** How long have you been here?

**AU: I've had 18 beers before they even rang the bell.**

**MC:** Are you actually from the New York Times?

**AU: The Absolute Underground Times. We want to know about your brewery, where's 101, what's it all about?**

**MC:** The 101 is in Gibsons on the Sunshine Coast, we're a craft brewery, craft distillery, music venue restaurant. We really try to be a community hub so we have events almost every night of the week. We have raging karaoke parties, lots of live music. We have the most Neil Diamond impersonator nights of any brewery on the Sunshine Coast. That's verifiable and a sweet thing about The 101 is that it attracts a really diverse crowd. There's music for all kinds of people, there is danceable music for the 20-30 set and there's dad rock, and it's also applicable to moms. It's a cool place come check it out.

**AU: What other beers do you brew?**

**MC:** We have a lineup of about eight right now, because we're essentially a brew pub and we do a lot of in-house business we try to hit a pretty broad range. We have a German-style lager, dry hopped Blonde Ale, New England IPA, a

hefeweizen, and a porter as our core lineup.

Also right now, you can get a blueberry and lime leaf gose at the brewery. We're releasing a Vienna lager next week and I'm super stoked for that. It's called Sweater Weather Amber lager.

**AU: You have your booth here at the Great Canadian Beer Festival.**

**MC:** This is our booth. We're super stoked to be associated with The BC Ale Trail. We're one of four breweries on the Sunshine Coast Ale Trail and you can also dig at least one cidery. The Sunshine Coast is a happening place to be, we're stoked to be part of this Ale Trail scene to get people travelling through and visiting the coast. It's a self guided tour that has multiple branches through the province find out more at [bcaletrail.ca](http://bcaletrail.ca).

**AU: When did you say, I want to be a brewmaster?**

**MC:** I was half to three-quarters of the way through a PHD study in the humanities and I was also a home brewer, and I enjoy drinking craft beer. This was 2013 when breweries were starting to open all over the place and there was starting to be some excitement around this idea of craft brewing. Persephone Brewing opened up in Gibsons that year and before it opened my friend Dion who was the general manager of the place until this year said, "Hey man there could be a job for you just so you know," and I was like, no need, I'm finishing my PHD program, I'm going to be a university professor, there's tons of jobs... And a month later I emailed him and I dropped out of my PHD and I've been brewing ever since. I've been at The 101 for almost a year now as Head Brewer and Production Manager.

**AU: A Brew Master. Is there like a testing**

**process a Black Belt would go through or how do you become a master?**

**MC:** You have to attend the Great Canadian Beer Festival a certain number of times and your actions are reviewed by a panel of your peers. If they agree that you have endured enough adversity as a result of this festival then you're awarded the title of Brew Master.

**AU: Do you take pride in using local organic ingredients?**

**MC:** Yeah absolutely I think it's a really fun thing about brewing at 101. I'm super stoked to explore lots of ways to use local ingredients. Look out for more of this spruce beer next year, probably June, in cans.

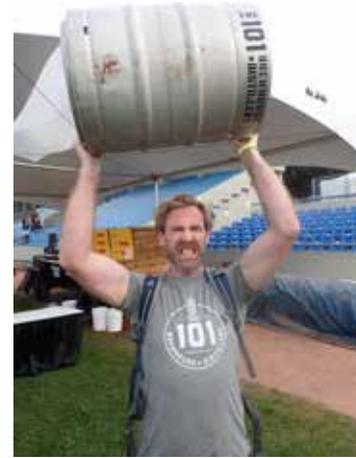
**AU: Where do people find your beer?**

**MC:** I'd prefer that you can visit me on the BC Ale Trail in Gibsons, but we do distribute our canned beer. We can several of our beers and we sell them on the Sunshine Coast almost

entirely. But we do have several draft accounts through Vancouver. You can find us at The Troller Pub, Queen's Cross, The Wicklow, Cafe Deux Soleils, a few others. But we focus on the Sunshine Coast because we're small and it's a cool thing. You can go to different places and drink different beer and we don't aspire to grow to the size you can get our beer all over the province. On the other hand we are also a distillery with a huge beautiful copper still and we're stoked to start sending our spirits far and wide soon.

[www.the101.ca](http://www.the101.ca)

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## UNDERGROUND MODELS



**AU: Who does your pictures?**

CC: Most of them are taken by myself, using a tripod and a self-timer. My outdoor photos are taken by my boyfriend. I enjoy taking photos by myself because I can be in charge of everything; usually I have a precise vision in my mind of what result I want to achieve.

**AU: Do you work with any brands?**

CC: Yes, I have worked with some amazing brands in the past, however, I do not have any long-term collaborations. I am very thankful for the brands that reach out to me and they want me to promote their items and I really appreciate that I have the opportunity to model for companies I have always

looked up to.

**AU: What are a few of the brands that you have worked with?**

CC: The first brand that I've collaborated with was Killstar. I was so honoured when I got contacted by them, since I've always looked up to them and they are my favourite brand by far. So far I have also collaborated with brands like Devil Night UK, Rock n' Doll Store, Grave



and powerful female vampires) and Type O Negative (when I listen to them I picture a misty graveyard covered in autumn leaves). As far as people are concerned, my main inspiration is British model Dani Divine. I followed her for a few years before I created my own account, I have always admired her confidence and stunning fetish style. The other one is Mahafsoun, I absolutely admire her vampiric vibe and the way she combines bellydance with metal and gothic style is truly impressive.

**AU: What is your main influence?**

CC: My main influence is music. I am absolutely addicted to music, I can't live without it, my musical taste is very broad and varied. The bands that inspire me the most are Cradle of Filth (their lyrics are a masterpiece, when I listen to them I always think of gothic castles

whole. Another favourite is *The Love Witch* from 2015. This film tackles the topic of wicca, which is among my interests. Again, the visual part is just stunning: the outfits are splendid, so is the interior design, filled with beautiful objects. I also love the message of this film: it tells women that they should not be afraid of their sexuality and femininity and embrace it and flaunt it, as it is one of their main powers.



**AU: What is your most favoured fantasy element?**

CC: My most favoured fantasy elements are all supernatural, half-human creatures like vampires, werewolves, witches, demons, etc., because they portray both the darkest fears and desires of the human race, for example the desire to live forever, possess immense strength, control the elements, and so on.

@contesacneajna

PHOTO CREDIT: Contesa Cneajna

## Contesa Cneajna

Interview By Don McCaskill

**Absolute Underground: When did you start modelling?**

Contesa Cneajna: In February, 2018, right after I created my Instagram account.

**AU: Why did you start?**

CC: I have always loved gothic fashion and enjoyed creating different looks and outfits. I also wanted to have a small place in the web where I could vent my creativity. I love modelling because I can transform myself into virtually anything: I can become a vampire, a horned succubus, a witch, etc. and I love putting some fantasy into mundane everyday life.





## Dating a Non-Toker

By Julia Veintrop

Since Canada legalized cannabis, society has started to chill out. People who used equate pot with heavy narcotics are learning the facts and social stigma is breaking down. On top of that, there are lots of people who accept cannabis use now simply because the government is on board. Regardless of why, stoners and squares are letting go of social judgements and connecting with each other more than ever... many are starting to date. Like the first slow song played at a middle school dance, these new human interactions can get pretty awkward. To avoid stepping on any toes, here are some tips to help you approach.

### Decide beforehand if this is really what you want

When it comes to relationships, you can never expect to complete your life by adding someone else to it; you need to be a complete person to begin with. Before you affect the wellbeing of someone else, take an honest look at yourself and lifestyle. How big of a part does cannabis have to play in your day to day life? Are you willing to adapt or change any of those habits? Do you really want to? If the answer is no, it's okay! Knowing what you don't want in a relationship can teach you to recognize what would truly fulfill your heart. The important thing is to listen to this inner voice and let it guide you, regardless of what it says.

### Communicate

Does this person really mesh with your life and routine? Do you want to do all of the same things? Check in with each other regularly to make sure you are still both on the same journey because it's easy to get too comfortable in a relationship when there's weed. Having this conversation all through the relationship is key because something that might be a mild annoyance in the beginning, can end a relationship if left unchecked.

### Here are some topics to get you started:

**What** - Explain how cannabis is medicine, even if you aren't using it like that. After all, the difference between a recreational and medical need is hurt or illness and no one is safe from that. Assuming that your significant other will know the difference at the moment you need them to is leaving a lot up to chance. If you get a horrible stomach flu and need to have a quick puff out the window, the last thing you need is your partner reacting.

**How** - Get down to the nitty gritty details of how you use cannabis so that they know what to expect. Sure, they might not have any issue being around you smoking in your place. But, if you need to leave the balcony door open, give them a heads up and have a blanket ready. Someone who doesn't smoke weed just can't understand why you, "have to have the door open for two hours because you can't put the bong down." Having a conversation beforehand to set expectations goes a long way. Plus, they might not know. Tell them how to respect your cannabis use because a non-toker will need the suggestions.

**Why** - Your partner wants to get to know you. If cannabis is a part of who you are, do yourself justice and be honest with them about that. Approaching this subject early on can really help to solidify a common understanding; that way, you can puff in peace. If you need to use cannabis medically, this conversation is a critical necessity.

### Create boundaries and ground rules so both of you don't impose your views on each other.

Discuss pet peeves, including yours. If they can't stand the smell of your roaches, find that out and keep them in a mason jar. Tell them about that strategically placed lighter for the days you can never find one. It is not about being finicky, it is about preventing arguments.

Use this as an opportunity to learn how to be really sweet to each other. They don't use cannabis but they know that you like it. Give them an opportunity to engage with you in their own way. I had an ex-boyfriend that didn't use cannabis at all but, I was constantly stoned. He used to surprise me with tasty treats sometimes instead of flowers. We dated for eight years.

### Use this as an opportunity to branch out and try things like edibles

If you haven't tried using cannabis edibles with calculated planning and routine dosing, now might be the time. Supplementing inhalation with edibles works for a lot of people, especially once you fine tune what works for you. Until you know exactly how your body will react, pay attention to dosing by starting off with less than you usually would. The last thing you want to do is green yourself out right before a date night.

True story - My friend dated an Opera singer who landed a leading

role in Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro." The whole production was four hours long, with a single fifteen minute intermission. Wanting to be supportive, he made pot cookies. They were so strong, he fell into a coma sleep and had to shook awake when it was over. He was visibly baked beyond belief and everyone could tell. She took one look at him and dumped him on the spot. He told me that he was too baked to even protest.

### Approaching In-laws

Of all the positive and negative factors that can affect your relationship, few are more complicated than dealing with the inlaws. Bringing up cannabis when your partner doesn't use it can be a bit nerve wracking, but it can be done easily and effectively.

When it comes to sussing out the inlaws situation, do some research. Find out if any of them have ever smoked weed before and ask why they stopped. If it happened organically or because college ended, this person might be your ali and you can approach with confidence. If they quit because of the law, health or addiction, proceed carefully but proceed nonetheless. Be respectful but be true to yourself. Remember, you might be introducing them to the medicine that will save their life one day. Think wise guide, not pushy chauvinist.

When it comes to you using cannabis when your partner doesn't, there is no reason why you can't find common ground. It all comes down to communication, knowing what you really want and honouring each other.

vcbc.ca

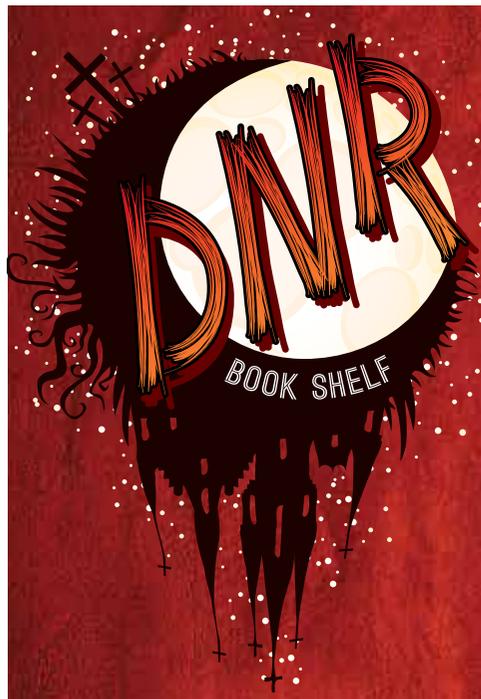
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story is beautifully uncoiled before us in a brutal winter setting with a man and his children hiding safely in a mountain cabin safely (at least at the beginning of the tale) from what howls outside. Another was "Fat Jack," a morbidly obese man witnesses an unthinkable violent traumatic event against his family and is forced to recover alone, get his health together, and just when he does... the story takes a surprising turn down a dark path. Vengeance and revenge make such great stories. Plenty of twisted stories of slithering brain masses, flesh-eating worms and yes, zombies, make for a really enjoyable, well-rounded collection, quite proper for your short story/anthology shelf.

*Demonika*

cutting the inhabitants off from civilization, becomes that much more terrifying. Jason Howl adds to that primal fear by layering on familiar tensions between lovers, fractured relationships between friends, and dark secrets between family members. With the full moon looming overhead, we're ready for a disaster before the characters even step foot inside the cabin door.

Beyond that familiarity, what "Breeding Season" does really well is mess with the clichéd gender roles and expectations. From the start, having been teased with a glimpse of the coming confrontation between wolves and humans, we're led to expect the big, brave men to be slaughtered, fed upon and discarded, leaving the helpless women to be sexually ravaged.

Instead, we have men have gone mad, turning on one another, hiding in the cellar, women taking charge of their defenses, and wolves that aren't there to breed, but to be bred.

This is a story that is brutal and angry and passionate, all at the same time. There's fire and blood and barbed wire. Much of the story is marked by the gore of torn limbs and chewed flesh... but then it gets disturbingly weird, with (literally) animistic acts of rape.

*Bob Milne*

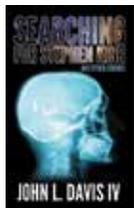
burden for Kris to figure out, unraveling exactly what happened and how she and the rest of the members got to where they currently are - no where, soulless perhaps?

Blow by blow, Kris begins to expose what she believes happened. It's a classic tale of selling one's soul for fame and fortune, except their souls were sold without their knowledge. She gathers the old members of Dürt Würk, trying to reach Terry and seek justice and free their souls from this arrangement she and her bandmates suffer from. A winding tale on the road all the way to Las Vegas for an epic showdown at a festival caps this book off for us with quite a happy ending for a horror book.

I found this book is really about true grit rather than horror, though it did have a few decent demonic/paranormal junctures which would have been great if they had delved into a bit deeper. But it was great that the lead character was a stubborn, strong willed female guitarist and overall not a bad read. If you are a Hendrix fan, or a metal fan, for sure grab this one. The hardback version is actually very beautifully done in red with black pages. Nice on the old book shelf.

*Demonika*

## SEARCHING FOR STEPHEN KING AND OTHER STORIES



**John L. Davis IV**  
Amazon/Independent  
November 1st 2019

I really enjoyed this anthology of short stories. I have never read anything by this particular author before, but certainly will check more out. There are 19 tales in this collection and I was pleasantly surprised at how many were great, I found it hard to put the book down, so I rate this book quite high. We see everything from morbidly obese men seeking vengeance to zombies... so many zombies. Even though I have had my fill of zombie stories, I really enjoyed the ones he presents, and each one is done a bit differently for great variety of creature which saves it from the same old type.

My favourite story of them all was probably the title and final piece of the book, "Searching for Stephen King." Davis paints a freakishly true to life story of anyone who collects books with much gusto, and is hilariously relatable even in the middle of the zombie apocalypse. Two men have managed a suitable life in a bunker below ground and one, with an insatiable quest for collecting books, is no different in this zombie riddled world than he was before it happened. His library below ground boasts many rare and hard-to-find books he's scavenged over the years and he needs but one pièce de résistance to complete the Stephen King shelf. The story is flourishing, exciting, funny, and heart-pounding.

Others I really enjoyed included "Mountain Nightmare: A Christmas Tale." The whole

## MONKSPIKE: YOU ARE NOT FORGIVEN



**S.E. England**  
Amazon/Independent  
October 20th 2019

After hearing such good things about Sarah England's work for the past few years, this was my first attempt at digesting one of her novels myself, and man, is she ever an amazing storyteller! I wasn't sure if I would like the story at first because her writing and prose is very English, very prim and proper.

I really didn't have a clue what was going on till about 100 pages in. Then slowly a story began to unfold, about ancient evil surrounding a small town in England, where a monastery of 400 monks were slaughtered during a Civil War in the 1400s.

By the time I was 200 pages in, I realized that I had to stop everything else that I was doing, and see what she did with the story. This author has the skill to slowly let the story unfold, increasing the tension level by increments until you found yourself reading like a fiend, trying to figure out where exactly she was going.

If you're in the mood for a really good ghost story that is wonderfully executed, I would start here.

*Michael Cushing*

## BREEDING SEASON



**Jason Howl**  
Amazon/Independent,  
August 2019

As we continue to become more digital, more plugged into the world around us, the simple horror of an isolated hotel or cabin, with an inevitable catastrophe

## WE SOLD OUR SOULS



**Grady Hendrix**  
Quirk Books, June 25th 2019

As both a metal head and a horror fiction fan, I was delighted to sink my teeth into this new Hendrix book. I have not read anything by him before, but know he has a solid mainstream following (probably why I avoided him in the first place) so I gave it a go since many were raving about it and it was about metal and band dynamics, a double whammy for my interests. Something that caught me right from the start was that there were no numbered chapters, instead each chapter was a song title from the likes of Venom, Napalm Death, Ozzy, Manowar, etc. The story begins to shake out for us, painting the picture of a tired, worn out, beaten down Kris Pulaski, now the night manager at a Best Western. We learn she wasn't always this person, but a musician in the great 90s metal band Dürt Würk teetering on the verge of success at that time. However, things took a disturbing turn (for all members of the band except the power and fame hungry lead singer Terry 'Koffin' Hunt), when all eyes shifted to the singer for stardom. All members were dropped unjustly, leaving a wild, heavy

## BLACK HEART BOYS' CHOIR



**Curtis M. Lawson**  
Amazon/Independent,  
September 1, 2019

I picked up Curtis M. Lawson's *Black Heart Boys' Choir* yesterday to see what the fuss was about, with it being considered to be nominated for a Stoker Award this year. This was my first time reading anything by Mr Lawson.

The story follows Lucien Beaumont, a teenage misfit and musical prodigy that has gone from riches to rags following the suicide of his father. At the beginning of the story, he goes from a prestigious "Academy," having to dress up in suits and tie every day, to being thrust into the middle of America's educational system in his senior year. And after finding a heavily defaced, lost piece of music that his father and one of his associates never finished, he decides that he wants to discover the secret to his father's music, which becomes his undoing.

This is like a cross between H.P. Lovecraft's *The Music of Erich Zann* and Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*. This novel is so unique and so strange that it will be stuck in my head for a long time to come.

*Michael Cushing*

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### High Expectations with Gou Tanabe's Graphic Novel Adaptation of At The Mountains Of Madness

By Ed Sum

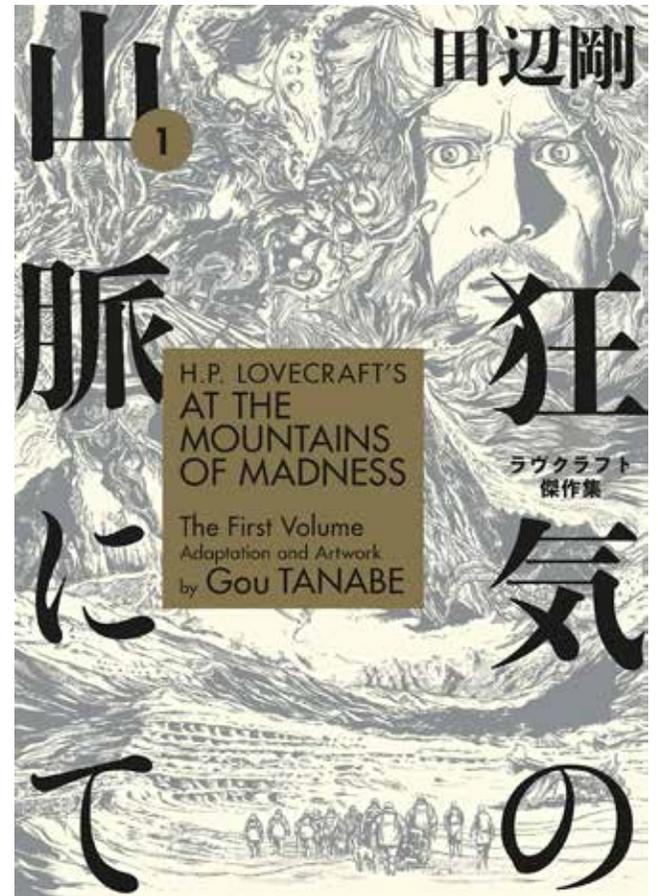
This manga style adaptation of H.P. Lovecraft's *At The Mountains of Madness* certainly delivers winter chills. Some liberties were no doubt taken to realize this story, and anyone who knows the original story will recall how Danforth lost his sanity after seeing a Great Old One rise from the destruction near the end of the novel. Will this artist attempt to draw this cosmic entity? You'll have to pick up this work to find out!

The purpose of splitting this graphic novel into two parts is to give readers time to mellow with the story. Both parts are now available to purchase through Amazon, or your local comic book store, and having both on hand is heavily recommended so you can enjoy the story in full.

While the first volume builds the suspense, the second contains all the back history and terror Dyer and Danforth discover: The barrel-shaped Elder Things that once ruled the Earth. They navigate the air and sea like the strange echinoderms that they are. The invading Cthulhu is recalled, and he is rendered in all his terrifying glory. The war that's waged is explained; if only this work was published in a larger format!

## COMIC-GEDDON

I really wanted to see the Elder Things, Mi-Go and Shoggoths in all their detailed glory. The paperback format is decent. I admired the skillful use of grey tones in Tanabe's style. And he's not stopping with this work. His debut collection, *The Hound and Other Tales* helped introduce readers to his style. His next work, which has no release date yet, is *The Call of Cthulhu!*



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## Neck Of The Woods

Interview by Stepan Soroka

Since 2014, Neck of the Woods has been delivering a unique fusion of progressive metal stylings to anyone who will listen. With a consistently arresting live performance, an EP and a full-length album under their belt, and a sophomore record about to drop, the Vancouver based five-piece shows no signs of slowing down. We sat down with vocalist Jeff Radosmky in an East Van café where, unlike their live shows, he was required to keep his shirt on.

**Absolute Underground: Who are we speaking with and what are you best known for?**

JR: I'm Jeff Radosmky, the singer for Vancouver's progressive metal band Neck of the Woods.

**AU: How would you describe Neck of the Woods to someone who has never heard your band before?**

JR: Man, that's a tricky one. Being a progressive metal band, we're pretty influenced by older bands like Pink Floyd, with a lot of attentiveness to modern metal flair without subscribing to any sort of trends. It's a culmination of five or six genres all smashed into one without any sort of restrictions or apprehensions to explore new territory.

**AU: You've got a new record coming on Pelagic Records on March 20th. Tell us about that.**

JR: Our new record is titled *The Annex of Ire*. It is seven tracks long. We recorded it at Rain City Recorders with Jesse Gander around this time last year. We're all very happy with the sound we've all made together and it's definitely a step forward from our previous release, *The Passenger*.

All of us have grown and changed as people and as musicians. Our inspirations have shifted a little bit and so has our goal and our intentions with creating this music. We're all a little more experienced and grown up, so it definitely turned out a little better than the last.

**AU: You just released a music video for the title track. Can you tell us about the concept of the video and how this relates to the aesthetics and the message of the band?**

JR: Oh, absolutely. We shot the video with a gentleman named Rob who runs a small cinema company called RZCINEMA. He and I sat down and brainstormed the concept behind the video. The lyrical content focuses on an incident that happened to the band in 2017, when we tried to release our debut record *The Passenger*, and unfortunately the artist who we had purchased artwork from had sold it another band and effectively ripped us off.

a longer tour? Is it realistic for me to apply for a government grant, or estimate a merchandise order?" If you want to order T-shirts, you'll have a better idea of how many to order. Plus, it's nice to keep track of everything and look back and see your actual growth, not just in streaming and social media statistics. You can look back and see that there were 50 people there the first time you played and now there's like 150. That's great, and it's a little validating. Sometimes playing in a band feels like an endless slog uphill and that is reassurance that you're doing it right.

**AU: Stress and conflicts are inevitable aspects of touring. What are some of the tools or strategies that you use to keep things rolling smoothly on the road?**

Jeff: All of us need to take time to ourselves and have our own little rituals on the day-to-day to make sure that we're socially capable of interacting with both other bandmates and other people. When you sleep in a van every single night and you one-by-one share a shower, and you spend every waking second with each other, it's pretty easy to be at wit's end with each other. We're very fortunate that all of us really get along and we all have the same end goal. We all understand where our limits are on a personal level and we know not to push them. I think respecting each others' space and boundaries has

been the keystone to the longevity of the band.

**AU: Can you tell us about the strangest show you have ever played?**

Jeff: It seemed strange to us at the time, but it actually turned out to be one of the best shows of our tour. We played a sandwich shop in Chico, California called Ike's Sandwiches. We rolled up not really knowing what to expect. It was my first

# NECK OF THE WOODS

time working with the promoter, who had come to me highly recommended from a peer, and the show went off. We played on the floor in front of the entrance with all the lights on and the shop was still fully functioning and open. They were still serving sandwiches to the crowd. About 60 people showed up to a 50-capacity sandwich shop and were stage diving off the tables. It was unbelievable and was definitely the weirdest place we've ever played.

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**AU: If you had to French kiss one other member of Neck of the Woods, who would it be?**

Jeff: Dave. It would make him so uncomfortable. One hundred percent. He would squirm and he would hate it, and that would make me enjoy it way more.

**AU: What's next for Neck of the Woods after the release of *Annex of Ire*?**

Jeff: Extensive touring. We're starting with South by Southwest in Austin, Texas on March 18th. In May we're taking off on a three-week tour, but I'm not allowed to announce who we're touring with yet. We're a headlining act at Armstrong Metal Festival as well as Loud as Hell Metal Festival. We'll be doing another three-week run in July-August which will be most of Canada and some of the East Coast US. Then we're doing another west coast run in November and are trying to get over to Europe at the end of the year. We're touring almost every month of the year, which is a step we've been wanting to take for a really long time.

**AU: Anything you would like to add?**

Jeff: I'm really grateful to all the people who have helped to bring this record to completion. All five members of the band contribute equally, and there have been a lot of people who have joined our team who have been key in us moving forward. People like Ryan Schutte from Seattle, who plays in Pound. He's been an incredible resource for myself and almost the entire Vancouver scene to start touring internationally. I have unending gratitude for people who have helped push this boulder up the hill and that list of names is only growing. It fills my heart.

[neckofthewoodsmetal.com](http://neckofthewoodsmetal.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Shimon Karmel

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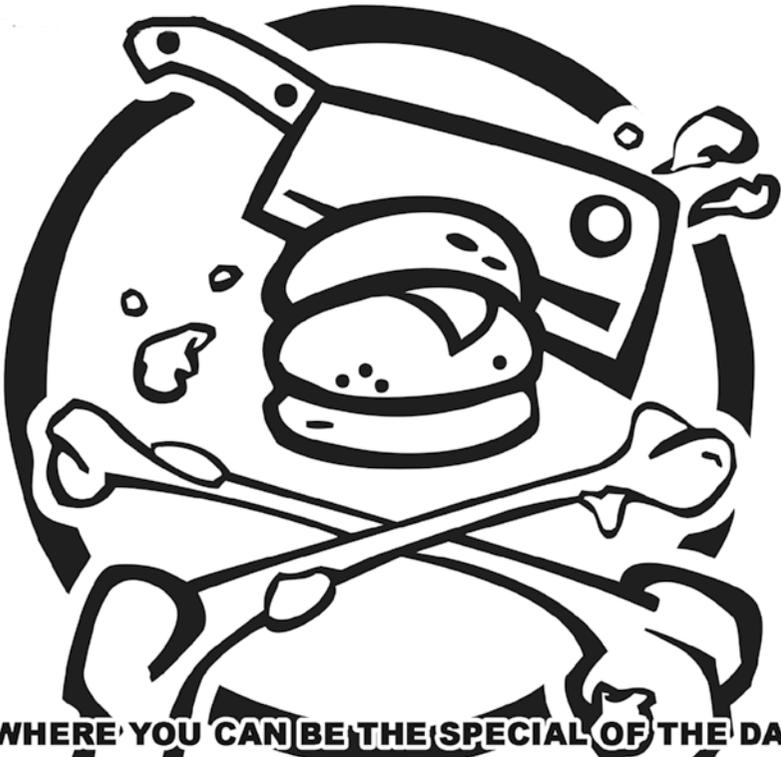
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## Bedouin Soundclash

### New record *Mass*... out from the cold!

Interview with guitarist/vocalists Jay Malinowski  
By Erik "Combat Rock" Lindholm

**Absolute Underground: How are you doing?**

**Where are you? Set the scene.**

Jay Malinowski: In a parking lot in Victoria, sitting in a car. It's raining heavy. I'm doing well!

**AU: What's next for the band?**

JM: We took a few years off, playing tours. We played festivals. There were albums in there, too. Thought maybe we should move on from music, didn't want to tour after we had for decade straight. We've refound ourselves. We want to release more music. The new ideas we have are reggae-oriented, and we are penning them. The

ideas for the next record is coming together.

**AU: Your new record *Mass* has been released as of October 2019. What was your goal musically with the record?**

JM: I had started writing with a lot of horn parts. The sound spoke to me. As for the themes, and lyrics in the songs. There is a lot of tension in the world right now. *Mass*, for me, is about coming together, massing. Being together. Finding solutions.

**AU: Why did you take 10 years off the band, with recording? What perspective did it give you?**

JM: Why are we doing something for the sake of it? Why are we touring? We had to ask ourselves. We want to be engaged onstage, not ever feeling tired or routine. It wasn't right. There was a need for some time away. I did solo project called The Deadcoast and also wrote a book which accompanied the music, published on Harper Collins about the experience. I illustrated it and it was a chance to explore new concepts.

**AU: *Mass* is New Orleans-recorded. You worked with the The Preservation Hall Jazz Band; legendary. What did you learn about creativity**

**from them?**

JM: It was an experience. The message was, "less planning." Ben Jaffe, who leads the band, his family mission is to preserve historic New Orleans jazz music. They were about coming to the studio prepared, but not set into expectations. They wouldn't write and have notions about what the music would sound like. It was flexible and dynamic. It was a different way of writing and approaching. I worked with classical music in Vancouver in my downtime right before this project, and immersed in the structure of it. Structure is sheet music. This brought both into the middle, in the studio.

**AU: The band employs many styles, reggae being a large part of the mix. Do you find certain styles have more traction than others? When you step outside of reggae, what is the public response?**

JM: We have at times, been pop in structure. We change every record. Our style is "fusion" - not reggae. Purists don't view us that way. We blend styles. So many influences come to us. Most people in Canada only know one or two songs from us. We feel reggae is a big part, and future songs are in that direction. We have the freedom to record what we want. Be open.

**AU: I love the full sound of the horns on the record, it is so lovely. I just wanted to say that. Will you reproduce it on the road?**

JM: Thank you! We came up with some great lines with the Preservation band, and we will be touring with a full horn section. We have rehearsals for the seven days in Victoria prior to the start of the tour, the first show in Victoria, in February.

**AU: Where are you from originally? How did you fall into this style of music and find the original influence to launch the band?**

JM: Home is Vancouver. I met Eon (on bass) at school; and we connected over music. He was all about classic reggae, he was raised on it! And I was on Asian Dub Foundation, Massive Attack, and The Clash. We met in the middle. We wanted to create.

**AU: What is your favourite metal record, and why? Tell us a story about it.**

JM: That's a question... okay. I have heavy metal friends and they will disagree with me, but for me, it is Bad Brains - *Rock The Light*. It's more of a hardcore record. Our producer, Darryl Jenifer, is Bad Brains bass player. He said all metal was is "sped up funk breaks." When you heard the record again with that in mind, it made perfect sense. It was like The Clash, at double pace. He was right!

**AU: Last words to music lovers across Canada, the people coming from the shadows into the light.**

JM: Come and see us live! Thanks for being there for us.

[www.bedouinsoundclash.com](http://www.bedouinsoundclash.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Brandon Artis Photography



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## Mission of Christ Early Days of Crossover in Victoria, BC

By Jason Flower

Interviews with Stephen McBean (guitar), Mike Synnuck (vocals), and Tolan McNeil (guitar) conducted late 2018/early 2019 by Jason Flower. Other MOC members include Kev Smith (guitar), Jon London (drums, RIP), and Randy Long (bass, RIP).

**Absolute Underground: Those were different times, back in 1984-86, hardcore punk scenes didn't mix with metal, the rivalry was even a bit aggressive. What did it look like at some of those early shows when you started to play full-on metal?**

Steve: We started out playing punk shows because we were punks. There were a few hesher stads that were cool and crossed over. Tolan and Shawn Ross from Tantrum. Kevin Wright from Armoros, Blake, etc. John Hircocok from Overkill Radio was hugely supportive and always flowed mix tapes with demos by fresh blood like Death, Morbid Angel, Sepultura, etc. He gave us an advance cassette of Slayer's *Reign in Blood* a month before it came out. When we dropped that fucker into Mike's car stereo, life became "Before and after hearing *Reign in Blood*."

Tolan: Definitely after hearing the advance of *Reign*, there was the before/after ... that movie *River's Edge* brought a different thing to so many people... but we knew we heard it

way before... but little media nods ... I remember slightly before the advance copy from John Hircocok, Steve had a copy of Slayer's *Haunting the Chapel*, we listened to that for bedtime in our shared dumpy room.

Steve: It wasn't until the Karrion/Armoros show at the OAP Hall that the scenes totally collided. That was a pretty violent show. There may have been a rat-gooft in the pit who got the boots. The entire concert was arrested and put in jail.

Mike: There definitely was a lot of intolerance back in the day, which would lead to a lot of crazy shit. The Douglas rockers would chase us down

the streets of Victoria and try and kick our asses, but our Peter-Pan-go-fasters would allow us to easily out-run most of them. If not, then we would just hide under the tables and watch everyone pound the piss out of each other. That night at the OAP Hall was nuts, so many fights. Eventually the metal heads realized punk was way cooler than they first realized and all cut their hair and started wearing "NOT" t-shirts.

Steve: Thank god for Anthrax ...

Tolan: I remember one of the shows in Vancouver (Blasphemy?) that was so fucking violent and conflicted... people who were experimenting. Or practicing to be "hard." At that time I don't think there was really a blueprint to follow in respect to how to express oneself through metal, especially in western Canada. I think that we as a band were just kinda quiet, fairly decent kids with a lot of inside jokes that kept us slightly left of most bands of our ilk. So maybe that's why we were sorta weirded out about Synnuck's car getting firebombed that night.

**AU: Can you tell us about all the labels that contacted you?**

Steve: Alchemy, Manic Ears, Metal Blade and some label from France all sent us offers. I remember reading the letter from Alchemy and passing it to Kev asking, "Does this mean they wanna put out a record?" I spoke to Victor Hayden on the phone a few times about us coming to SF to record but then he disappeared and the label seemed to vanish. For its short life it was pretty crucial - putting out the first albums by the Melvins and Neurosis plus Poison Idea, RKL, and



Clown Alley.

**AU: Why or how did MOC break up and what came from its ashes?**

Steve: It was just done — Hearts were waning. We wanted to do something else. The scene had gotten pretty dark and violent and there were probably some new sounds happening that got our toes tapping. Randy was in Atrocity, which morphed into Shutdown. Mike was in Soul Charge. Tolan, Jon, and I started Onionhouse. I believe the last MOC song written became the first Onionhouse. I think Randy said it sucked.

**AU: Anything you would like to say about Randy (RIP, 1990) or Jon (RIP, 2012)?**

Mike: I spent the best years of my life with these guys ... Randy, Jon, Steve and I all grew up together and without them I wouldn't be who or what I am today. I will always miss the two of them dearly and now there is just me and Steve, and Kev and Tolan left. Somewhere along the way we lost two magnificent people that the world never really had a chance to hear play the music that changed our lives. Now they will.

Steve: Brothers for eternity. The ups and down, the endless passion and drive. I'm happy some fresh ears will get to hear their teenage asses shredding!

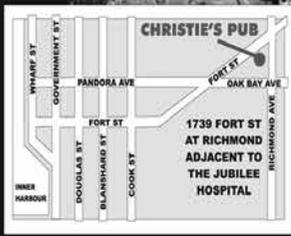
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# Absolute Album Reviews



## Annihilator - Ballistic Sadistic Silver Lining Music

On their seventh studio album, their distinctive thrash metal vibe is filed down to a razor sharp weapon with some of the very best songs and guitar playing Annihilator has ever recorded. The attitude is set to kill early on with the in-your-face refrain, "Fuck your attitude," on the neck-breaking track "The Attitude."

So does one of the main purveyors of "the crazy riff" still have what it takes to impress the jaded extreme metal heads out there? The answer is a big "Yes," after the truly face melting and catchy "Psycho Ward" is finished with your skull, the blazing un-human riffage of "I Am Warfare" will crush it flat. Jarring rhythms and fierce fret-board savagery will make you think the war inside that head of yours isn't all that bad, after all.

This album serves as a highlight reel, track after track, of the greatest stuff Annihilator has to offer the masses. Whether it's classic old-school or modern metal extremism, each song shows the prowess to unite all the metal cats of this world.

-Dan Potter



## Beat City Tubeworks - I Just Can't Believe it's the Incredible The Sign Records

Chuck Berry licks open "Gravy Days" where the line, "Let my guitar do the talking," is sung with a 70s vibe. A pretty feel-good selection of songs where harmonies and bluesy bursts of wah-wah will take you to the sunny-side of town instantly.

"Rock n' Roll Degenerate" is a full-on rock trip that takes a more melodic approach to Motorhead. A strong back-beat propels this simple but powerful track into the stratosphere where southern fried guitar leads bend this full throttle rocker somewhere past the moon. Planning a rock revival on "Decline to Conform" goes according to script as smoky melodies pour out like liquor from a whiskey bottle, gotta love the cowbell.

Whiplash fury reaches a peak on "Not So Fortunate Son," showing rock's not dead, it just went to Sweden.

-Dan Potter



## Envy - The Fallen Crimson Pelagic Records

Opening track "Statement of Freedom" lays it out, loud and clear with razor sharp guitars and harrowing screams. Back after five years, this Japanese band sounds like a well-oiled machine, hungry for starting sweaty mosh pits.

Mixing the kind of emotional hardcore that seems to ascend with crushing heft, melody isn't cast aside in fear of watering down the metal fisted gut punches. The song titles are in English, while the singing is done in Japanese, making this record mysterious for some and a celebration of roots for others. Even with a potential language barrier, the universal rage whipped up on "A Faint New World" should resonate with fans of shredded vocal chords and inventive guitar riffs.

Marrying together some auto-tune vocals and guttural scream jams on "Dawn and Gaze" creates something very unexpected for the hardcore genre and reveals the intense duality this record possesses.

-Dan Potter



## Frogg - A Reptilian Dystopia Independent

Neck-breaking and melodic, yet super technical death metal is unleashed on "Ancient Rain," where each movement of guitar shredding riffage increases the tension ten fold. This is a debut outing by a new band still forming itself and getting ready for a full-length but it sounds super tight so far.

"Nuclear Storm" brings an evil djenty sound to their arsenal of ripping metal mentalities. Thundering low-tuned riffs and jarring harmonics will squeeze the last bit of life out of the vertebrae in your head-banging neck while cave man screams might lead to breaking stuff. If you are afraid of steroid induced fits of proggy rage, then you should definitely keep your distance.

Obscura meets Dream Theater on the seven-plus-minute track "DNA" where the guitar skills are exploited with raw passion and will leave many with a permanently dropped jaw.

-Dan Potter



## Sightless Pit - Grave of a Dog Thrill Jockey

This extreme music trio brings together some of the most ambitious minds in today's heavy metal genre. Comprising Lee Buford of The Body, Kristin Hayter of Lingua Ignota and Dylan Walker of Full of Hell, their harrowing music captures a deranged beauty ripe with sublime musings.

Playing out like a film noir score composed for a surrealist horror movie, each track is buried in layers of discontent and endless mourning. This sense of loss is particularly strong on the unsettling "Immersion Dispersal" where sonic oblivion rages unrestrained. The lyrical chaos gets an enhancement from the hypnotically repetitive drum sequences and wretched out primal screams making the track sound like a sonic epitaph to a terminally wounded cyborg.

The bleak emotions reach a depressing high on "Love is Dead, All Love is Dead," where the final glimmer of hope readies to go out forever.

-Dan Potter



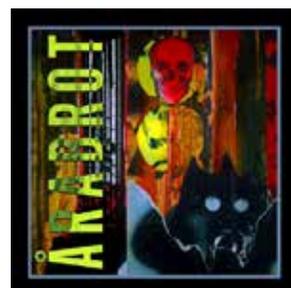
## Sun Below - Volume III Independent

Low frequency sludge rock lumbers out of the hellish bog, slanging bottomless fuzz sounds that are sure to roil the properly inebriated. "Green Visions" is a perfect wedding song full of ominous riffage and jilted vocals, just right for a re-animated corpse bride and groom.

The eleven-minute track "Solar Burn-out" picks up ideas from the occult masters Electric Wizard and drives a stake through this world's main life giver. Sinister atmospheres, delirious guitar riffs are what this three-piece are all about and judging by their bio; weed too.

A short but memorable introduction from these Toronto stoners, definitely look out for a full length from them in the future.

-Dan Potter



## Arabrot - Our Time is Fix'd Pelagic Records

This is a remix EP featuring the work of Lustmord and Andrew Liles. On opening track, "Die Nibelungen," a lurking depth greets you as the sonic environment goes bone chillingly cold and forlorn melodies permeate the pitch-black atmosphere.

Taking Arabrot's original compositions that serve, as a re-imagined sonic companion to Fritz Lang's legendary silent film and making them even more sinister is a task previously thought impossible. Sparse percussion and distant calls of unrest further this trip into horrorville with "The Sharp Edge" beckoning the dark spirits to feast upon the film projector light. This is truly a cinematic experience even without the visuals, an unsettling smorgasbord for those who have a wealth of imaginative thoughts to turn to.

Each of the three tracks extend out beyond the ten-minute mark allowing for complete submersion into this netherworld where hearing is seeing.

-Dan Potter



## CB3 - Aeon The Sign Records

Short for Charlottas Burning Trio, CB3 play an intriguing form of heavy psych-rock. Big on driving guitar riffs as well as subtle atmospheric sound effects album opener "Zodiac" is a thundering example of movie music.

Some early Floydian excess bubbles below the huge crimson coloured fuzz riffs on "Sonic Blaze," which, as an instrumental, speaks through the language of crashing drums, thick bass and wiry guitar passages that eventually unload into bombastic heavy metal insanity. A lot of the tracks sound as if they were jammed out free in the recording studio giving them each a loose and energetic feel, making the music flow out. This band is a pretty killer instru-rock group with plenty of influences to go around, which makes for a great listening experience for those who love the oldies as much as the new jams.

-Dan Potter



## Eye Flies - Tub of Lard Thrill Jockey

Enraged grooves blast out on opening track "Tubba Lard," leaving a past full of nu-metal riffs behind in a cloak of frying speakers. On this debut album the "metal super group" lays it all out and their purpose is to pummel the competition with unrelenting fury.

Bringing a complex union of math rock and post-hardcore sped up to a delirium inducing level, the track "Predator and Prey" seethes and strikes with merciless precision, enacting noise as a perfect offense. With the pulverizing "Not Ready for Tomorrow," listeners are treated to a bit of melody underneath the hollowing vocals via the harmonically diverse guitar riffs.

The alien grindcore of "Chapel Perilous" really cements the purpose of existence of this band as they hammer forth with sounds that surpass the fiery work of their day jobs.

-Dan Potter



## Rosetta - Terra Sola Pelagic Records

Serene melodies and hefty bass rhythms open up this EP on the track "Terra Sola," before blasting into gut rumbling hardcore. Rage-filled screams detonate and math rock complexity hides any chance of an autopsy, as if the world deserves a meaning.

This band is emotional to the core, and they use musical extremes to puncture any potential numbness contained on the listener's part. Preferring an abstract approach to rage and sadness is definitely the name of the game for the four-piece on this, their eighth release. Lots of deep and dark atmospheres that drift with ambience through star systems yet to be explored like on "57844" where dreamy vocals and echo laden guitar effects lead to the genre classification of metal for astronauts.

At just three tracks, it's surprising how quickly they lock you into their emotionally charged world, never to let you go like a cold embrace from a loved one.

-Dan Potter



## Sleepwraith - Day Terrors Independent

Sinister death metal equipped with terrorizing blast-beats and fast growls is where this band gets its gravity. Outer orbits contain some heavy melodic play that brings to mind a lot of progressive metal as does the sequences of calm that add considerable depth to the proceedings.

"Anamnesis" goes from a cave troll approved verse with tight larynx shredding to a wide-open sounding refrain full of fist pumping riffs. Their schizophrenic style eventually bleeds into serene emo singing, taking the change of scenery in psychotic stride.

In the end each track stuck to the brutal script, detailing an unrelenting vision that never lets up throughout the eleven-track beat down.

-Dan Potter



## The Osedax - Meridians Independent

Tripping on some nighttime rapid eye movement to the sound of cavernous glaciers melting into the ocean is how "Offen" opens up. Shrieking words are then layered over reverberated post-metal with plenty of freaky atmosphere: a soothing emission of sludgy horror for over eleven minutes.

Massive squalls of wailing guitars and blasting double-kick drums work to awaken the subconscious. These lengthy tracks provide a meditative angle that is very pleasing to the thinking parts of the mind. This is metal with deep dark secrets, the enraged witch screams part way through "Beacon/ Ox Eye" give a glimpse into what the sonic abuse represents.

Overall, a very abstract-leaning album that will reward the time commitment necessary to listen to each extended movement that is presented.

-Dan Potter

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Ball and Fetish Factory in Florida – which I will be returning to this year after a two-year hiatus. I have also walked the fetish runways in Montreal and Berlin, and those were amazing, but Vancouver is my home, and being able to meet attendees at fetish events all over the world and entice them to come home with me to my own fetish events so I can show off our beautiful city and our kinky crew is what really gets me excited. I love the Vancouver fetish scene, it is a very body positive, welcoming and fun community of perverts.

**AU: What can you tell us about the upcoming Sin City Valentines Fetish Ball?**

E13: I can tell you it will be the sexiest Valentines party in the city! I can tell you that you don't need a date for this Valentine's Day party, just grab your girlfriends and put on something that makes you feel sexy (as long as it meets our dress code requirements) and come out and get your heart-on! We will have performances by Madam Lola, Lola Frost, Veronica Vex and Calamity Kate as well as dungeon areas for sexy play time and a big dirty dance floor with DJs Pandemonium, R-Lex, Antonia Jane and myself.

**AU: What types of music can people expect at the event?**

E13: We play a mix of alternative and electronic dance music mostly. A little something to get you amped up and a little something to make you feel sexy and seduce you into our dirty dance cages for all the grinding and twerking.

**AU: What other Sin City events happen throughout the year?**

E13: Sin City actually happens once a month, typically at our home venue Central Studios on the second Saturday of the month. However, with larger events like Halloween, New Years and Valentine's Day, we need a bigger capacity venue so we invade the Imperial. We also host Vancouver Fetish Weekend from July 23-27, which is an international fetish festival at multiple venues and includes a fetish cruise, fashion shows and a decompression day at Wreck Beach.

**AU: What are your favourite Valentine's kinky treats?**

E13: I'm a bit old fashioned, so I like a fancy dinner on Valentine's Day, however my ideal date would be in a fancy restaurant in heavy rubber fetish attire with my date in a gimp mask handcuffed, and possibly a chastity cage so only I can feed them. Obviously I would tease them and watch them starve, but throw them scraps

when they deserved it. I guess I kind of like public humiliation and have probably just scored myself a lifetime ban from all the restaurants in the city on Valentine's Day, haha! Also I am a terrible tease, so after dinner there might be a bit of a strip tease with my partner tied up and unable to enjoy themselves. And after that... well, I'm not sure how much more detail you want me to get into....

**AU: Any dating advice for people on a first date?**

E13: Be honest, be yourself, be confident. It takes courage to let someone know your kinks and when someone shares theirs with you, be open-minded and be respectful. Above all else, ASK FOR CONSENT before anything. If all goes well, have fun and play safe!

**AU: How did you become a professional cosplayer? What are some of your favourite cosplay costumes to wear? Will you be a guest at any upcoming comic expos?**

E13: I'm a cosplayer, but I don't know how "professional" I am! Some of my favourite costumes to wear are my classic Harley Quinn, Elvira, the Wasp, Tina Belcher and Wonder Woman. I'll be wearing a few of my costumes at Fan Expo Vancouver on Valentine's weekend February 15 – 17, so be sure to stop by my booth with a Valentine for me!

**AU: What is considered a "pervy persona"?**

E13: I feel like this would be your inner whore. We all have one, we all have those dirty thoughts and things we do to make ourselves feel sexy. At Sin City we encourage you let your pervy persona come out and play. We are all kind of like superheroes – we just don't wear capes (all the time). We have our daytime reserved office Clark Kent persona, and then when the sun sets, we have our Superman persona in tights and underwear that is full of magical power that makes all the muggles swoon.

**AU: How hot does a full latex outfit get by the end of the night?**

E13: Haha! I actually took a video of myself in Toronto for Fan Expo Canada emptying out my latex booties in my classic Harley Quinn cosplay in summer. Latex doesn't breathe and this was a full body catsuit with latex shoes, and it was HOT in Toronto. You could see the sweat pouring from my shoes when I removed them and randomly, it was my most liked Instagram post from 2019! Hellooooooofot fetishists! Haha!

**AU: Any suggestions for igniting the romantic flames this Valentine's Day?**

E13: Valentine's Day is a Friday this year, so most of us will be at work. Find out what your partner is into and give it to them, but not all at once. Tease them and taunt them with it

all day. Send them text messages showing them what you are going to do/give to them during the day to get them heated up and excited. Valentine's Day doesn't just have to be about buying flowers and chocolates, it should also be about sex and intimacy and showing people how hard you love them. Be unapologetically passionate!

**AU: Tickler or crop?**

E13: I prefer a crop as my weapon of choice, or a flogger, or even my bare hand. You can't BEAT the sensation of flesh on flesh!

**AU: What kinky Valentine's gift would you suggest for someone new to the fetish scene?**

E13: Maybe a collar with a leash, it's something pretty inexpensive and simple that you can get at almost any sex store or pet store. It is something you can gift to a partner to say, "Be mine" or something you can gift to yourself because it shouldn't be too hard to find someone willing to hold that leash for you if you are among good company.

**AU: Any other naughty thoughts you would like to share?**

E13: We would probably run out of space.

**AU: How can people follow you online?**

E13: I have a website at [www.evilyn13.com](http://www.evilyn13.com) and I'm on Instagram @evilyn13 twitter at @evilyn\_13 and facebook @evilynthirteen. I post the most to Instagram currently, so if you want all my behind the scenes info, check me out!

**AU: Where can people go to learn more about upcoming fetish events?**

E13: You can check out [www.sincityfetishnight.com](http://www.sincityfetishnight.com) and [www.vancouverfetishweekend.com](http://www.vancouverfetishweekend.com) to see when our next fetish events are, and if you are looking for something more you can always log onto Fetlife and search all of the communities there. I'm sure you will find something that will tickle your fancy.

[www.evilyn13.com](http://www.evilyn13.com)

PHOTO CREDIT: Ken Nash & Pinup Perfection Photography

## Sin City Valentines Fetish Ball

Interview with Evilyn13

By Amanda Lawrence

**Absolute Underground: Please introduce yourself to our sexy readers.**

Evilyn13: Hello, I am Evilyn13, model, DJ, cosplayer, professional badass and party tart.

**AU: Any other talents of note to share?**

E13: I am pretty good at walking in impractical footwear (stilettos), slithering into tiny skin-tight outfits (latex), cinching my waist down to 22 inches in a corset and being an advocate for all the fun and throwing shade when necessary.

**AU: What is your connection to the Vancouver fetish scene?**

E13: I would say I'm pretty balls deep into the Vancouver fetish scene. I started as a door girl at Sin City Fetish Night and have since graduated to DJ and backstage manager at Vancouver Fetish Weekend. In between those gigs, I also do fetish modelling (I'm on the cover of Sinical Magazine right now, so order a copy!) and have DJ'd at international fetish events, like the Dallas Fetish

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# Sin City

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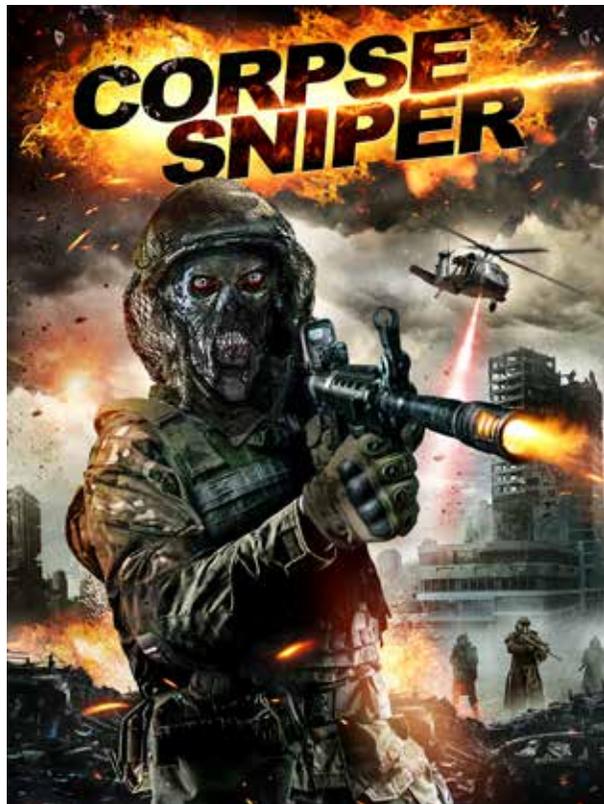
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# Absolute Film Reviews



## Sniper Corpse Other Dimension Films

Director/writer: Keith R. Robinson.

*Sniper Corpse* is a film from Keith R. Robinson (*Silverhide*). His latest title, shot in the United Kingdom, took three years to complete. From the initial scriptwriting to the end of production, Robinson wore many hats to finish this micro-budget feature. Shot for a mere \$38K, *Sniper Corpse* is a great-sounding film, with the score produced by Matt Chapman. As well, the story is intriguing as a soldier is

brought back from the dead, to keep killing in the present. However, the director's fascination with headshots is not enough to distract from the film's flaws. Overall, *Sniper Corpse* is a very static film, despite this title's dark subject matter.

The first film element that stands out is Chapman's compositions. The music shifts from a very militaristic soundtrack to one of sentimentality - during softer moments. On a decent sound system, this feature continually sounds good. Even the

sound effects, mostly involving gunfire, sound great on the speakers. This film element is consistently strong, even with the over-repetition of the music.

The story itself involves the resurrection of a soldier's body. This McGuffin is used to draw in a former war bride and new widow, who is looking for the body of her husband. Diane (Eleri Jones) is lured or directed to a military gun range. Here, the undead shoot each other in a simulated war game. Diane eventually finds her husband, but he is in no shape to go home. Now, the film changes as Diane tries to find a way to put her husband to rest, for the rest of eternity.

This viewer liked Robinson's use of nightshots and space. However, much of the film is very static. There is no lack of action, mostly through gunfire. Yet, many of the scenes just sit as characters interact with each other. As well, one setting - a laboratory - is used over and over again. This setting is not well dressed, so the repetition of using this one interior setting becomes a bit monotonous - over time. Also, other scenes are held for too long or repeated too many times. There is a shot of a forest that is used at least three times, sometimes for at least ten seconds. This does not make the visual sphere very interesting. Finally, Robinson does show a flair for exploding heads and every character that dies has their head exploded via gunfire. Robinson is developing his directing techniques here and most of his choices are on-the-mark. But, movement is continually minimized.

Still, *Sniper Corpse* has a lot of flaws, as might be expected on such an indie film. The film's reality dissolves slightly when green screen shooting is interspersed with live action scenes. This inconsistency can be

a bit jarring. For instance, Diane visits a graveyard at some point in the film. Her live shot action scene is then fused with a green screen image, of another character. This switching back and forth between a live, exterior shot to an interior, simulated one looks very strange. Also, how does infrared work on the undead, when they likely do not give off any heat? The undead do not have a heartbeat, after all. Yet, a helicopter searches for the undead by tracking its non-existent heat source; that would not work. Other flaws include the use of voices over walkie-talkies or cell phones, which cannot be heard. There are still other flaws. But overall, *Sniper Corpse* does offer a coherent story, set in a spooky locale.

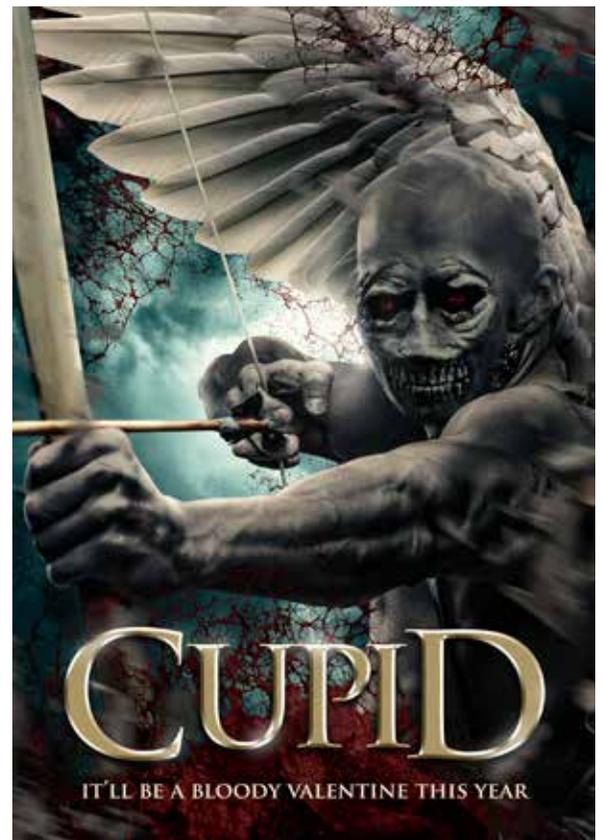
*Sniper Corpse* has just been released this past October, in the United Kingdom and the United States. Those in the U.S. can find the film on Amazon Prime. Fans of home entertainment versions (DVD, Blu-ray) can visit the Other Dimension Films' website for a Region-free version. And, this title was truly a labour-of-love for Robinson. He shot much of the film after hours and after work. Shot over seventeen days, *Sniper Corpse* does show passion and intellect; unfortunately, it also shows a few flaws in the composition of scenes. This title could have used a bit more movement. Meanwhile, the sound design is consistently on point. This is a film for fans of the undead or of micro-budget features. And, it is hard not to smile at all of those exploding heads, or when the Dark Soldier stands for the third time, after being shot through its non-beating heart.

-Michael Allen  
28DLA.com

## Cupid Uncork'd Entertainment

\*Spoiler Alert\*

Valentine's Day is going to be very bloody if Proportion Productions' *Cupid* is any indication. Here, the god we know gets wonderfully subverted and becomes a new supernatural threat for anyone in love. Bao Tieu (*House of Anubis*) nicely plays this undead threat. In addition



to being the idolized Greco-Roman legend, he has also become one of the thralls to reside in Hades. The Lord of the Underworld cursed this figure to serve more than his traditional duty.

Flash forward past the movie's introduction, we are treated to a traditional high school tale. We meet the main heroine, Faye (played by an up-and-coming actress Georgina Jane) who is bullied by the "it" girls, led by Elise (Sarah Cohen). Little do they know that she's into the occult, and she discovers a spell book (just why it is in this school is a mystery in itself) and summons the winged one himself. He warns her of what is coming and she wants it. She craves it. However, he does not distinguish from those who are her allies and

those who have wronged her. That's when the fun begins.

The kills are modest, and for a budget film by writer/director Scott Jeffrey, he at least offers something new a very crowded world of slasher horror. Instead of offering simple revenge fantasies, he adds myth into the equation and the addition he makes to Cupid's tale is plausible. His use of the high school trope covers a lot of ground. He even explains the animosity between the two girls.

Also starring in this work is Michael Owusu, Abi Casson Thompson, Ali Barouti and Sarah T. Cohen. This title is set to arrive on DVD and digital Feb 11th.

-Ed Sum

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## Victoria Film Festival 2020 Preview

By Ed Sum

Victoria Film Festival runs Feb 7th to 16th at various locations in Victoria, BC.

The Victoria Film Festival is enjoying 25 glorious years and with ingenious films as a regular focus, the idea is terrific. This idea started about four years ago.

*Red Snow* is a suspense-filled drama set in the Northwest Territories. This tale is about the burden of love and loyalty within two families—one Gwich'in and the other Afghani. Dylan Nadazeau has a lot to deal with when stolen away, to become a soldier, and thrown into a war-torn country very different from his own. *The Last Tree* is similar. It is semi-autobiographical portrait of childhood upheaval and film traces a boy's journey to a new life, in a new world not natively his own.

But there is more to this event; also on offer are heavy metal, documentaries, horror films and music. *The Men's Room* is about 25 Norwegians who love to sing dirty rock songs and drink beer. They promised to sing at each other's funerals but did not expect their director is first in line. This choir is preparing for its biggest gig to date—they are the warm-up act for Black Sabbath before their concert in Norway 2016.

*The Seer and the Unseen* sees Sara Dosa delve into the world of the hidden folk of Iceland. Elves, dwarves and trolls are an integral part of Icelandic myth and when a piece of volcanic

rock is under threat of demolition, the seer Ragga fights to save them, revealing more about protecting the past, and the future.



While few genre works are offered this year, Andrew Patterson's science fiction mystery *The Vast of the Night* should fill two niches. Set in the 50s New Mexico, radio host Everett and trusty switchboard operator Fay intercept a strange broadcasting during the night. Until they figure out where it's coming from, it's safe to say we are not alone in this universe.

As there's no easy way to describe *Jallikattu* without seeing it, critic Ravi Srinivasan describes this work as an, "adrenaline-inducing, menacing ride that blurs the boundaries between thriller and horror as well as man and beast." This title references a traditional event in India where individuals and community members attempt to wrangle a bull and thus the film examines a community in the chaos that breeds anarchy.

The treat behind *We Are Little Zombies* is that we are looking at social misfits expressing themselves through music. These kids lost their parents. They don't know how to deal, much less cope. Instead of crying, they go through the motions of becoming a pop cultural phenomenon— what they discover about themselves is both heart-warming and amazing.

For more information, dates, and tickets, please visit [www.victoriafilmfestival.com](http://www.victoriafilmfestival.com).

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# Absolute Live Review



**High On Fire**  
**Power Trip**  
Rickshaw Theatre, Vancouver BC  
December 2, 2019

Throwing down a brand of metal that would fit perfectly in a car factory that welds together Cybertrucks, the muscular Power Trip quickly goaded the squashed audience into fits of swirling madness. Sudden jolts of twisted rhythm changes turned their stacks of amplifiers into pure instigators of endless mosh-pits as the singer stalked the stage with his classic "couldn't give a fuck" attitude, punching and kicking at imaginary enemies, heaving the mic-stand around until the microphone crashed to the floor letting the suffocating thrash metal grooves come up with an explanation.

After this brutal initiation, a smoky redness filled the

stage as a deafening throb that also seemed quite meditative emerged. The sonic equivalent of a giant fist punching downward from the sky, High On Fire let raw aggression take the wheel. With former TrapThem stickman beating the skins and iron like his life depended on it whilst the tattooed torso of guitarist/vocalist Matt Pike shone in the spotlight, the band parted the seas of normal reality.

With esoteric symbols glistening off his skin and tales of the unknown being bellowed out, suddenly an extraterrestrial blues jam emerged as sounds of alien ecstasy were coaxed out of Pike's sweat-drenched Les Paul. Unleashing the doom, they finally laid waste to crowd surfers with the pulsating heft of "Snakes for the Divine," which epically closed this tight set of sonic catharsis.

-Dan Potter

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