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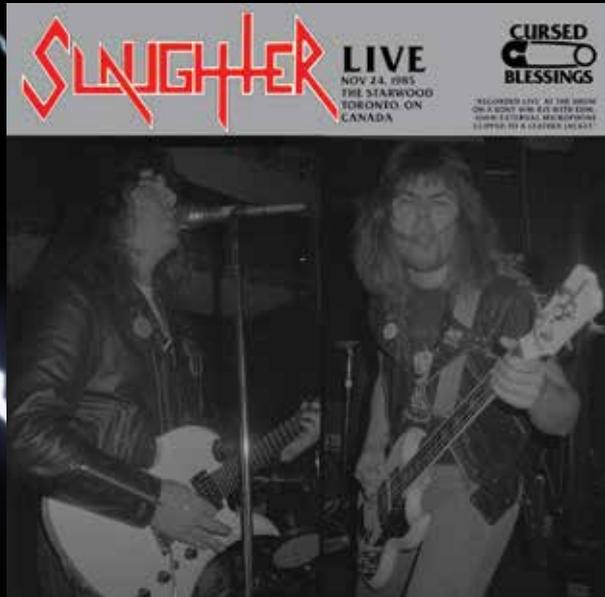
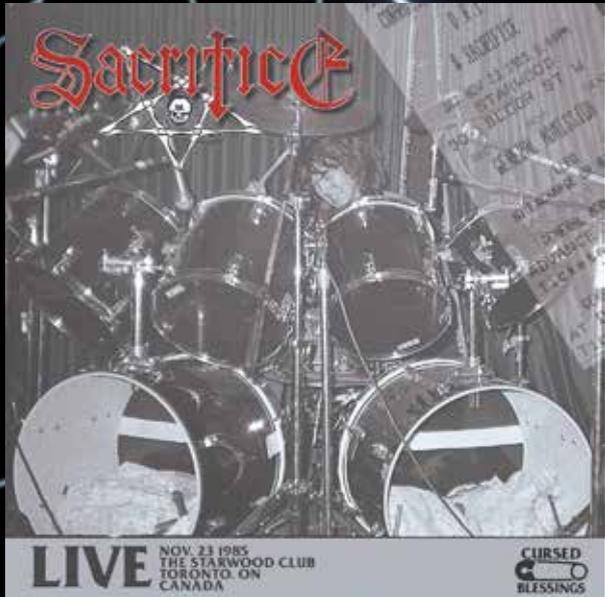
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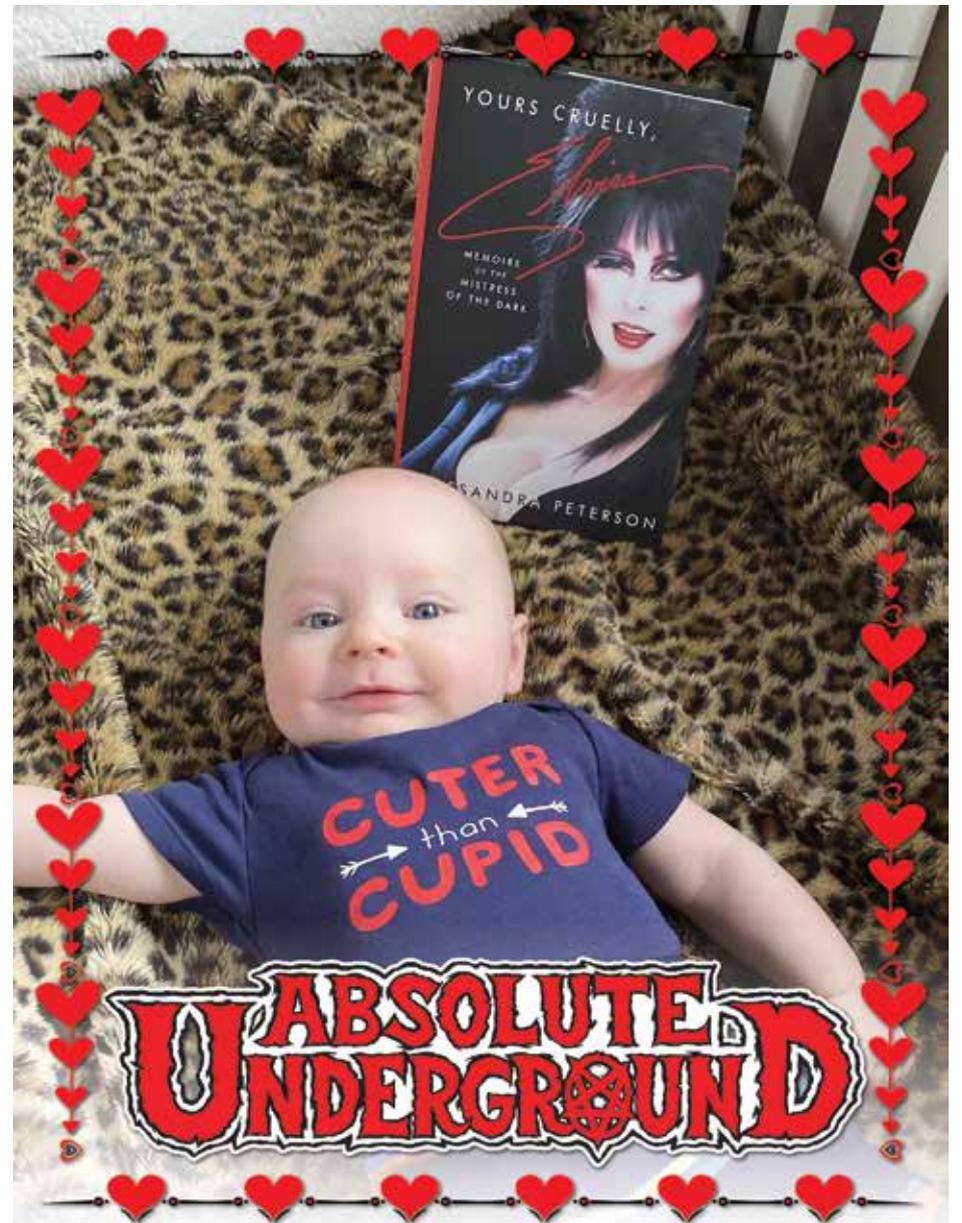
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# The Poor Choices

Interview by John Carlow

**Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves**

Bobbi (guitar and vocals)

Dana Dee (drums)

Tina (bass)

We all live in Victoria.

**Absolute Underground: The band has been playing and appearing on splits and compilations about 11 years now, but how did it all start/come together?**

Poor Choices: Dana and some former band members were trying to put a band together, and so they posted a Victoria Craigslist ad, "looking for a rad girl guitarist." Bobbi saw the Craigslist ad and responded. It seemed too good to be

true amidst all the other ads that were either "old dudes looking for other old dudes to jam with," or "heavy metal band looking for a drummer." But it was a perfect fit. Bobbi and Tina have known each other since high school, and Tina has experience playing in other bands, so when we needed another band member, she was our first choice.

**Absolute Underground: How did the name happen?**

Poor Choices: The Poor Choices was the name of Dana and her roller derby friends' drinking team. It translated into the perfect band name, especially in the early days of tequila shots being brought up on stage for us while we played derby after parties.

**Absolute Underground: What kind of music/genre would you say the band fits into?**

Poor Choices: I would have called us a punk band after our first album, but this latest album a little garage rock, a little punk rock, but all rock 'n' roll.

Some of the songs still have a punk feel ("Cut Corners"), but there are some riffs in there I would even say are leaning towards bluesy ("Trash Bin Fever").

**Absolute Underground: Musical influences?**

Bobbi: Hole, Alice in Chains, The Runaways, Motorhead, Nirvana, Stone Temple Pilots

Dana: Bowie, The Cars, Judas Priest, The Rolling Stones, Turbonegro, Girlschool, Electric Six, The Cure, The B52's, The Police

Tina: Rancid, The Distillers, The Hives, Headstones, ABBA, Simon and Garfunkel

**Absolute Underground: The songwriting processes. How does it come together?**

Poor Choices: Usually someone will write the riff and lyrics, bring it to the group, and then the others will write their respective instrument's parts to go along with it.

**Absolute Underground: Who are some of the bands you've shared bills with?**

Poor Choices: We've played with a lot of great bands over the years. Some of our favorites would have to be The Pack A.D., The Jolts, The Mags, The Hex, The Daisy Strangers, The Gnarl Gnars, Durban Poison, Mascara Nights, and The Shakedown.

**Absolute Underground: What would be a dream billing?**

Poor Choices: Joan Jett, Courtney Love... frankly at this point we would even open for Cardi B.

**Absolute Underground: Outstanding shows you want to tell us about?**

Poor Choices: It was epic to play at Scott Henderson's "30 years of S.H.I.T." at Logan's with other awesome Victoria bands that Scott had recorded (A.K. 47 and The Role Models).

When we played in Seattle, Bobbi was still 1 month away from turning 21. She was able to play in the bar but had to have big sharpie 'X's on her hands so they would know not to serve her. This is the trip where the song "Bootin' for Bobbi" was written. That night we played with a band called ClareAnnoyed and the guitarist performed in a camo print bikini and played her guitar with a Sai (basically a small sword). We also won the Halloween costume contest, dressed as "Canadians." It was an interesting night, to say the least.

In 2018 we opened for The Pack A.D. at Upstairs.

# VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

Dana was pregnant, and the night before the show we practiced... then the next morning Dana went into labor. At the last minute, Bobbi's husband had to fill in on drums. He had never played live in front of an audience in his life, and despite being super sick, he managed to pull it off! We could not say no to playing that gig, and he saved the day.

**Absolute Underground: What's been happening past two Covid-affected years?**

Poor Choices: Covid really slowed us down during



the past two years. We had tried to start the recording process in the late summer of 2020, and then lockdowns happened, and it just ground to a halt. But we got it done this past summer and the new recordings are FINALLY here!

**Absolute Underground: What's in the future? Where would you like to see the band go?**

Poor Choices: We just want to keep writing and playing music and having fun. It never gets old.

Look for new Poor Choices album on Bandcamp and Spotify/ Facebook for socials

PHOTO CREDIT: John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography

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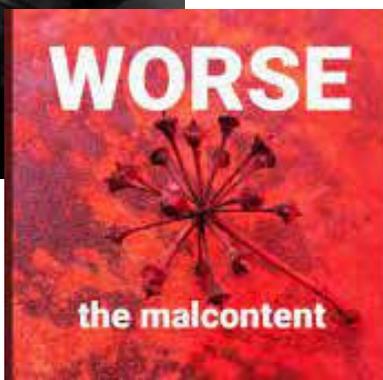


## Worse

By Heath Fenton

Whenever an iconic band calls it a day, it's always interesting to see where the members of said band take their next musical journey. In 2015 when Vancouver metal stalwarts 3 Inches of Blood took their final bow, their guitarist Shane Clark found himself bandless and free for the first time in many years. 3IOB had a legendary run, but Clark had more to give musically. "After the final shows, I definitely took a break. We toured solid for 11 years, and it was that brand of metal that was my focus for so long, feeling creatively stifled

at times," Clark expands. "Between tours I would jam at home with friends for fun and to play music that was in tune with my other influences. All the while I was always writing demos that stylistically would be all over the map depending on where inspiration is coming from at that moment." One of the drummers Clark would frequently hook up with was Matt Wood (ex 3IOB, Bison, Goatsblood, Pride Tiger). When Clark enlisted Wood to record drums on one of his early demos, that would essentially be the beginning of his new band Worse.



The good thing about getting Wood on board is not only is he a solid drummer, he is also a powerhouse vocalist. "Worse is myself and Matt, simply put. We have a rotating bass player slot," Clark states. Making them a unique two headed sludgietastic monster with a singing drummer.

As for musical style, Worse couldn't be anything further from Clark and Wood's former metal band. When listening to their 2020 self-titled record one can't help but summon up the ear demons of the Melvins as a definite influence. Kyuss and Soundgarden come to mind as well. Lots of groove, sludge and stoner passages in a maze of clean, crooning, soulful vocals. And sweet riffs galore. Clark is a riff meister of the finest kind.

"I like to write the never ending riff. I personally like to be hypnotised by music in that way and by the wheel of repetition. I let my influences take my writing wherever it ends up," Clark explains.

"It's a melting pot of heavy rock and heavy music. (With 3IOB) I met my NWOBHM and thrash metal influenced music quota. I guess because I wrote for that band and played it's music for so long, I really needed to get this music out of my system. Worse's style is heavy but not necessarily metal."

Just recently Worse released their new single "The Malcontent," and it is the crushing riff fest you would expect. The song is epic in that it clocks in at almost 10 minutes, but it cooks along like a 3 minute barn burner. "It happens in 3 parts and the middle section is something I actually wrote years prior," Clark speaks of the single. "It is simple and works really well for the vibe that was needed to take things. Worse is definitely a band that is centered around vibe. We really like the focus

## VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

on songcraft, taking the listener on a journey where you don't notice 10 minutes has gone by." Whether it be a three or four minute banger or a 10 minute opus, Worse brings you on that journey. Clark and Wood are stone cold veterans of the Vancouver metal scene and they don't fuck around.

In addition to the original bodies of work, Worse has also contributed the cover song "The Milkman" by Canadian sludge lords Shallow North Dakota for the tribute album *Rhino Body Lover*. Ironically enough, SND also had a singing drummer (RIP Tony Jacome). So it is a nice tribute and a rock solid version of their song.

As for bass duties, Clark and Wood have trusted in Frank Dingle for the latest material. "With the state of things with the world these days our live thing will be few and far between. We have lots of material we are working on. We are currently writing with Frank adding the low end to things. When we start playing live, Frank is our guy. Him and I are lifelong brothers and he was in Human Resistance Program and Ten Miles Wide with me. A live performance video is in the works. But as I said, more recordings will be happening on the regular," Clark goes on. "I am no stranger to hitting the road and grinding it out but I don't see that happening anytime soon.

We will be playing select shows for the time being in the city. I feel comfortable taking the energy I would normally be spending on performing our music to people and spending that energy on writing and recording."

Bandcamp link is below and also check out all the usual music streaming sites. These cats are on the upswing, so go have a gander.

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



## Caveat

Interview with Greg Musgrave  
By AU Editorial

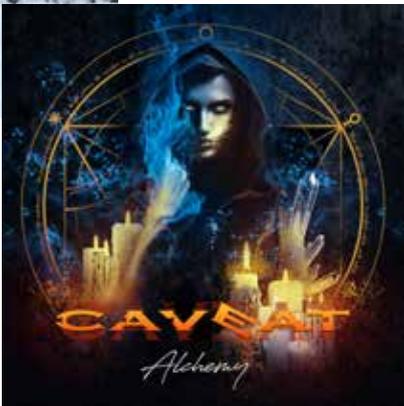
**Absolute Underground: Thank you Caveat for taking the time to do this interview. For those unfamiliar with the band, please tell us some quick background info? How would you describe your music?**

GM: My pleasure! Caveat has been around since 2001, and has been one of the longest-running bands in Western Canada for over 20 years. The band members have all been in multiple other Alberta bands over the years such as Thorazine, Exit Strategy, Phantom Limb, BlackSky, Truck, Illuminated Minerva, Inner Surge, Verbal Deception, and Greybeard to name a few. The musical style would definitely be metal, but with a very open and experimental approach. Meaning that we aren't really pigeonholed into a particular metal genre like so many metal bands, which I think has attributed to our longevity. You're just as likely to hear the odd blast beat over a savage death metal riff, as you are to hearing

a violin line over a 70s prog rock-inspired groove. Now with having two lead vocalists, the sounds have grown that much more with the last two albums, which is a great thing when you've been around as long as we have.

**AU: Caveat has a new album *Alchemy* being released on February 11th, what can ya tell our readers about this record?**

GM: This record has definitely been in the melting pot for some time now, as the writing of the songs was completed probably three years ago, but the recording, unfortunately, began right at the beginning of the pandemic. Consequently, most of the production has been delayed for months and months, which has been a bit of a drag, but certainly par for the course for bands in our position dealing with the same obstacles to get a record made in the Covid era. The sound of this record definitely has a different and evolved sound to our previous work. The tech aspect of the band has been dialed back a bit on this album, but the progressive elements are still there in a big way, but translating towards building on creating atmosphere and overall



cohesive feel with this album, that has really turned into its own thing and a really interesting listening experience.

**AU: *Alchemy* is the first album putting newest member Amanda Marie Bourdon on lead vocal duties, and also shares a double vocal attack with guitarist Greg Musgrave, how have ya found this influenced Caveat's new album compared to your 2016 full length *Consummation*?**

GM: Great question! When the writing began for what would become *Alchemy*, there was definitely a clear objective to have Amanda adopt more of a lead vocalist role for this batch of material. When both Amanda and Matt joined the band for our last album *Consummation*, the material was already written and arranged by Casey, Joe and I; so, this time having Amanda and Matt there from the beginning of the writing process has proved to be a big part of how these songs evolved into what they ended up sounding like on the record. I still sing on all of the songs to varying degrees, but Amanda is definitely the star of the show in the vocal department on this record in my opinion, and that was absolutely by

design.

**AU: The album is all in-house production starting back in 2017, how was it for the band to put this all-together DIY? Any learning experiences to share? Any obstacles that you do not foresee?**

GM: We've been recording our own stuff since our first album back in 2003, other than our 2005 EP which we did at Sundae Sound (RIP). Between the sick-ass production skills of both Casey and Joe, we've been fortunate enough to be able to make our own records, which has always given us lots of creative freedom and flexibility. Obviously, with the pandemic hitting right when we started recording this album, it had a massive

## CALGARY CARNAGE

effect in the way of delay after delay trying to get *Alchemy* finished; an album that would have otherwise been released almost two years ago under previous pre-Covid circumstances.

**AU: You all have experience in other bands (Exit Strategy, Greybeard, Illuminated Minerva), what would you say being in those bands and Caveat has influenced your sound and performance?**

GM: As for our sound; I would say no, as Casey, Joe and I have been in various bands together; sometimes even at the same time. We have always been good at keeping the style of the respective band separate from our other projects, which I think is a good thing. It has allowed each project to have its own sound and vibe, just as Caveat has always had its own sound and vibe. Exit Strategy and Caveat were both active simultaneously for years with three of the four members being in both bands playing drastically different styles. No point in having all your projects sound the same, or it wouldn't hold the same value to people, or us for that matter. Being that all of us have been in various other bands over the years, it always helps in the way of live performance for sure.

**AU: For readers hungry for live shows, are there any upcoming that they can see Caveat perform at?**

GM: Our next show will be at Dickens on February 4th celebrating the release of *Alchemy* (finally!).

**AU: Any final thoughts you like to share with our readers?**

GM: Just a thank you to anyone who is new to enjoying our music or have been following us for years. We've got some badass videos coming out with this record too, which you should keep your eyes out for, as they turned out amazing! We hope you enjoy the new record!

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# VOIVOD

**“CHILLING TECHNOLOGY” - art, activities, and futuristic memories in the shutdown timeline**



*Interview with artist and drummer Michel “Away” Langevin by Ira Hunter, Jason Flower, and Erik Lindholm*

**AU: Who are we talking to officially today?**

ML: Well, you are talking to Michel “Away” Langevin. I’m the drummer. I also do the artwork and the visuals for the band and been the constant member all through these four decades.

**AU: How would you describe Voivod’s sound?**

ML: It changes. But there is definitely a heavy metal root, mixed with punk and prog rock.

**AU: The song *Ravenous Medicine* from your album *Killing Technology* feels like present tense given the COVID scenario.**

ML: Yeah, we always tried to talk about what could happen 25 or 30 years down the road. So it finally caught up with us. We have a new album coming out soon, and now it’s kind of hard to talk about what can happen 30 years down the road. I mean, depending on what you read or watch, we might have passed the tipping point. The new album is more rooted in what’s going on right now on this planet, which is science fiction enough already!

**AU: The world is going to turn out like *Blade Runner* for a while, then into *Road Warrior*.**

ML: Yeah, like the early cyberpunk movies. They were really influential on Voivod. I wish we could make a soundtrack for these dystopian movies.

**AU: Does it feel like songs you wrote in the past are coming true? In this sense the future you imagined in the past is now the present.**

ML: Yes, actually, and also, some aspects of it are some recurring nightmare in a sense, that we were talking about Chernobyl in the 80s, and now it’s Fukushima. Or we were talking about the ozone layer and acid rain, and now it’s global warming, and so on. But the constant thing, we’re from the Cold War era, so we were always afraid of nuclear conflict, and I’m still afraid of it to this day.

**AU: Tell us about your new album “Synchro Anarchy”? What is the theme, and what did you and Snake on vocals want to get across?**

ML: Well, it’s representative of what’s going on right now. It’s not directly talking about the current situation, but there’s a lot of isolation and alienation. Some of the work was done while socially distancing, so I can feel that Snake wrote some of the lyrics while in isolation. It’s a bit darker than the last album *The Wake*. It was made under strange circumstances. And so it’s kind of a strange album in a way.

**AU: Who else is in the band with you, and how did they get their nicknames?**

ML: Well, Snake was with me in ‘83, when we formed the band, and we were at college, in an improvisation troop, and he had to imitate a worm. And he just crawled on the floor and turned his head! Everybody started laughing and he got a standing ovation! And then we decided to call him “Snake”. And my name “Away” comes from the fact that when we were starting in ‘83, I, myself was at university and studying science. And I had a hard time keeping up with the homework every night. And so sometimes, I would show up really late, or not at all. And so they called me “Away” because of that. And as for “Chewie”, he is a huge fan of Chewbacca. “Rocky”,

the bass player, his last name is Laroche or “Rock”. And his artists name is “Rock Laroche”, so when he joined the band we said “We will call you Rocky.”

**AU: What did you learn recording drums on this album? Is there something new you wanted to explore with the sound?**

ML: I had to do some of the work in isolation and confinement. So it was a tough situation when we had to build the album while socially distancing. So, for the demos, I had to program the drums on the computer. And it gave me another angle, the whole thing was more surgical. The challenge was for me to be able to play it when the time came to go into the studio. It gives a bit of a twist to the album. We had to build this puzzle before going into studio. It’s one of the reasons why we decided to call the album “Synchro Anarchy”.

**AU: Any standout tracks on the album?**

ML: The first single we released “Planet Eaters” was everybody’s favorite song, but mine is called “The World Today”. And it has a classic positive message. Like if you want to live in a better world, you have to contribute to it. It has a good swing, and I can’t wait to play this one live.

**AU: You’ve been living in Montreal since the start of COVID. How has it been?**

ML: For 2020, we concentrated on releasing live albums. But playing drums for me is really what gets the anxiety out of my body. And I really missed it. As soon as we were able to go into a studio, with the sanitary protocols, we did it in August 2020. We started doing online shows, and it was successful. I was home all the time, it gave me the opportunity to put together an online store, where I can make my art books available.

**AU: You’ve done all the artwork for the Voivod albums. How would you describe your art?**

ML: My early art was influenced by Heavy Metal magazine, as well as Dungeons and Dragons, but then my style changed. First there was a documentary in the early 80s called “If You Love This Planet” about the prospect of a nuclear war. Also movies like *The Wall*. When the early thrash metal movement exploded with Slayer and Metallica, we were right there at the right time. So my art was very relatable, but it’s always tried to depict a scorched earth so in a way it’s a post-apocalyptic art based in the heavy metal synthesis. Progressive rock being so big in Quebec when I was a teenager, I also have a lot of influence also from the art of bands like Yes.

**AU: Your hometown of Jonquière had an incredibly potent scene in the early days. *Deaf Dealer* seems to predate even *Voivod*. Can you reminisce about some of your earliest peers?**

ML: Being about 500 kilometres north of Montreal, Jonquière is sort of isolated, and that’s where *Voivod* grew up along with bands like *Deaf Dealer*, *Voor*, and *Messiah Force*. It was a place where people really love heavy metal. And essentially, we all moved to Montreal in the mid 80s. Everybody was rehearsing in the same building and very much listening to each other. In ‘85 it was really part of the crossover in the scene in Montreal because the heavy metal bands, thrash metal bands, and hardcore bands were all rehearsing in the same old run down building.

**AU: Beginning with *Nothingface* you began to move in a more progressive and melodic direction. With *Angel Rat*, you toured with Rush. Some fans disliked the change, but I’ve always seen it as continuous growth without ever denying your roots. Voivod seems to have made the conscious decision to keep their identity “metal” even though you could have chosen a different path. Is there any easy summary you yourself give to the multiple stages that the Voivod character and group have undergone on this journey?**

ML: Voivod will always be a heavy metal band. We had a period where we were exploring more of the psychedelic side of music on like *Angel Rat* and *The Outer Limits*. Different weird days because everybody was listening to grunge at that time so they sort of went unnoticed. Nowadays they are really being worshipped by the people into Voivod. We have some albums that are really heavy and thrash metal. But these days, we are back to progressive rock mode with sort of a new fusion metal direction to inaccessible areas.

**AU: Could you explain that Voivod is actually a character. What is the story behind Voivod?**

ML: As a kid, I wanted to be an artist for the magazine Heavy Metal, that was my main goal. I wanted to create a character, and the mythology that I could draw. I had read the book “*Dracula*” by Bram Stoker, and they explain that he was like some warlord who called himself “Voivod”. So I took the name and I started to create, and soon it turned into some sort of apocalyptic vampire guarding a planet. There were many Voivods guarding many planets. And the rule of the Voivod was to control the population whenever they would fool around with high tech weaponry. I had all these concepts for comic books. When the band got together and we’re looking for a name, I said, “Why not Voivod?” and we ended up developing the concept with the lyrics and the music ultimately over five albums.

**AU: Are you still in touch with Jason Newsted?**

ML: I’m still in touch. Jason is great, and I miss him. Whenever we are in the same town, he always jumps on stage and plays Voivod with us.

**AU: Do you have anything to say about the recent passing of Budgie’s Burke Shelley?**

ML: Yeah, I was really bummed. Because the very first show we played in Georgia in 1983. We played the song “Gunslinger” it’s actually on one demo cassette we released called “Anachronism” early in our career. So we were big fans of Budgie.

**AU: What do you think has been the key to your longevity in music and also the band itself?**

ML: The fact that we found our signature very early on, even though we tried many styles and we did our own thing. It played against us, but nowadays we are respected for it. If I would have to give an advice to a younger band, I would say find your sound and don’t try to copy anybody. You can be influenced by a scene but if you find your own identity, later on, you’ll be respected for it. You’re better to do your own thing, really!

**AU: Voivod is credited as one of “The Big Four” Canadian thrash metal bands, who are the others in your opinion?**

ML: For me, the originators of thrash metal are Exciter and Anvil. They are the ones that started it all, but many people would say Razor, Annihilator, Sacrifice, and DBC (Dead Brain Cells). There were a lot of great Canadian bands and the trademark of Canadian metal was that it was super technical. But it’s hard for me to pick “The Big Four” because I’m more from the Rush school.

**AU: The last time Voivod played in Victoria, the singer of Men Without Hats came out to the show. Is he your friend?**

ML: Yes. Ivan is great and he played the Hammond B3 organ on the album “*Angel Rat*”. And also, I played on a Men Without Hats album called “*Sideways*” and did a tour with them.



**AU: Anything else that you want to promote?**

ML: Aside from the new album, I’ve been working a lot on reissues. There will be vinyl of *Angel Rat*, *Nothingface* and the Noise Records catalogue *Rrröööaaarr*, *Killing Technology*, and *Dimension Hatröss* coming out this year. There’s also a documentary about Voivod coming out. Next year is our 40th anniversary so we have a book and also a best-of album planned. So I just want to tell people into Voivod that COVID won’t stop us!

**AU: When will the documentary be completed?**

ML: There are a couple of interviews, like Jason Newsted, to be done still. It’s directed by Felipe Belalcazar who did a great documentary called “*Death by Metal*” about the band Death.

**AU: Did Voivod influence other bands?**

ML: Yes, at first I wasn’t too sure, but I do see it now in bands like Fear Factory, Meshuggah, and Machine Head. It’s after talking to the guys that they confirmed to me that they were big fans of Voivod. Especially in the mid 90s I started noticing an influence for sure, with the strange chords and strange time signatures. I think we sort of opened a lot of doors in the thrash metal movement to explore psychedelia and progressive rock and incorporate that into the metal.

**AU: What was the tour with Rush like?**

ML: They were super nice. When we did the first show there was a bottle of champagne backstage with a note signed by all of them. We gave the note to “Piggy” who was our guitar player then. Unfortunately, he passed in 2005, and he was the biggest fan of Rush. When we met the band we were a bit silent because I mean, what am I going to say to “The Professor”, you know? But what a great experience. We were super nervous, especially in Toronto, because when people go see Rush, they want to see Rush. But whenever we played the song, “*Astronomy Domine*”, a cover of Pink Floyd, the crowd roared and went louder than our music. So it was a relief!

**AU: Last words to the readers in the far reaching corners of Canada.**

ML: We have a North American tour planned in the summer and hopefully we see you on the road sooner than later.

[voivod.com](http://voivod.com)  
[awayartpress.com](http://awayartpress.com)  
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## Cursed Blessings

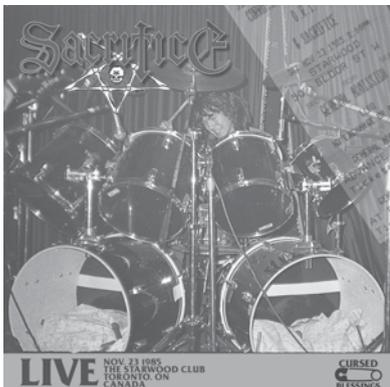
### Sacrifice Goes "Live In 85" On Cursed Blessings

On November 23rd, 1985 a young up-and-coming thrash band was booked to open for hardcore punk heavyweights Corrosion of Conformity and D.R.I. at the Starwood Club (a.k.a. Ildiko's/The Bridge) in Toronto. It was the first time on record in the city that a thrash metal band had been booked to play with hardcore punk acts.

Sacrifice were admittedly nervous about how they would be received by the punk rock audience but were also excited as they looked up to both co-headliners and were pumped to share the stage with them. "Back around this time, we were going to a lot of hardcore shows," remembers Sacrifice vocalist/guitarist Rob Urbinati. "To get asked to open for two bands we all looked up to was great for us." Sacrifice bass-man Scott Watts recalls, "This was a great show for us! It definitely helped us grow our Sacrifice name in the Toronto scene!" The night ended up being the stuff of legends and instantly became an, "I was there," event. Worlds collided and it resulted in a raucous and rowdy night that performers and fans alike will never forget. Urbinati recently said, "I remember being a little worried about if we would be accepted, but we were. This was the beginning of metal and punk coming together in Toronto."

All of this was unknowingly captured on tape by a crafty fan in the front row. Ray Berkis was a regular fixture at many Toronto-area shows during this time and had developed a clever system to be able to take the show home with

him every night. Berkis would attach an external microphone to his Sony Walkman and affix the mic to the lapel of his leather jacket. The bands would set up and Ray would simply hit record and find a good spot to stand where the sound was best. Rumors of these recordings had circulated for years and even made a rumored appearance on YouTube, but it wasn't until Berkis reached out to Cursed Blessings Records President Al Nolan (who actually attended the show in question) that the existence of these legendary recordings was fully confirmed. *Live in '85* is a full-length vinyl and digital LP of the recordings from this night, remastered for digital and vinyl and available



exclusively from Toronto's Cursed Blessings Records.

This recording is as much a time capsule as it is a thrash metal record, capturing future legends in the infancy of their journey. Make no mistake, this isn't KISS ALIVE!! These recordings are RAW and UNEDITED with the sounds and ambience of the Starwood Club on full display. If you were there, it will take you back to that November night and if you weren't there, you'll feel as

though you were. Limited to only 500 hand-numbered copies, this album is a must have for all fans of thrash metal and heavy music in general. Captured mere months before the recording of Sacrifice's landmark album *Torment in Fire*, *LIVE in 85* features most of the tracks that would end up comprising that thrash masterpiece including "Possession," "Turn in Your Grave," "Homicidal Breath," and their self-titled anthem to name a few.

*LIVE in 85* is also available worldwide on every major streaming platform, so there is definitely a way for those fans of classic thrash metal who have parted ways with their hi-fis of old, to enjoy this excellent live thrash metal experience!

### Thrash Legends Slaughter Release "Live In 85"

1-2-FUCK YOU! Canadian thrash legends Slaughter are back on the scene with the release of *LIVE in 85* on Toronto's Cursed Blessings Records. Recorded live by a fan in attendance, Slaughter supported COC and DRI at the Starwood Club (a.k.a. Ildiko's/The Bridge) in Toronto on a cold November night in 1985. The two punk bands had just played a raucous show the night before with the other thrash band of the day, Sacrifice opening up. The headliners had a night off, decided to do another gig in Toronto and it was all caught on tape.

Cursed Blessings Records got ahold of those tapes and have had them remastered and pressed on 12" vinyl. *LIVE in 85* is no KISS ALIVE! This is as raw and real as a live recording can get, and will make you feel like you were there!

We recently caught up with Slaughter drummer Ron Summers, who now resides in Switzerland and recently wrote a book entitled *Oh Ronnie Where Art Thou*. Here's what the living legend had to say about *LIVE in 85*:

"The existence of this Slaughter recording from 1985 was a surprise to me. I find it amazing that people still have tapes from over 30 years ago, or even that they know the whereabouts of them. I had hundreds of cassettes from my 80s tape-trading days, but I have no idea where my collection has vanished to. Since I moved to Switzerland, I have lost all my precious vinyl, bootlegs, Japanese imports of The Plasmatics, Motorhead picture discs, my most favourite Direct Action cassette, the obscure metal albums that Brian Taylor or Adam Sewell from The Record Peddler would thrust in my face while I searched through the bins for something new to delight my ears. So many valuable music memories lost in some grime-covered unlabeled box.

Al messaged me one day through Facebook and asked if I would mind if Cursed Blessings released the live recording from the Starwood Club when Slaughter had the beginning slot in front of COC and DRI. And then he mentioned he would send me money. Fuck yeah! I said. I haven't seen a payout for Slaughter since my first and only royalty cheque back in 1988 or something like that. Then I tried to think of that night, and how we played, what I was feeling, and what a dusty old tape recording from so long ago would sound like...

I mostly remember how exhausted I was, and how I didn't want to pack up the van with the standard metal music gear of double bass drums, roto toms, and Marshall cabinets and drive into Toronto. It was a last minute show since the headlining bands were staying another night in Toronto. They had just played the night before with Sacrifice and decided to stay and play again. It was also a Sunday and even though I was only



16 years old, I was most likely hungover. Back then, since I didn't have a driver's licence, my father drove Slaughter to all our shows. Dad did the roadie thing, hauling gear into the venues and then would wait out in a parking lot for us to finish our set to carry gear back out.

We began to play and I didn't want to be there - I had no energy for playing and didn't care that we were sharing the stage with COC and DRI. I think back now at what a little fuckup I was, and that I should have been euphoric at the opportunity for that gig. I was a total jackass and left soon after pushing the gear off the stage and through the crowd to the metal staircase that led to the cold black parking lot where my father sat patiently in his Ford Econoline van. We packed and drove

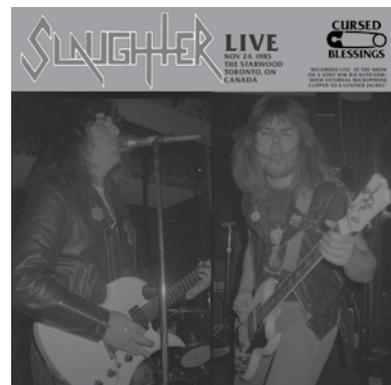
away, back to Scarborough, only speaking a little about the show. I am ashamed with myself that I let that metal/crossover memory slip away and that I left the show before the real bands came out - I'm not sure I even said two words to them. What a turd. Today, I brag to fellow metal enthusiasts about playing with these two bands - even though I was only physically there and not mentally there. Most of the

younger people don't know who I'm talking about when I tell stories of the bands we played with - which is sad - mostly because I always want the ego boost, but the significance of playing with these bands is lost on them. I guess it was lost on me back in 1985 too. I don't really remember much else other than the drummer from COC watching me from the side while I played, and getting nervous that I was going to fuck up or mistakenly fling a stick across the stage.

I'm ecstatic that Al Nolan, my good friend, and who used to be part of Epidemic, so many years ago, has a label that is so impassioned about the scene and the music. I'm jealous of his energy for releasing all these bands! I certainly miss the old days and the old ways - I wish I could be a part of the family that his label is building - it's the direction and the attitude the music industry should be heading."

*LIVE in 85* is available exclusively from Cursed Blessings Records.

PHOTO CREDIT: Nelsha Moorji



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## Malicious Intent

Interview by Sheldon Byer

Malicious Intent is Leadmonton's premier diabolical thrash titans! Just never ask them about chicks.

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

MI: Edmonton's speed merchants Malicious Intent! Infamous for stumbling through loud fast thrash.

**AU: Give us a brief history of the Malicious Intent, who is in the band and what are you all about?**

MI: Started in late 2014 under the name Diabolica, remoulded into Malicious Intent when Conor joined on vocals in 2017. I'm High Speed Chase on bass & the best damn riff partner Dr. Enema Matt on guitars have been constant forever, with me taking over vocals after Conor's departure in 2019. Drums started with J. Parent, then there was a dark period, and now we've got Your

Mom's Favourite Dylan pounding drums and couldn't be happier with our new brother

**AU: What does it say on the other band members' Tinder profiles?**

MI: We don't have much to say.

**AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.**

MI: Early Destruction, Sodom, Razor I would like to hope. A lot of speed but a lot of dirt too.

**AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?**

MI: We



actually just put out "Too Live To Drunk," six way-too-drunk-to-play-live cuts from our Devil's Night show and four demo tracks! It's messy, but... fun messy.

**AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?**

MI: "Intöxisatan"! Years in the making, somehow this set of lyrics got slapped on I think 3-4 different sets of riffs, each of em got dropped, and finally got together a version we were happy with once Dylan had joined. Two versions of it on there too, Live & Demo

**AU: What are Malicious Intent's biggest influences, classic & modern?**

MI: RAZOR! Obviously. Sheepdog is god. Other big ones I'd say Megadeth, Demolition Hammer, Slaughter, Power Trip, Deathhammer make a good rough idea.

**AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?**

MI: Copious quantities of VHS & vinyl. Can't speak for Matt or Dylan but I say: invest in a VCR. Shack up with copies of all three *Evil Deads* and you won't wanna go out!

**AU: What makes a Malicious Intent show unique?**

MI: We've got enough fog to set off a fire alarm! Did that once at Temple (Starlite Room) and they cut our sound, told us to tone it down a bit, and get back on with the nonsense.

**AU: How would you sum up 2021?**

MI: For the band, it's a bit weird. A struggle to get into our jam space (cause of COVID rules) followed by a bit of a mess to get our drummer situation sorted out, agreeing to a show without actually having rehearsed much at all since March 2020, finally finding the perfect new drummer, and then chaotically getting organized for those shows.

## SHR-EDMONTON

**AU: Any cool bands you've gigged with that we don't know about?**

MI: Leadmonton thrasher union boys Rising Sun, Hollow Point & Lacerator! Sölicitör are really cool too.

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

MI: Right before we did our first run of shirts we found *The Toxic Avenger*, drunk as hell in Matt's basement. Put him on that first shirt, and now we're putting him on our next album! *The Toxic Avenger* will be the title track to the studio album we are finishing writing now, so get ready teenyboppers!!

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

MI: Eat Shit Get Away!!

**AU: How do people find Malicious Intent online?**

MI: Instagram, Facebook, Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and our label Unholy Coven Productions in the Netherlands!



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some amazingly talented bands. We are going forward with the 2006 *Scattering* lineup for the foreseeable future as Bryan and Amanda are dealing with personal things right now and we can't really comment any further on the subject. We WILL be showcasing a new tune at the show and we may have another

surprise or two up-out metal gauntlets during our set as well!

**AU: What can fans expect from this very special reunion?**

SB: You can expect a high-energy show full of fun, shredding riffs, and killer vocals!! We can't wait to let some energy out!!

**AU: As a metalhead yourself, who are you looking forward the most to personally**

**see perform at the Hyperspace Metal Fest?**

SB: Well of course my guys Witherfall, Iron Kingdom are super talented and a great time, Archon Legion, Planeswalker. Looks like a great festival packed full of talent!

**AU: Stu, you first reunited with Into Eternity at Loud As Hell 2021, which gave way for metal fans to be very excited about your return with the band. We heard that you will also be recording a new album along with vocalist Amanda Kiernan, can you give insight on what fans might expect from this new dynamic compared to past Into Eternity records?**

SB: Unfortunately, we can't comment too much on Amanda's personal situation as per my above

answer but hopefully, in the future, we can do some recording with her. For now and for the foreseeable future we will be doing all recordings with this current lineup. The new tunes are sounding heavy and amazing and will take the listener on a musical metal rollercoaster so we are very excited to share them with you!

**AU: Have there been any obstacles after leaving Iced Earth and reuniting with Into Eternity? How did you initially decide to return to Into Eternity?**

SB: Besides me obviously having a very traumatic 2021 I feel things are in a good place (for me) now. I (love) Into Eternity and have always wanted to perform death/extreme vocals again so it was just a good time to come back.

**AU: Even though we have Covid unfortunately postponing a lot of events and tours, will we see Into Eternity touring once again in Canada, the USA, Europe, or any other countries?**



# REGINA RAGE

SB: Yes COVID has made it tough on many levels to properly plan any live performances. We are taking it slow right now and want to put more new music out before entertaining any sort of touring. I can say that we will always be down to do some festivals and perhaps a short leg of touring here and there but we just don't see any extensive touring happening on our foreseeable future but who knows!

**AU: Any final thoughts you like to share with our readers?**

SB: Hey, thanks for the interview, and we are stoked for you all to hear the new music and see us live! Much love and respect to all of our loyal fans out there as well!! Death Prog Squad Unite!!

<https://www.facebook.com/intoeternityweb/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HyperspaceMetalFestival/>

## Hyperspace

## Into Eternity:

## The Scattering of Ashes Lineup

Interview with Stu Block

**Absolute Underground:** Thank you Into Eternity for taking the time to do this interview. For those unfamiliar with the band, please tell us some quick background info? How would you describe your music?

SB: Into Eternity is a Canadian progressive metal band (death prog) formed in 1997. The band has done extensive touring with some amazing metal bands. Into Eternity's music can only be described as a dynamic musical and vocal journey.

**AU: Into Eternity was announced as one of the headliners for this year's 2022 Hyperspace Metal Fest in Vancouver, BC. It was mentioned that this performance is a very special one for fans attending the festival because you are reuniting your original 2006 *The Scattering of Ashes* lineup, how did this come to be?**

SB: We are very stoked to play Hyperfest with



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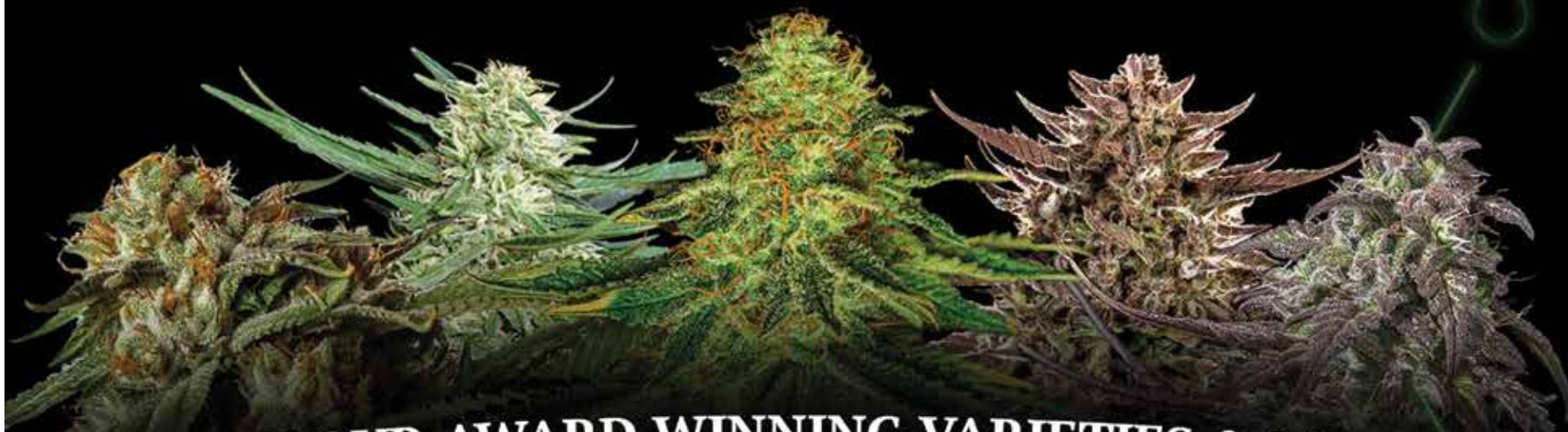
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## Idol Of Fear

Interview with Austin Myers  
 By AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Thank you Idol of Fear for taking the time to do this interview. For those unfamiliar with the band, please tell us some quick background info.**

AM: It's our pleasure, thanks. We play black metal made in our own image. Fear has never been a more menacing force in the world around us. We are here to harness that.

**AU: The band is releasing its third album, *Trespasser* on March 11th, what can you tell our readers about this new record's influences? Inspirations for your dark sound? Compared to *Grave Aperture* (2018), *All Sights Affixed*, *Ablaze* (2014)?**

AM: This album was influenced more by our own previous releases than any other outside factor, but carries influence from artists like Shining, Emptiness, Deathspell Omega, Behemoth, Beherit, The Devil's Blood and others. Compared to our previous releases, *Trespasser* is a much more refined take on our personal brand of black metal. We have no doubt it is our finest work to date and is a definite step up in terms of

heaviness and brutality. This album also has a certain side of dark beauty that while always having been a part of our sound, shines through more so than ever before.

**AU: What would you like fans to take away from this album experience?**

AM: *Trespasser* will likely leave the listener in both a mire of introspection centered on subjective personal darkness and an over-arching confrontation of the greater rot.

**AU: Idol of Fear self-recorded this record, how was that process, any tips for other indie bands doing the same?**

AM: We do it this way because it just makes sense for our creative process. It's probably not the easiest method of making an album and it likely slows things down to an extent because we really get as much time as we need to perfect everything. It's totally worth being able to fully control the end result, however, and if anything goes wrong along the way we can only blame ourselves. As far as advice goes, use the best

quality equipment you can manage to acquire and try to start by capturing the best possible tones can get without excessive processing.

We learned a lot by making this album and will likely modify our approach for the better on the next release.

**AU: We read that you don't jam your songs, you write and record them on the spot: "All contributing ideas to the creative process, Idol of Fear tracked the first two albums themselves and tend to write new material**

**by recording as opposed to jamming it out." What made you decide to take this approach?**

AM: It's just the way things have tended to work over the years. Our music comes from a very personal place so it's usually a lot easier to conjure when alone. We then take these

ideas and collaborate on them together. Being able to record as we go also makes things more efficient and easier to remember. For the next album, we may likely take the opposite approach and do a more live-oriented album. It's important to keep things fresh.

**AU: How did it come to be to get Jeremie Bézier (Emptiness, Enthroned) to master the record?**

AM: We are big fans of Emptiness so we just looked up Blackout Studios asked if he would be interested to master it for us. He seemed pretty

## TORONTO TRASH

enthusiastic to work on it so it wasn't a difficult decision for us. Having someone who is into the music goes a long way. He was great to work with and went above and beyond to make sure the album is as crushing as possible.

**AU: How's Toronto metal scene these days? How has Covid affected live shows?**

AM: Between Covid and the loss of key venues, the Toronto metal scene is basically non-existent at this point in time as far as we can tell, although we've always existed on the peripheries and don't stay in touch with other bands much. None of our members live in Toronto anymore, although we usually get lumped in with that scene because it's where we've played nearly all our shows thus far.

**AU: Will the band be doing local gigs in Toronto or touring?**

AM: We were planning a few shows around Ontario before Covid happened, so maybe when things loosen up again we can get back to that if the promoters are still around. Either way, just like the plague we will be back eventually.

**AU: Any bands you really love to tour within Canada, USA or Europe?**

AM: We've never been on tour but the personal circumstances of the band are getting to a place where this is becoming more of a possibility. This would entail us having to make friends however, we'll see how that goes. We are kind of loners.

**AU: Any final thoughts you like to share with our readers?**

AM: Thanks for taking the time to check us out and if you enjoy *Trespasser* keep an eye on Idol of Fear because our next release won't be far behind. It only gets darker.

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# MONTREAL MASSACRE



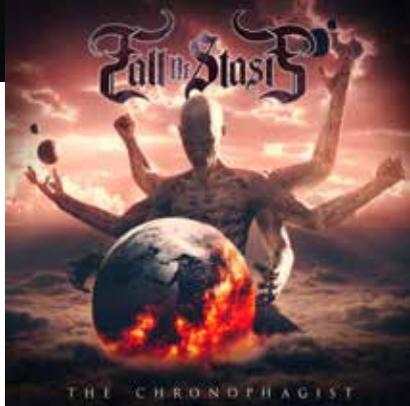
sound, but what I can say is that the chickens enjoyed it (I think).

**AU: You're releasing your debut album *The Chronophagist* on February 25th, what can ya tell our readers about this record?**

SL: This record is

with what he heard, so we talked with him about the possibility of recording at his studio.

We didn't have much studio experience since it was our first album, but Chris has this way of making you feel at ease and comfortable when you're recording. We felt like we were old friends who had known each other for a long time. We had lots of fun recording with him, making jokes non-stop, talking about music in general. He's been no less than exceptional. He was listening to our ideas and really tried to understand our vision for the album and put a lot of effort to realize it. He also helped to make some changes regarding the compositions, steering us towards better ideas. Overall, we wouldn't have had an album of this quality without him.



**AU: We read that the album showcases fictive storytelling from start to finish, although the lyrics often symbolize modern social issues along with some of the band members' personal experiences. Would you be able to tell us more in detail, what social issues would you like to bring forth to listeners?**

SL: Yeah, a good example would be the song "Baron." Initially, this one was about a real-life "character" nicknamed "Le baron" in French. He was a local eccentric alcoholic, let's call him that way, who was willing to do anything, and I do mean ANYTHING for a beer (or several). This varied from eating bugs or cigarette butts to getting beaten up. It was usually pretty wild and disgusting stuff. We never participated in it nor did we approve of this type of behavior, but let's just say it was the stuff of legend in our hometown. We wanted to pay tribute to him with this song, so we wrote lyrics inspired by his persona and wrote a narrative that fit our album's concept around it. Unfortunately, we learned that

he passed away recently.

Other social issues that are brought up are drug addictions, mental health issues, and religious indoctrination, notably in the songs "Twilight Carnival" and "The Cult."

**AU: Your music video "The Cult" was incredibly epic, brutally and gutturally assaulting, will there be more videos to come from the band?**

SL: You bet there will be; there is a lyric video for the song "Baal Arise" that will be released in a few days. We also have a video clip that is supposed to come out after our album's release. We won't tell you which song it will be, but we can tell you it will be very different from the other two.

**AU: For readers hungry for live shows, are there any upcoming that they can see Fall of Stasis perform at?**

SL: Unfortunately, we can't say. I really wish there was, but with the COVID restrictions in Quebec, it's very hard to plan a show since all venues are closed until further notice. We will plan concerts as soon as we can.

**AU: Any bands you really love to tour within Canada, USA or Europe?**

SL: I think we'd like to tour with Gojira, we really love their music and share their values regarding veganism and environment, so I think it would be an interesting tour, but in a more realistic way, I'd say maybe Shadow of Intent or Beyond Creation (even though we'd probably get upstaged every night).

**AU: Any final thoughts you would like to share with our readers?**

SL: If you don't know us, look us up. We think there's a little something for every kind of metalhead out there in our album and you'll be pleasantly surprised with what you hear.

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

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## Fall OF Stasis

Interview with Serge Lecours

By AU Editorial

**Absolute Underground: Thank you Fall of Stasis for taking the time to do this interview. For those unfamiliar with the band, please tell us some quick background info.**

SL: We're from Montreal and *The Chronophagist* is our first album. Our style varies from black metal to death metal, symphonic, folk, and prog. We try not to have too many boundaries regarding our sound.

**AU: We read the band's beginnings first started with jams in a chicken coop, even playing in -20C and log fireplace to keep warm. Were there any lessons learned or influences from this harsh environment to create your sound? Is the band in a heated jam place these days?**

SL: Yeah, the first lesson we learned was to always start a fire 30 minutes before the jam. We also learned that since the freezing cold was gonna damage the drumkit anyway, might as well use a shitty one. Jokes aside, I think we learned to deal with not-so-ideal jamming conditions and it made us appreciate a better jam room once we had it. I'm not sure how this environment influenced our

long overdue; there are songs on it that were written a few years ago and others more recently. We had difficulties finding a stable lineup comprising members that were willing to show engagement towards the project and that was fun to work with. I think our many influences are reflected in this album and that it will surely captivate the listeners.

**AU: You worked with legendary Cryptopsy guitarist and producer Chris Donaldson, how did this come to be and how was recording the record with him?**

SL: First of all, we heard so many positive things said about his work by other bands from the local scene, so it made us want to work with him. Also, we didn't want to cheap out on the production and wanted the best producer available for the songs that we put so much effort in. Chris came to see one of our shows and was really pleased



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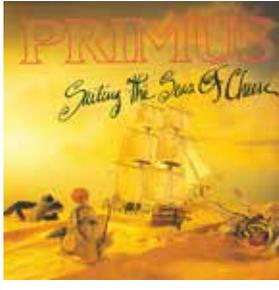
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# BLAST FROM THE PAST



## Blast From The Past presents : pRimUSH RUSH w/PRIMUS at Vancouver's Pacific Coliseum Feb 2, 1992 by Super'Clark'Mantei.

Hello past blasters. This issue finds us going 30 years back for a bill that included Canadian artists Rush with openers Primus and it seemed like a good way to spend a cold groundhog's day. Rush were touring in support of their new album *Roll The Bones* and I was happy with the record. My problem was that, just across from the Coliseum was the Argodome, and also on this night was the Red Hot Chili Peppers and I was tempted to enjoy a warmer evening with California surf funk rap and hi-energy RHCP instead of Rush. I had to quickly decide. What will it be? My decision on which show to go see had help with a little magic from the spirit of radio. In fact, while I was driving, Alex Lifeson (guitarist for Rush) came on the local R'n'R radio station and he was very insistent to announce about the openers Primus, so that helped in my decision. I found a magic pair of tickets and we were in line for Rush instead of RHCP and I remember making a joke that everyone seemed to have either gloves, scarfs, or toques on and I said "Well, here we are in line with The Ice Cold Chili People."



I'm pretty certain we all know who Rush is. They are Alex Lifeson, Geddy Lee and Neil Peart. From Toronto, Rush are a power trio and have been a wondrous source of progressive high energy uplifting rock and rollers since the fall of 1968. Well, let's move along to 1974 when they were picked up by Mercury records in the USA and started to tour and record non-stop. They worked hard and eventually become seasoned pros, and by 1980 they were headliners. Rush recorded 20 studio LPs in all from 1974 to 2012 and retired from touring in 2015. Then sadly, Neil Peart passed away in 2020. Rush has made it's mark and they remain Hall of Fame legends forever.

Ok, back to 1992. *Roll The Bones* was a great LP with awesome tracks. Rush was well entrenched in Canada's music industry. Yet the show can't go on without an opener. The previous show Rush played, the opener was bassist extraordinaire Billy Sheehan with his band Mr. Big. So tonight I knew only that Primus was a trio and had a popular following. So, let's take a wiki quickie... Primus are from El Sobrante, CA, they were formed in 1985 by bassist Les Claypool and guitarist Todd Huth along with a drum machine. They went through 7 drummers and eventually found their synergy with drummer Jay Lane and changed the name from Primate to Primus and recorded a demo in 1988 called *Sausage*. The demo showcased a truly inventive band who encapsulated the vibe of both Frank Zappa with their humour and even Rush with their exceptional musicality and

style. The term Alternative Rock seemed to appear in regards to Primus. They eventually recorded a Live album in 1989 called *Suck On This*. That LP ironically opens with "YYZ", an instrumental by Rush from 1981. Then in 1990 Primus recorded their debut studio LP called *Frizzle Fry*. The band then recorded their follow up album in 1991 entitled *Sailing The Seas Of Cheese* that contained the hit "Jerry Was A Race Car Driver". Things were shining bright for Primus and along came the chance to tour with Rush in the fall of 1991. The tour was exactly what they needed. A chance to shine a spotlight on them in the same light as Rush. This double bill was great indeed. I can't think of a better back up act for Rush and I am confident I'm right as in 1994 Rush once again hosted Primus on their 'Counterparts' tour as well. After that Rush never used an opening act again as they played a full 3 hour plus set.

Ok, let's go to the show now. Primus opened the night for a very enthusiastic crowd. Before the lights went down there was a lot of talk about this Primus act and I was actually excited to have them play live as my initiation to their music. My naked ears were at the ready as the lights went down and the crowd lit up in plumes of ready rolled joints. The fragrance was everywhere and I was all eyes on the stage as Primus started to play. I instantly noticed a very crisp bass guitar being played very well and also the bassist was singing. The guitarist was playing somewhere under his lengthy hair, and man could he play. Then there was the drummer. He had a pretty big kit and their music was well thought out. They played for about 45 minutes to a very attentive crowd. Most seemed to know the music and at one point they played a very cool version of "Kashmir" by Led Zeppelin. Some other highlights were "Tommy The Cat", "Sailing The Seas Of Cheese", and funny enough a track called "Groundhog's Day". The lights eventually went up and everyone seemed aglow with smiles almost touching their ears.

Next came the headliners from Toronto, Rush. They were now a world renowned band and it was time for the 3 humble Torontonians to take the stage. The lights went down to a roar of appreciation and the mini pre-show movie began. Rush shows were now equipped with surround sound, screens, and lighting designs that were state of the art back in 1992. They were the cutting edge of what was capable of enhancing the live experience and come showtime their performance was nothing short of perfection. Their music resonated throughout the night, touching past memories of both music and a vibe within, when you know the songs so well they actually become a part of you. What a rush!! They opened with the track entitled "Force Ten" from their 1987 LP *Hold Your Fire*. Next was "Limelight" and many consider this one to be Rush's greatest tracks as it explains the life of one in the spotlight. Neil even quotes Shakespeare with "All The World's Indeed A Stage and we are merely players, performers and portrayers. Each another's audience, outside the gilded cage."

The other songs were all highlights from their respected LPs and this night they were also of course showcasing tracks from their new LP *Roll The Bones*. Each Rush LP has some sort of a theme and this time around the idea was about chances and luck. New tracks like "Roll The Bones" and the energetic LP opener "Dreamline" were on the

radio in heavy rotation. Also played during the show was a soon to be radio hit called "Ghost of a Chance" and that song along with "Bravado" remain two of my favorite mellow Rush tracks. As for the lyrics that Geddy has to sing, it's a well known fact that drummer Neil Peart was the band's lyricist and he always had a lot to address. His brain seemed as big as his drum set to me. I looked up to him since the first time I read his lyrics and eventually read all of his 7 novels too. A brilliant man, great author, and musician. I regard Neil Peart as one of Canada's top songwriters.

The highlights of the show were pretty much the entire show. It is hard to say which high was higher? Of course there is the magical moment when the drum solo comes. This solo is legendary. Neil Peart playing his contraptions to 20,000 fans for over ten full minutes with a spinning set of triggers and samplers, drums and cymbals, perfectly constructed all around him. It made you think it might

actually lift off and fly to another planet. No drummer showcased a drum solo like Neil Peart did and no one ever will again.

As the show came to a close they played their biggest song "Tom Sawyer" which was played to perfection. Then the band left the stage. This is always my favorite part of a Rush show... the encore. Rush always played almost 30 minute encores and this one did not disappoint. They came out again to a roaring crowd when the opening riff to "The Spirit of Radio" hit the

speakers. The band then went into a medley of many earlier songs all effortlessly morphed into one mega mini-set. Tracks like "Anthem" and "Finding My Way" were performed after years of not being played and then came my fave called "Red Barchetta" which also magically turned into what many consider their biggest show stopper: a latin style instrumental called "La Villa Strangiato". That song is a long lifting beautiful instrumental that takes everyone

to a sacred place in Rushville, and once it came to the end it kicked into "Cygnus-X-1" a fan fave from their deepest cuts of early magic. Once the encore came to a happy, elated finish the band took a quick moment to wave and say "Goodbye Vancouver and we hope to see you again down the road sometime. Goodnight." Feeling elated and fully satisfied we left the building and once

outside mingled with a lot of folks who went to see the Red Hot Chili Peppers and most of the fans from that show were very excited to ask "How was Primus?" So obviously I was not the only one undecided on which band to see. No offence to the Chili Peppers but I'm glad I chose Rush with Primus. Or 'pRimUSH'??

Anyway, as this edition draws to a close I'd like to add a couple things about Primus. They have released

a total of 9 studio Lps to date and there is one really truly unique twist in this story, and that is that Primus have been performing live playing Rush songs instead of Primus music. This started in 2019 when they appeared and performed all of the 1977 album by Rush called *A Farewell To Kings* and have just booked a tour as Primus, yet they are performing the music of Rush instead. Which begs the obvious question, will Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee possibly show up with another drummer and tour as a Primus tribute band? If so maybe they can use my name of 'pRimUSH' and maybe I can be the drummer too? Ok, Dream on SuperMantei.

Remember to smile at the sky from time to time and say hi to Neil Peart when you do.

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## Steve Johnson – Part 3 Rubberhead: Sex, Drugs, and Special FX

### Absolute Underground: Do you still do Special FX work?

Steve Johnson: I only work remotely now. I still sculpt and sometimes I design. Occasionally I'll do a film. I just did a film that Robin Williams' daughter Zelda directed and that was a lot of fun. But I don't have a studio anymore. I just gave all that shit up because the film industry is a young person's industry. I did that for 40 years and now I don't really want to do it anymore.

### AU: Are some of the early films you worked on still being discovered by newer audiences?

SJ: In the past five or six years all of this stuff is having a resurgence and it's like almost on a weekly basis that I get a call to go in and do an interview about some obscure movie I did for the DVD or the Blu-ray extras or whatever. And I just turned out my first one because I'm sick of it. The Tom Holland movie called *The Temp*, and *The Temp* is a really bad movie too.

### AU: Yeah, that doesn't need a documentary.

SJ: No, the only thing that would probably be watchable on this entire DVD release would be my outrageousness.

### AU: What music videos have you worked on?

SJ: The most recent one I did was a Slipknot video called "Nero Forte." And let me tell you something, I hate their music, I despise them. I love Corey Taylor, the lead singer. I've worked with him on several projects but I hate their music. I do hate it. Sorry, Corey, if you're reading this. But I'm really happy with what we did on the video though. And as a matter of fact, at my ancient old age, I learned a lot about art on this project. Not from the Slipknot clowns, but from what we did in the studio because Corey's very



we painted and dyed them and then we made this incredible webbing to go over them. Then the girls had to be naked and we slimed them up. We painted them first and then we slimed up their beautiful naked dancer Vegas bodies. And then we put these cocoons on them and it was so difficult because they were so tightly tailored, that's why we had to slime their bodies

and the cocoons up, to just barely get them in it. But oh my god, when they called Action on set, these things turned into creatures, I could have never imagined myself. These girls were so good in these cocoons, and it was really fun.

### AU: And you have also worked on theme parks

#### in the past?

SJ: Yes, Disney World, a couple of things in Tokyo.

### AU: Were they horror related ones like Halloween Horror Nights?

SJ: No, I got in with the people at Disneyland because when you wait in those long lines they sometimes have television monitors that play things to keep you interested. And so we would do animatronic puppets and that kind of thing. I did something for the Tokyo Disneyland. I did a whole other theme park and it was all Big Daddy Roth inspired. It was really fucking cool stuff.

### AU: You have a section in your books called "The Ones That Got Away" My friend Dave Alexander from Rue Morgue magazine has a book called Untold Horrors about all these movies that almost got made. Which movie would you like to see made the most of all the ones that got away from you?

SJ: *The Jetsons* by Joe Dante, the director of *The Howling* and *Gremlins*. We worked for months designing and making models. I got so excited about that. It would have kicked the animatronics world on its ass, and the plug got pulled. There was going to be hundreds of robots, like real animatronic robots. We designed them all, and we knew how to do it, and we could have done it,

and goddammit the project fell apart. It would have been great. And they still haven't made a live action *Jetsons* movie and they probably never will because they would make the robots CGI these days.

### AU: There's a cool underappreciated horror movie you worked on called Brainscan with Edward Furlong.

SJ: Yes. Good ol' Eddie. That was a fun movie. I was actually put in prison over that film.

### AU: Really? What happened?

SJ: Well, the first time we went up to shoot, I went with my assistant, and because I was a seasoned traveller at this point going to work on movies I said to the producer, "Hey, where's our work permits? I hear it's pretty rough in Montreal," where we were shooting *Brainscan*, "pretty rough on Americans coming in without work permits." And he goes, "Don't worry about it. Just tell them you're here for a vacation." So I got on the plane and we had like 12 trunks full of makeup stuff so they detained us. They took me and my assistant to separate rooms to interrogate us. I held my own. I'm like, "No, no, I'm here for vacation" and customs was like "Then why do you have 12 trunks full of makeup?" I said, "I just like to practice." but my assistant cracked and said "Yes, yes we're here to work, I can't take anymore, we're here to work." So they put us in handcuffs and took us into an actual prison cell with real criminals. And I couldn't get in touch with the producers on the phone, it was the middle of the night in LA, and by the time I was able to get in touch with him the next morning there was nothing left to do but put us back in handcuffs and literally escort us through the airport and onto the plane in handcuffs like we were criminals. So we had to fly all the way back to Los Angeles from Montreal, which is a long flight, get our work permits that same day and then fly back to Montreal. It was really unnerving.

### AU: I see you worked on the Here Come The Munsters TV movie. And now Rob Zombie is supposed to be revamping The Munsters. Was that hard to do without the original cast members?

SJ: John Landis produced that and we did two of them actually. One of them we shot in Australia and one of them we shot here in LA. And I'm really pleased with the work we did on them. Because I had the greatest team ever Bill Corso, Chris Nelson, and David Dupuis. We kicked ass on those movies. And they had tried to recreate *The Munsters* many, many times since the original series. But we did it right. And the actors were fantastic. And I'm really interested in seeing what Rob Zombie does. And I was really hoping he would take a different approach and maybe go a little more punk, a little more edgy. But I don't know yet but it'll be interesting to see.

### AU: One of my favorite comics is Hellblazer which is about the character John Constantine. I believe you worked on the movie Constantine



### with Keanu Reeves?

SJ: Oh, no, I didn't work on that. I did work on it, but I didn't. We designed and designed and then the production designer came along and just took all of our designs and gave it to Stan Winston, which is the bane of my existence. Stan has stolen so many jobs from me. I didn't actually do the show. I just designed the show.

### AU: You alluded that you're semi-retired, is there a project that you would come out of retirement for? A dream project?

SJ: One that pays me \$30 million? I know, that's a difficult question. Because at this point, it's really not about the money anymore. It's not about the status. It's about having fun. So if it's fun, it's great.

### AU: Someone should do a Highway To Hell Part 2.

SJ: Well, I keep saying that the film industry is a young person's job. When you're young, you can have very sharp pointed teeth, and I'm too old for that shit. You're supposed to have fun. It's all supposed to be fun.

### AU: Is it just a friendly rivalry between you and Tom Savini?

SJ: Yes, Tom and I love each other. I love him to death. I went out to Tom Savini's Special Make-Up Effects school for almost a year and I taught a filmmaking class and it was so much fun. I got my cat, Snoop, out of the deal. So no, me and Tom have no problems. But Stan Winston and I were mortal enemies when he was alive. Now I like to think that I have forgiven Stan for all this misadventures in business when he stole job after job and design after design from me because Stan's son Matt Winston is making up for it with the Stan Winston School of Character Effects and being very sweet to me. So, you know, there's no room when you get to be almost 62 for anger in your life anymore. I don't have the energy to get mad. I used to get so mad. I used to throw director's chairs at people on set. I used to get so angry, but I'm just done with being angry.

### AU: So it seems to me you've gotten to work with every Special FX person that inspired you and all these wicked directors throughout your career, is there any regrets at all of this crazy life you've had?

SJ: I should never have sold my real estate and I never should have started smoking.

### AU: Parting words for Canadians gore fans?

SJ: Well, I love Canada even though those bastards in Montreal put me in jail for no good goddamn reason.

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## Ross Rebagliati Still Going For Gold – Part 4

Interview by Ira "Irocker" Hunter and Brydon "Panda Face" Parker

This is the fourth and final part of our epic interview with Olympic gold medal snowboarder and cannabis activist/entrepreneur Ross Rebagliati.

### Absolute Underground: How did you break through the fear of launching big airs?

Ross Rebagliati: Well, I ended up just racing and so we weren't really jumping very much once I started doing that, but you know, I competed in World Cup Halfpipe before I specialized in Alpine and I think '92 was my last year on the World Cup Halfpipe, like I competed against Shaun Palmer and all the big names at the US Open. But I found that the judging was based on who the names were and what they were riding and promoting. And

everyone knew that was by design. So I gravitated towards the racing just because of that, you know, just to beat the clock. And I had ski race background, so it gave me that advantage.

**AU: Was Shaun White around during your time?**

RR: Yeah, he came in at the end of my career, and he was really young. We called him Mini Shred.

**AU: Do you have an opinion on the controversial Jumbo Glacier Resort they want to built near Invermere, BC?**

RR: They were trying to build it but the First Nations are blocking it and they didn't really consult properly with the First Nations. But in my opinion I think the First Nations should develop it for themselves though, as a First Nations operation, and turn it into a world class ski resort but with them operating it themselves.

**AU: What country has the best ski culture and après-ski scene?**

RR: I enjoy being in Switzerland. But Italy has a great après. So do all those Tyrolean and Bavarian countries like Austria and Germany. In general Europe has the best ski scene, I think.

**AU: They know how to do it right. I remember**



# POWDER SEEKERS

**we went to Austria and it was just all these Schnapps bars and they were lighting the tables on fire.**

RR: Yeah, they have these Seagloos, these plexiglass bars that should fit like 20 people, but there's like 100 people in these little plexiglass domes that look like igloos, but you can see through them. So you have 100 people in these, like it's smaller than a normal sized living room, basically all drinking and smoking cigarettes. And those are everywhere in Austria, like at the bottom of the ski resort and at the top.

**AU: How many kids do you have and have you introduced them to winter sports as well?**

RR: I have three kids, and they're all wicked skiers and snowboarders.

**AU: Any advice for someone trying to become a professional snowboarder and get sponsors?**

RR: I think you have to be good at social media these days. You have to be on Instagram for sure. You really have to work for who's supplying you with gear and you're gonna have to maybe just settle for a discount until you can prove that you're getting some traction on your social media accounts. Then you have to get yourself somehow to these contests. And no matter what your results are, as long as you do a good social media story about it and of course include all those sponsors that helped you get there. That's all you can really do. And then you better be good. Because otherwise you're just wasting your time.

**AU: Anything else to promote? I know you mentioned the Ross' Gold 2.0. But I don't know if you can mention anything yet?**

RR: Yeah, we can talk about the whole thing. Let me run it down. We have a new LP (Licensed Producer) partner called Oakum Cannabis out of Kelowna, BC. So effectively, Ross' Gold is now fully licensed.

**AU: So it will be a brand that you we'll see in stores across Canada?**

RR: Yeah, it's either gonna be the Ross' Gold brand or a brand like RG select or RG premium. Right away we're gonna have Ross' Gold premium pre-rolls. We also have a new product coming on the market that nobody else has. It's awesome. It's pre-ground weed, man. So you don't have to grind it. You just have a cool pouch that seals up with a humidor

pack in there. It's premium milled bud too it's full on beauty buds. Aside from that we've got Ross Gold Full Spectrum vape cartridges and vape pens coming out. That's just the beginning and we're going to be including of course, edibles and topicals.

**AU: I like your idea because I had a similar idea because during COVID I was like, they need to have a company called U-Lick. It's everything you need to roll a joint but you lick it yourself because you don't want someone else licking your joint in a global pandemic.**



RR: That's funny, that's good. I like that. So yeah, that's like the main guts of what we're doing but then we have all the grow gear. Ross Gold LED lights by Eco Growtech are coming. We're going to be bringing in Ross Gold nutrients, the genetics, and the grow medium for the complete system. The full package has to be used to grow the proprietary flower.

**AU: Anything else we should know about you? Any strange hobbies?**

RR: I'm a big road biker. I'm a big auto racer fan and and love racing cars. I have a dirt bike and love to race in the Baja1000 and promote my companies through that. Kite sailing. I'm pretty much into all the sports. Surfing, of course. I'm a dad of three kids. I'm going to be 50 next week. My dog Bella is a Corso. I'm a big dog guy, a dog whisperer. I'm a whisperer and I like cooking.

**AU: Final words of**

**wisdom?**

RR: I would say Go Big Or Go Home.

**www.ross-gold.com**

**Instagram: rossrebagliati98**





## Corpsegrinder Vaguely Human

Interview by Erik The Cannibal and  
Ira "Gore Obsessed" Hunter

Transcribed by Sheldon  
"Bloodthirst" Byer

Cannibal Corpse vocalist George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher announces self-titled solo album, set to be released through Perseverance Music Group.

After debuting on the worldwide charts earlier this year with Cannibal Corpse's critically acclaimed *Violence Unimagined*, Corpsegrinder is back with a solo full-length! Set to be one of the heaviest albums of 2022, Corpsegrinder is chock-full of death metal, hardcore, and thrash, plus Corpsegrinder's signature guttural vocals.

**AU: Who are we zooming with today?**

GCF: George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher, vocalist of Cannibal Corpse.

**AU: Hey Corpsegrinder, how are you today?**

GCF: Today's been out of control. I'm sitting at home for interviews, signing pre-order CDs, and going over lyric videos. I can tell you this solo "Corpsegrinder" record is gonna be awesome.

**AU: How've you been surviving the end times?**

GCF: I'm doing this solo record. We did the last Cannibal Corpse record *Violence Unimagined* and then not too long after that I recorded the vocals for the Corpsegrinder record. Spending time with the family, playing video games, same old shit.

**AU: How did you first get into heavy music?**

GCF: Hearing Black Sabbath the first time got me into metal. From there, I just wanted it to be heavier and faster. Fortunately I grew up in the era of Twisted Sister, Judas Priest, Slayer Venom, Possessed, Mercyful Fate, Celtic Frost. The heavier stuff. Then of course all the death metal stuff.

**AU: So you were in a band called Corpsegrinder? Is that how you got the name?**

GCF: That was my first band in Baltimore, Maryland. When I met Lee Harrison we went down to Florida, and we put together Monstrosity, he started calling me the "Corpsegrinder." It's taken from a Death song which I believe is taken from a movie called *The Corpse Grinders*.

**AU: I've seen *The Corpse Grinders* movie.**

GCF: I used to have a shirt from that movie. Then we played a show in Hungary. It was just such a killer show and so hot. After the show, I just took it off and threw it into the crowd like an idiot.

**AU: How'd you end up joining Cannibal Corpse?**

GCF: They were having issues with Chris (Barnes), I got a call and came down. That was pretty much it. We started recording *Vile*. When I got in the band, they wanted someone to be able to sing faster and enunciate better.

**AU: What can you tell us about the newest Cannibal Corpse album *Violence Unimagined*?**

GCF: Well, it's Death Metal first and foremost. It's fast and the music is intense, as are the lyrics and vocals. This is one of the most successful albums we've ever had. It was awesome, because everyone put a lot of effort into it.

**AU: Any standout tracks?**

GCF: "Inhumane Harvest" was the video track and that got a really big response.

**AU: Any secret to creating such brutal songs?**

GCF: I don't think any lyrics or titles have been pulled from actual horror movies. They're just a lot of inspiration internally after doing it for so long.

**AU:**

**Maybe when you're playing video games or watching a horror movie, you see something and are like, "Eye pierced with jagged wood!"**

GCF: It's just pulling inspiration from a lot of different sources. For the people who've always been out to get us, it's not because we're sadistic murderers or anything. It's just a love for horror. The lyrics and the music should fit together. We feel like not singing about religion or politics. We'd rather do something that we're more interested in, like horror movies. The lyrics and the music I think go hand in hand when it comes to that.

**AU: Did Vince Locke do the album artwork again? Are you a fan of his *Deadworld* comics?**

GCF: Yes. I believe the inspiration to get him to do the covers in the first place came from us just reading about *Deadworld*.

**AU: Do you still read comic and collect toys?**

GCF: I have Conan the Barbarian action figures, Ghost Rider. I grew up reading comic books. You could say I'm a big kid.

**AU: Were you the inspiration for Nathan Explosion from *Metalocalypse*?**

GCF: I did voices for a few different characters. Nathan Explosion is a mix of me and Conan the Barbarian. I think it's safe to say that I'm

one of the inspirations for him but I didn't do his voice. I was the Metal Masked Assassin, that's the recurring role that I had.

**AU: With Covid-19 does it give you some ideas for the band? Disease, social control?**

GCF: We've had songs about disease. Social control like I said, we're not into politics, religion, or any issues like that. We just sing about bashing the shit out of people or zombie apocalypses.

**AU: You guys have teamed up with Erik Rutan on guitars. He's been in a lot of amazing bands and produced Cannibal Corpse records in the past. What does he bring to the band?**

GCF: We recorded so many records with him, he was already like a sixth member and he played the four tours that he did with us - he's just savage live. He's brutal and he's one of the best guitar players out there. He played with Morbid Angel. He brings everything to the table, super positivity, super passion and aggression. Total package.

**AU: Did you take on a new hobby or start making a new food item since Covid started?**

GCF: My wife and I and our oldest daughter, we started doing Weight Watchers. I was like 309 pounds and I decided, "I need to get this under control." I did it for a month and when we played in Vegas and I could feel the difference on stage.

I'm down probably 35 pounds now. I'm not getting any younger. I'll be 52 this year.

**AU: Ever done a Heavy Metal workout video about building up your neck muscles?**

GCF: All you gotta do is go on YouTube, find anybody posting videos of me headbanging, that's all it is. I've always done the counter clockwise. I might have done the other clockwise years ago. I do a couple of forward headbangs. I don't know if there's much technique. When it comes to headbanging, one of the earliest versions of that was Ozzy nodding his head in the "Paranoid" video. That's not like what headbanging is today. The first guy I remember doing headspins was Blackie Lawless in W.A.S.P.

**AU: Ever had a neck injury?**

GCF: Never anything painful. Luckily never had any real neck injuries or had to have surgery.

**AU: Is that why Slayer's Tom Araya retired?**

GCF: I know that bummed him out because of all the surgeries he had. That's the thing, you don't realize how much you have going in life until something is taken from you. I wouldn't know how I would react if I couldn't headbang anymore. I would be extremely distressed. My voice and my neck, they're kind of one entity. I can tell you right now what inspired me - and I never really usually never talk about this - but Tom Araya, watching him live. He did a side to side. We call it the figure eight because his hair went this way and that way. It was like the Infinity sign. That really got me into wanting to headbang. I just morphed it into going full circle.

**AU: We heard Cannibal played the Gathering Of The Juggalos with Insane Clown Posse?**

GCF: It was wild man. They had people in a shopping cart in the mosh pit. I've never seen anything like that.

**AU: What was it like working with Dee Snider on his song "Time To Choose"?**

GCF: Amazing. He's one of the people that's the reason I'm here. When he wanted me to do it, I wasn't sure how it was gonna work. How was it gonna sound, his voice with mine? He's a legend in Heavy Metal and I'm just a Death Metal guy. But it worked! The people's reaction was great. It was a lot of fun and an honor.

**AU: Advice for Death Metal bands coming up?**

GCF: Make your own path and try to improve on your instrument. Death Metal vocals are kind of the fifth instrument in the band. Try to come up with something that's original and interesting. Practice your ass off and don't let anybody tell you that you can't do it. If you start believing the naysayers then you might as well just give up.

**AU: Is Cannibal Corpse still on Metal Blade?**

GCF: Yeah! We've been there since the beginning.



**AU: Who's releasing the Corpsegrinder album?**  
GCF: It's out February 25th on Perseverance Music Group. It's Jamey Jasta from Hatebreed's label.

**AU: Did Metal Blade Records just re-release a bunch of Cannibal Corpse records?**

GCF: Yeah, there's a bunch of vinyl that has come out again recently.

**AU: Do you ever attend comic book conventions to do autograph signings?**

GCF: I did one autograph signing at a comic convention. I went to another one and met Lou Ferrigno, which was

amazing.

**AU: Is Corpsegrinder a romantic at heart?**

GCF: Well, there was a meme with me that someone came out with, which I'm very fond of, that said "No Valentine's This Year? Maybe Neck's Year." I have a wife, two kids. So I do love, I don't just walk around hating everyone.

**AU: What is the secret of your successful relationship with your wife?**

GCF: Just find someone who makes you laugh. We've been together 33 years. She's been with me before I was ever in my first band. She's stood by me through everything that's happened over the course of my career, like when I made the decision to join Cannibal Corpse, or when I wanted to release this solo album. All the other records I put out like *Paths of Possession*, *Voodoo Gods*, *Serpentine Dominion*. She's stuck by me no matter and I can never thank her enough.

**AU: Tell us about the toys you donate.**

GCF: When we would tour, you go to truck stops on days off and you go into Wal-Mart, they have claw machines and I would win the toys. I put them in a trash bag and would add some other toys that we won at various theme parks around here. Then we would donate them to St. Jude Children's Hospital. I don't mind giving back and helping people out. That's what makes me happy. And if you put a smile on someone's face, and make their day a little better, I would like to think you make your own day better as well.

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

GCF: Hopefully somewhere in the near future we can get back to Canada and play with Cannibal Corpse. I also fully intend to do some tours for this Corpsegrinder record. Thanks for the support. Canada has always been amazing for us. Every time we play the crowds are awesome. Hope to see everyone out there soon!

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

[instagram.com/georgecorpsegrinder](https://www.instagram.com/georgecorpsegrinder)

[cannibalcorpse.net](http://cannibalcorpse.net)

[martyrstore.net](http://martyrstore.net)

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

# CONCERT VENUE AND BAR

## DOWNTOWN MONTREAL

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## Futhark Records

Interview by AU Editorial

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

CN: I am Claus Nader, the owner, sole proprietor and employee of Futhark Records in East York (Toronto), Ontario. I am usually remembered for my sardonic wit and Germanic pragmatism.

**AU: Tell us about your business, Futhark Records. Where, how, when, why did you start it up?**

CN: My shop is located in the East end of Toronto, in East York, at a busy and cool section of the Danforth between Greenwood and Coxwell subway station. I opened the shop on Devil's Night, October 30th 2021.

I have been a record collector since my teens and opening a record shop has been on the radar for decades. One thing that has always stuck with me is heavy music so it feels natural to extend this appreciation into something more professional – a brick and mortar store dealing in all genres of metal. I am nostalgic about record collecting hence this is a vinyl only shop, with the exception

of a selection of music cassettes. I felt that the metal community is underserved with regards to metal on vinyl in Toronto. We have some great record shops in the city, but their metal sections are somewhat neglected. I am not engaging in any e-commerce as so this whole enterprise is pretty old school.

When I still lived in Germany back in the mid/late 80s and early 90s I used to frequent a record shop that stubbornly stuck with vinyl even though everyone bought CDs. I dropped a good load of cash there every week. When I opened my shop, I kept thinking about that store and decided to assume the same attitude. I do what I want to do. My shop, my rules. Folks coming into my store are usually pretty stoked to have something like that in the city and that I offer an alternative to online purchasing.

**FUTHARK RECORDS**  
- METAL ON VINYL -



**AU: What makes your business unique and what does the name Futhark mean?**

CN: My shop is unique because it fills a niche in the overall record store market in the GTA and beyond. At the moment, I have about 1000 titles/copies on 450 square feet so the experience is intimate. There is always a good record on. I typically engage with my customers through conversation. My inventory is organized according to record label with the artists on their roster in alphabetical order. Most first customers are surprised by that but then see the advantage of it: you get to see more stuff because you have to dig more.

I find too much categorization takes away from the experience. I have my personal stash behind the counter and there is always a good record on the deck.

Finding a store name is a pain in the ass. There are so many criteria: it has to sound METAL because that's what I am selling. It has to be unique because I have to license it and so on. It has to be a name that has some kind of meaning to me. It has to be a name that can be displayed at my

store front without causing serious trauma in small children. It has to be original. And so on.

Futhark refers to the first six runes in the Runic "alphabet" called the Elder Futhark, a writing system used in early medieval Northern Germany and Scandinavia. Since I am particularly fond of metal bands coming from that part of the world the name made sense to me. I am a trained and published ancient historian so of course it had to be something academic, haha.

**AU: What sorts of metal genres do you focus on? What are some of your bestselling records?**

CN: I carry everything from straight up to very filthy: traditional Heavy Metal, Death Metal, Black Metal, Doom Metal and all their subgenres. I have one German label in the shop that features electronic music. That section doesn't draw a lot of attention, haha. I just added a small Punk and Hardcore section as well as a consignment section for used vinyl. I have a selection of books and magazines. I had some cool tote bags made that fit about 10 records. They are made in Canada. I also carry vinyl storage accessories and have a T-Shirt line all made locally or in Canada.

My bestselling records were Amenra's *De Doorn*, Iron Age's re-release of *The Sleeping Eye*, Cerebral Rot's *Excretion of Mortality*, Black Sabbath's *Live in Montreaux 1972* as well as a whole bunch of other killer 2021 releases.

**AU: Have you done any special events at your store like band signings? Any upcoming events planned?**

CN: No events yet. I am planning to have some brief and intense in-store or in-front-of-store shows, new release parties and record signing for local bands and guest speakers. Of course, weather and the public health situation play a role here and determine when this will take place.

**AU: What's the current state of the Toronto Metal scene? Who are some of the best local metal bands and venues?**

CN: The Toronto (and surroundings) scene is rich and bountiful. There are some awesome bands from back in the day like Slaughter, Sacrifice, Razor, Annihilator and Anvil as well as some more current bands like Tomb Mold, Blood Ceremony, Volur, Nadja. This just names a few.

Toronto is the fourth largest city in North America and we always have a great live show attendance whenever a metal band hits the stage. Sadly, the pandemic has cost us smaller venues like the Coalition in Kensington Market. We do have Lee's Palace, the Phoenix Theatre, Velvet Underground, the Opera House, Hard Luck Bar and a couple more. Hopefully, they can soon go back to regular booking so that we can go out and see shows again. My empathy goes out to venues and promoters who are having a really rough time right now.

**AU: Do you help local metal bands by carrying**

**and selling their records in your shop, if so, why do you think that is important?**



CN: I am a big fan of shopping local and supporting small businesses. This stance carries over to supporting artists and local artists and labels in particular. All parts of the metal community such as bands, labels, concert-goers and my customers are interconnected and we help each other out. I have many titles in the shop by Toronto and Canadian bands. I try to support these bands by either buying their releases directly from them or through their Bandcamp site or through their label, whatever works best. The more direct my purchase the more the artist gets to keep and can go on practicing their craft. I am also thinking that I want to support local bands with events at my shop and perhaps even release albums for them. I have a bunch of ideas and hopefully I can further develop these ideas and help the metal community out.

**AU: Have you learned any valuable lessons over the course of running this business?**

CN: Well, the store has only been open for three months now, but one thing I learned is that I might have to get even more focused with respect to what labels I want to represent in my shop. I have noticed that small labels are much more enthusiastic about getting their releases into my store compared to bigger (and more commercialized) labels. Besides my academic career as a University instructor, I have always worked in retail. I have a college degree in retail management so I am quite familiar with running a store. Nevertheless, once you run your own show you see things quite a bit different. I learned quite a bit about the music industry over the last few years when I started researching for my store. The most important thing I learned, however, is that you can't know everything and that's ok. Learning never stops.

**AU: What are your hopes for the future of the business, do you have any long term goals?**

CN: My hope is that I can run this shop until I retire, hahaha. I am in my late 50s now and if I can do this for the next 15 years I am golden.

**AU: What should people know that they don't already? Anything else to promote?**

CN: Most people coming to my shop are very knowledgeable about the subject matter. So, there is not too much to add from my end.

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

CN: Just Giv'er. Always. Don't hesitate. And stay Metal.

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



S: I personally really enjoy doing color work. Cartoon or video game characters are my absolute favorite. I really enjoy doing cover ups/ fixups. I've actually won awards in both color and cover up categories over the years. Definitely my strengths. That being said, I do tattoo a lot of black and grey.

**AU: Where did you apprentice?**

S: I apprenticed in Winnipeg, Manitoba with Iko Lucic from Corner Tattoo. We were a struggling shop back then and though he was fairly new taught me everything he knew and we grew together as friends and

wildlife but is no stranger to color.

**AU: What's the craziest tattoo you've ever been asked for?**



S: I've been pretty fortunate. I haven't been asked for any really crazy tattoos. The funny thing is the stranger the idea, the more fun it is to execute.

**AU: Any tattoos you've always wanted to do?**



S: For most of my career, I have been dying to do an entire super Mario/ NES sleeve, And I've recently had the chance to start one.

**AU: Do you think tattoos need to have meaning?**

S: I feel people think they need to have a meaning that way it's more socially acceptable I suppose. But generally after the first couple the art gets addicting.

**AU: What is the best thing about the shop?**

S: I'd have to say I am just proud of the fact I have a shop. I've worked really hard to get it. I've collected every artifact and antique, autograph or musical/movie memorabilia, it's kind of a scrapbook of my life that I enjoy sharing with people. Everything has an interesting story. Just ask.

**AU: What tunes are you playing at the shop these days?**

S: Heavy metal and hard and classic rock is what I generally play while I'm tattooing. I try to somewhat be respectful, and gauge my audience before I start playing screamo.

My favourite is always been the Black Dahlia murder, Whitechapel, Despised Icon, lots of Maiden, Scorpions, and good old '90s alternative.

**AU: What is the best thing about being a tattooer?**

S: I find my job very rewarding, I help people with all kinds of things from mental health issues, self harm scars, or stretch marks which result in self-esteem issues, people joke around that I'm their therapist, but in actuality I kinda am.. It's important to me to build a rapport with my



clients so they feel comfortable enough to talk to me and come back after all. Tattoos are an intimate process.

**AU: Where can we find you online?**

S: You can find us on our Facebook page, biomorphs tattoo or via Instagram. @biomorphstattoo

And I have a personal portfolio

-@SillyBilligoat

-@candie.mckenzie.tattoos

Life is brilliant everyone and everything has a story, and this is the perfect place to tell yours!

## Biomorphs Tattoo

**Absolute Underground: Tell us about yourself!**

S: Hey everyone, I'm SylviaSin! Owner and artist at Biomorphs Tattoo.

**AU: How long have you been tattooing?**

S: I've been an artist for about 17 years and I got started by accident. I've been drawing my whole

life and a friend of mine gave me the opportunity to try tattooing with a homemade tattoo machine... I would never encourage this, but we all have to start somewhere.

**AU: Tell us about Biomorphs**

S: Biomorphs Tattoo is a true little shop of horrors! It's heavy metal/ rock, horror movie inspired atmosphere is fun for everyone to come check out! Located on 33rd Street in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

It's been open for 6 years and thriving. We are a busy shop with only two female artists. Myself, Sylvia Turcotte, and Candie Mckenzie. We each have our preferences but are quite capable of accommodating the versatility of our clients.

**AU: What styles do you specialize in?**



artists.

**AU: What was your first tattoo?**

S: First tattoo I ever got was my lower back, a bunch of flowers. I didn't really want a tattoo, didn't really care about it and just chose something on a whim trying to impress my friends. Funny thing was I was in my twenties, haha.

**AU: What was the first tattoo you ever did?**

S: The first tattoo I ever did on anyone was on myself. I've done all my firsts on myself. First outline, first color, first cover up, first texture. My first paying client was a friend's mother who got a tiny Mickey mouse on her ankle and it still looks fantastic.

**AU: What does your other artist specialize in?**

S: Candie McKenzie is amazing at anything black and grey! She really enjoys floral, organic and



**Tattoo**

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**AU: What styles do you specialize in?**



## Dressed to Kill Speed Metal Mania from Beijing

Interview with guitarist Fuwen Yang  
By Ryan Dyer

The 80s are alive in China with the thrash scene taking the lead as a leading subculture in the heavy music community within the country. Thrash bands like Ancestor, Punisher and Explosicum as well as the GNR-styled Los Crasher, are just a few of the bands any retro-minded music fan should look into. Dressed to Kill join their ranks as a first-class speed metal powerhouse, being one of the few who label themselves this style in the country. Formed in 2013, the band's 2019 *Midnight Impulsion* album is a worthy soundtrack to living after midnight, be it in the Beijing hutongs or New York's alleyways. I caught up with guitarist Fuwen Yang to discuss the state of speed metal in China.

**Absolute Underground: In China, thrash is a semi-large genre, but Dressed to Kill chose to play the slightly different style of speed metal.**

### What led to this decision?

FY: Yeah. That's right. Our thrash fellows have done pretty well in the last few years. Not only has the Chinese metal scene got a lot of thrash bands, but also quite many thrash metal fans. I think it means something in the history of the Chinese metal scene for it being the first ever nationwide fan base in one genre.

Although most of us are also associated with this scene, Dressed to Kill has had little to do with thrash metal. Years before, when Dressed to Kill started, we covered some Scorpions, Guns N' Roses and AC/DC songs. When we began to write original ones, we just wanted to do some melodic rock and metal. The aggressiveness of the music had not played a role until we listened to more punk and thrash metal. It's still not a priority on our list however.



I think our direction right now has something to do with the revival of traditional heavy metal. When we reconsidered the direction and style of Dressed to Kill around 2017, we were really intrigued by bands like Enforcer, Evil Invaders, Stallion, etc. When we put our attention on melodic stuff and the energy from NWOTHM, we got the speed/heavy metal style we are playing right now.

### AU: Do any other bands in the scene label themselves speed metal that you know?

FY: Yes... and no. There is Iron Horse from Nanking who call themselves speed metal, but in fact, their brand of "speed metal" comes from the dictionary of Lemmy Kilmister - it's more or less metal/punk stuff. Other bands are going in a similar direction. I should name Dogslayer from Hangzhou. They play heavy metal and sometimes they go epic, sometimes speedier. There was one band, Ironblade who might have been the first real speed metal band in China and they played quite well. However, they disbanded.

In China, we don't have that many bands calling themselves speed metal. I think in our understanding, speed metal is still not distinctive enough to be totally independent from traditional

heavy metal. Despite the song title "Speed Metal Mania," we are still a heavy metal band and cannot escape heavy metal by any means.

### AU: What type of crowds do you notice come to Dressed to Kill shows? Are they different from fans who come to thrash shows?

FY: I actually really care about who is listening to us. Yes, it is different from die-hard metal shows. We even have some audience members who don't listen to any other metal bands at all. That is a good sign and we really love to have them in front of the stage. We do care about the variety among fans. On one hand, we love to share the stage with thrash, black or death metal bands, because we could often be the most listenable and catchy band; on the other hand, it's also an opportunity for us to play together with indie/pop/rock bands. And for those who don't listen to metal, I think some of our songs can be a good starting point for them to find the energy and catchy melodies together within metal. In this way these fans know and remember us and come to our shows.

### AU: Midnight Impulsion came out in 2019 and has made an impact. I have a friend in Canada, and when I asked him what Chinese band he liked, he said Dressed to Kill. Have you noticed this type of international attention?

FY: Yeah sure, we also got emails and messages from other parts of the world - Europe, USA, Latin America, and Japan. Since releasing the album in 2019, we have posted onto Facebook, YouTube and so on. It was easily found by some metalheads into traditional heavy metal. Unlike NWOBHM in the 80s, the new NWOTHM scene is more internet based. We don't have a cassette tape exchange system right now, but we have some YouTube channels collecting and sharing music in this direction. And fans are also looking for new bands in this way. You can even find some one-man-bands making songs from a bedroom in rural areas of Belize.

### AU: "Rose of Kowloon" has a video, and reminded me of those crazy nights visiting Hong Kong. What experiences do you have

### going there?

FY: Yeah, the song is a fictional story about Hong Kong: A criminal is on the run and attracted by a prostitute by whom he seeks cover. It is not based on any real tale and I don't know if there's any similar story like that, but it just has something to do with the downtown of Hong Kong we've seen in real life and in film. It was 2017 and 2018, and I went to Hong Kong with Tumourboy and Ancestor. Although there are already a lot of people in China, we are still very shocked by the density there. They literally put everything and everyone into every corner, as much as possible. So, I easily imagined that it must be a town full of stories, especially when thinking of the already demolished Kowloon Walled City, which was supposed to be full of myths and criminals.

### AU: Anton Atanasov did the 80s inspired cover art to the album. What advice did you give him?

FY: Well, at first, we thought about something straightforward and easy to remember, like what he did with the Riot City album cover. Since the album's topic is kinda about film noir and cyberpunk stuff, we give Anton some key words like the cars, killer, huge city. And we agreed that there shall be one central spot, which is the killer with a gun. Anton made him look like Kurt Russell escaping from New York.

### AU: What can we expect from your next album?

FY: We'll make the fast songs faster, maybe having some punk/thrash riffs involved. On the other side, we'll also make the melodic songs catchier, with some glam rock fixings. We'll also have some real-life themes in some songs. Actually, we do not really care if it's speed metal or heavy metal or hard rock in the current stage of the band. We may have a decision on it after finishing the album. But I'm sure it'll be more listenable and show more unique elements of Dressed to Kill.

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

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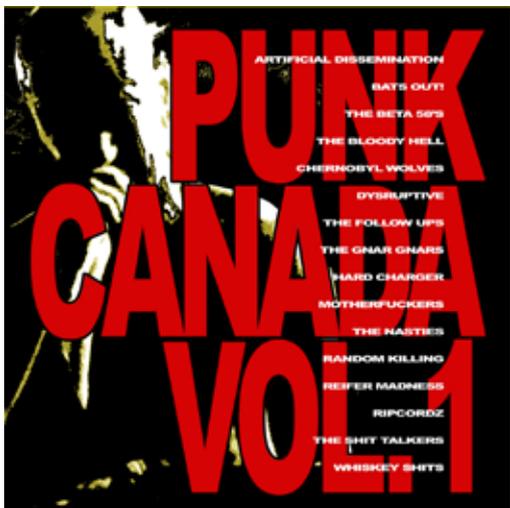


## Punk Canada

By Paul Gott, January 2022

Being one of the (really) old guys in the Canadian punk scene definitely has its advantages. For one thing, I've managed to meet a ton of great people and great bands over the years. About a year ago, I decided to put some of that knowledge and those connections to good use.

I contacted some friends and floated the idea of a compilation album featuring 16 current bands



covering 20th century Canadian punk songs. I was a bit surprised when everyone liked the idea, even if the bands themselves would finance it all.

So *Punk Canada, Volume One* was born.

It didn't take long to sign up 16 bands from 16 cities. From West to East, we have The Gnar Gnars (Victoria), The Shit Talkers (Vancouver), Reifer Madness (Edmonton), Motherfuckers (Calgary), Bats Out! (Regina), Chernobyl Wolves (Winnipeg), Artificial Dissemination (Hamilton), The Nasties (Guelph),



Random Killing (Toronto), The Beta 58's (Kingston), Whiskey Shits (Ottawa), Ripcordz (Montreal), Dysruptive (Quebec City), Hard Charger (Fredericton), The Follow Ups (Moncton), and The Bloody Hell (Halifax).

The bands chose what they would cover and I must say the results are rather brilliant. It's been masterfully mastered by Rene Delamuerte Garcia of The Brains and is currently in production at Clampdown Records in Vancouver.

Yes, it's a very Canadian production.

It's been a long time since I put together a comp (my previous ones happening in 1989 and 1992).

And that's a good thing because I forgot how much damn work was involved.



But the final product is definitely worth all the effort that everyone put into it. There was obviously a lot of love for the material that each band picked, and it comes out in the recordings.

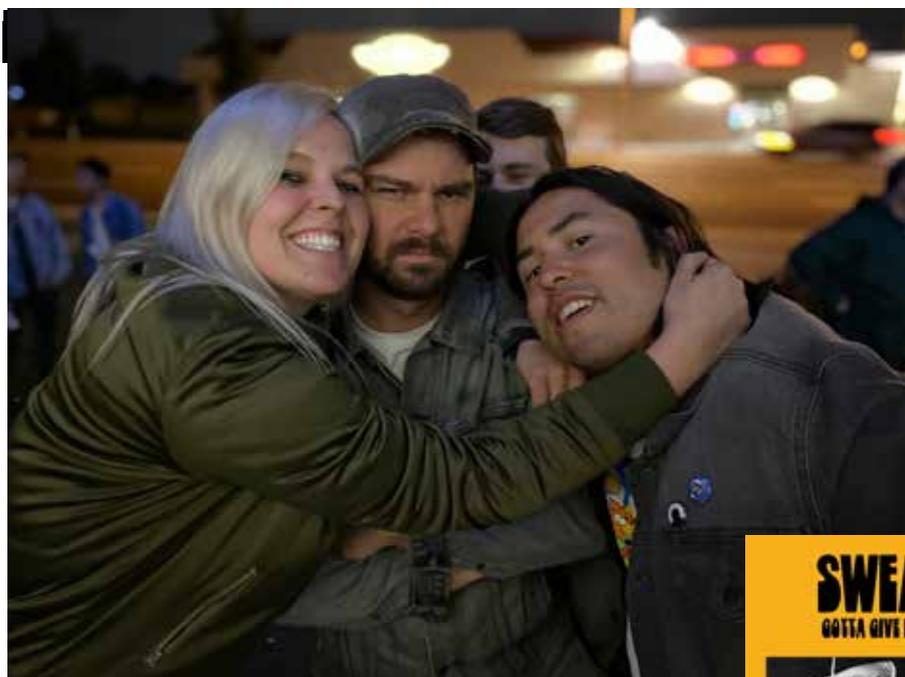
It sounds sonic.

I hope it will help people discover some of the 16 bands that they might not be familiar with, as well as to rediscover the 16 bands being covered.

Look for it in the fall, complete with a 20-page booklet. We're hoping to organize some cooperative launch shows across

the country (as long as the apocalypse isn't still happening). And you can buy it from the band closest to you.

# PIRATES PRESS RECORDS



## SWEAT

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking too and what are you most famous or infamous for?**

S: Tuna and Justin. Justin is a curmudgeon who dabbles in existential nihilism and guitar. Tuna, the muppet of the band.

**AU: Where are you guys from?**

S: In and around the Los Angeles area. Justin is just behind the orange curtain.

**AU: How and when did SWEAT form?**

Justin: To some degree we have played in different permutations throughout the years,

either Justin and Anthony in Dangers since 2013, Anthony and Tuna playing in Dogteeth for a short time, or Tuna filling on a Graf Orlock East Coast weekend on vocals in 2019. As a sorted concept the band started really jamming in early 2019 and did the first recording for the S/T 7" EP that June. The idea is that being in a band with this group of people would be sick and we had a clear idea of what the band should mostly sound like and be, so rip away.

**AU: You guys aren't your average hardcore band, is that fair to say?**

Justin: I think the influences are coming from different places this time around, but all rooted in a hardcore ethos or style of doing things, in terms of DIY, etc. This is important of course, regardless if your band is Prairie Rock or Goregrind I think we have tried to stick to the things we are into and have learned being in other bands that may have been more outwardly sonically hardcore. That being said, it is definitely rocker shit but when we play we play I still feel like the intensity of it is firmly set in the realm of enraged hardcore.

**AU: Can you describe your sound and influences?**

Tuna: A little bit of rock, a little bit of roll,

a whole lot of sass. Like Justin said, at our core we are a hardcore band- but we didn't want to be JUST a hardcore band. Influences definitely come from the more RNR side of hardcore- Annihilation Time, Rival Mob, etc, plus a bit of Danzig, Wipers, Phil Lynott worship, and lots of disco.

**AU: Anthony and Justin, you both played in Dangers previously correct? I remember seeing Dangers play the Victoria Event Centre, in Victoria BC, Canada years ago. Do you guys remember that?**

Justin: Yes, I do, shows there were always cool. Do I remember a dude that had a metalhead battlefest to end all battlefests that was really a cape with patches that went down to the ground and was accompanied by what I assume was a cane sword? If memory serves that was tight, if not I will hold onto that perceived memory anyway. I think this predated Anthony's tenure in Dangers. There was a time when Dangers, Graf Orlock and Ghostlimb played Victoria and Vancouver pretty often. I always liked going up there and made some solid friendships over the years.

**AU: Tuna, what is your involvement exactly in underground wrestling?**

Tuna: I could tell you, but it's way more fun if you go find out.

**AU: Justin, you are a history professor? What area of history is your focus?**

Justin: US, World, Western Civ, US Labor History, US Interventionist Policy, etc. History is tight as hell and another way of communicating that I find pretty akin to the way music operates in my life, at least. Of course, it is presented differently but to me, both are fundamental, especially in this giant shitshow we currently call western industrialized society. I don't see that much difference between screaming a lot and talking about the vapid world we currently inhabit in a lecture hall.

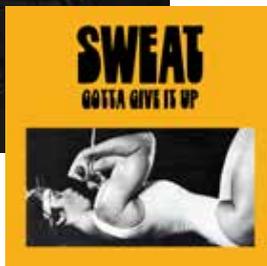
**AU: What are your favourite tracks from your upcoming full-length record, Gotta Give It Up, on Pirates Press Records?**

Justin: I would have to say "Hit and Run" and "Machismo," but if I was forced to make someone listen to one of the tracks under pain of duress and suffering, it would be the last track, "Poor Execution." That one and the flow of the riffs and vocals, everything together really does it.

Tuna: "Machismo" and "Bone to Pick" are my favourites to play live.

**AU: There are randomly inserted flexi disc records for your single in this issue of Absolute Underground Magazine provided by Pirates Press Records. How cool is that? What can you tell us about the song on the flexi?**

Tuna: Pretty siq! The Flexi has the song 'Hit & Run' on it. It's essentially about constantly having to pick yourself up and the mindfuck that can come with that. There's a nod to the boss at the end as well- I found myself briefly obsessed with dancing in the dark for a chunk of time, and it just... worked.



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**INFAMOUS RECORDS**



## Real Sickies Danny It's Not Your Birthday

Interview by Chuck Andrews

**AU: Who are we talking to today and what are you all about?**

B: Hey Champs, nice to be here! This is Ben From Edmonton's Real Sickies. I'm about to tell you about some fun and stupid things.

**AU: What have you guys been up to since you put out your last LP, *Love is for Lovers*, this past summer?**

B: Yeah, time flies when you're having fun. We've been mostly writing and demoing for our next LP (which I don't wanna give away the title just yet).. otherwise just adjusting to life as it comes. It's been pretty nice to focus on writing for a bit that's for sure, but we've still gotta throw some old ones in when we rehearse.

**AU: With the pandemic going on you still managed to play at least a couple shows this past year correct? Did you play more than a couple?**

B: Yeah surprisingly we got a few in, Just in Alberta so far. Hinton- home of the best breakfast, Fort McMurray- pumpkin city, Edmonton- city of champions and Calgary.

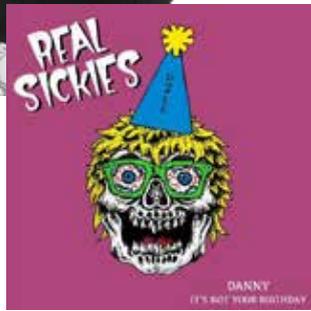
**AU: Can you tell us about the highlights of the gigs you played?**

B: I think the very first show back since everything went down was more than something else. That forgotten feeling of warm sweaty people and moisture in the air. Calgary was fun before the pandemic but the last two shows there were top notch. The last time we were there we met a fan who flew in from the States to see his girlfriend. He didn't know what bands he was going to see that night, he was just along for the ride. We started playing "Communication BreakDown" live and he recognized the song as he had just discovered it and it was on repeat. It was cool to meet someone in that way.

In Fort McMurray we played an outside Skate festival. It was amazing. Tons of kids skateboarding around listening to live bands. It felt a lot more safe covid-wise aside from it being a little chilly and raining. A bunch of kids wanted to sling our merchandise so of course we let them. We "sold out" of stickers that day. We found

a pumpkin patch after the show. Real mess.

Actually the "Real Sickies surprise bag" was a hit at the skate park bbq party. With the bag, we all put something in it that we found laying around and someone in the crowd get's the bag if they got a ticket at our stand. One happy kid I'd say with all his ketchup and mustard packages. We got to play with the Smelters in Hinton, we did have a few more shows



booked with them in BC but with Covid it made sense to hold off. So that show was a highlight in itself. There's still a bit of a panic after shows with worries about causing a major spreader so it takes a few weeks to be able to look back and feel good.

**AU: Does playing live and physically in front of people seem even more important than it did a couple of years ago?**

B: Oh big time. After doing a "Live Stream", the in person show was a restart mentally. For the performer and for the audience. As a performer there were times I felt I needed to say, "Hey keep a distance from each other," but I knew I couldn't control the positive energetic vibes in the crowd. Everyone was bursting at the seams to enjoy themselves. Important in the sense that it feels like we as music lovers get to connect to a distant romantic feeling of live music. Venues have gone through a lot obviously and had to put in a lot of work to make live shows happen. It's important to support the arts community in general and when people feel safe they really want to support. People are hungry.

**AU: Do you have any tours booked for 2022?**

B: We do have a western Canadian tour scheduled for this upcoming march with the Real Mckenzie's. It's been two years since we had to cut that tour short so it will be nice to try for it again. That tour will bring us from Vancouver Island to Winnipeg and the places in-between. If the world's not on fire at that time. We also have some other exciting news about live shows that we hope to be announcing soon. You'll have to keep checking back about that.

**AU: You guys have a new EP coming out on Stomp Records soon called *Danny It's Not Your Birthday*. It started out as you guys being paid to write a song for a young man's birthday correct?**

Yeah, so we got this message online asking if we wrote "original Music." I thought it was funny for someone to follow us and ask us that but curiosity made me look further into the message. This guy wanted a birthday song written for kids' birthday, which was on December 19th.

I liked the idea and thought it would be fun. We will only write not this kid's birthday song but a song for all of his birthdays. That's the idea right? I mean this guy wanted to pay us \$500 to write a song for a six year old. That's way too much for a 6 year old.. but hey, support the arts in a time of need. I asked for some details and got a very in depth detailed list about this kid. The favorite cartoon cat boy from pj Masks (thought I'd get hacked just watching cartoons on YouTube for reference lol). His best friend, her dog... oh and throw in spider man cause I'll carry him around and he pretends he's shooting webs. The simple stuff. The song writes itself. I got a message saying there was a problem with his account as his secretary accidentally took out too much money and they wouldn't be able to send us cash till after the 19th of December. I was playing darts with some pals and told them this. They thought this guy just wanted a free song or something. I felt the song was for Danny and not his deadbeat dad who is stealing from his company to pay for his kids song. But it still didn't feel right. The song was written and it was fun.

The next morning I dived a bit more into my gut feelings and searched for "original birthday song scam. After a bit of digging I started finding the same kinda scam happening to a few people in the states and evening getting closer to home in Edmonton and some in Ontario as of recently.

The scam is always the same, which is normal. But this scam targets mostly singer songwriters and now bands. Someone asks for a song and gives a big heartfelt story. They over deposit money and when you send the remainder their cheque bounces. Then you are left with the debt of what you sent them plus the bank fees. It's crazy to me. And around Christmas too.

**AU: To what extent did you drag the scammer along and waste his time once you guys realized what was up?**

B: Once we caught on we revamp the song a bit. I changed the lyrics and started asking which versions he liked more. I'd say it was a few weeks maybe from start to end. Things kinda dropped off when we sent him the email address to send payment whamvamthankyouscam@scammail.scam. I mentioned to him it would be easier for us to keep track if sent to our bands account since there is more money in there. Jokes on him we don't have a bank account.

It was a few days after that until I got a reply. But I asked when to expect the deposit and they replied to me right away asking for the email again.

**AU: So your new EP will now serve as a warning to any bands that are naive of this?**

B: Yeah , hopefully I mean it sounds stupid and obvious but people have fallen for this sadly. It only sounds stupid and obvious after someone becomes aware of it. I'd like to say it won't happen again but we did recently get another message asking if we wrote originals.. when I responded that we do and if they needed a birthday song ..they never got back.

**AU: What are some of the differences between the original song you were working on and the final version you are actually**

# PURE PUNK

releasing?

B: A few minor things, we recorded both versions of it actually. We put different bells and whistles on them and gave each one its own spice. It's the same song really but with a different story. It's not like you get to do that all the time as a band.

There are three songs on this EP. Not too sure what the single is really... Kind of a pin the tail on the donkey choice I guess. There's the original pop sensation, "Danny," and then there's "Danny it's not your birthday," The third is just for icing. A birthday song about freeing animals called "Happy Birthday." "Danny" was written first, it was based off the list of information I was provided. It's a fun little bopper really. Then after catching onto the fact his person didn't just want a free song but for me to send them money and pay for it. Scammy was born a.k.a. "Danny it's not your birthday." Scammy tells more of a story to the guardian. It is funny to put them side by side. I think?

**AU: How can people listen to these new tracks?**

B: All three songs will be posted on our bandcamp as well as your streaming platform of choice. We are in the works of doing a music video for one of the songs so that's something to look forward to as well.

**AU: Is there a physical release planned as well?**

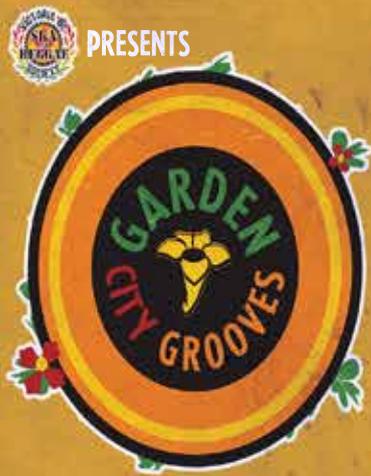
B: I do want to make some handmade birthday cards with downloads so people can give someone a birthday card with music. We still got the cool club stamp kicking around to make them official. Otherwise this is just for fun and to bring awareness to this BIRTHDAY SONG SCAM.

**AU: Final words to Danny the scammer?**

B: Yeah... I still don't see your transfer... Can you resend it to the correct email please?

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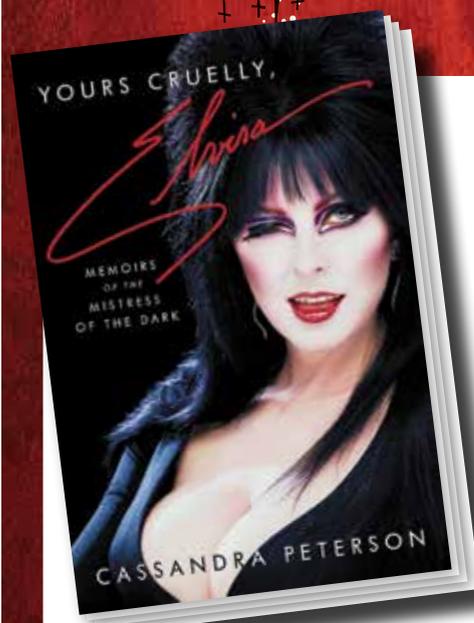
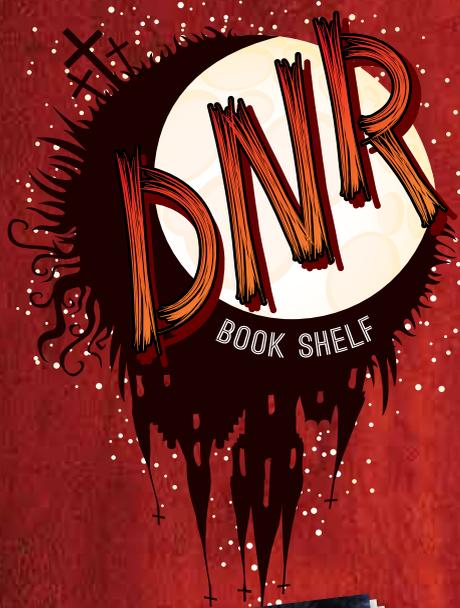
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### YOURS CRUELLY, ELVIRA: Memoirs of the Mistress of the Dark

Cassandra Peterson  
Hachette Books  
September 21st 2021

Cassandra Peterson is not your ordinary girl from Kansas. When her sisters would play with dolls, she was more into horror movies. She wasn't interested in being normal, and it helped her become the host of a local Los Angeles Television station show, *Movie Macabre*, as Elvira, a character inspired by Vampira and perhaps also Lily from *The Munsters*. Instead of copying from them, she made the role all her own. This Queen of Halloween is known for terrible puns and saying something about the movie of the week which shows her clear love for the genre.

Peterson was barely out of her teens when she moved to Vegas and was soon with the elite. Performers from that strip, namely Elvis, gave her advice on how to succeed.

From there, the rest is history, and it's nicely recounted in the memoir, *Yours Cruelly, Elvira*. Peterson recounts her four decades of working the floor, singing her heart out and detailing the ins and outs of fame. Instead, it's about that stage persona—a blend of being a hill valley dork and temptress—which became a target of adulation and victimisation. She eventually turned it around. Her sassiness helped make her loved worldwide. It was partially honed after many years of improv and performing in a band. She acknowledges making mistakes and 'fesses up to it. One

of them included nude pictures taken by a so-called photographer—and she couldn't do a darn thing about it.

This book wastes no time dishing out the dirt. She's candidly open to tell all and isn't afraid of saying she had regrets. This autobiography is very telling. The only warning is to be prepared to experience the pain, as only Peterson can tell it.

Ed Sum



### HORRORGASM

Nikki Noir  
Blood Bound Books  
September 24th 2021

Nikki Noir is awesome. She lives and breathes extreme horror, erotica and bizzaro, doing tons of reviews on all kinds of books under those umbrellas for years... meaning - the woman knows her shit.

Well, *HorrorGasm* is one of those. Fucking great. A teeny little book she's calling a 'Petite Mort' that you can crank out in one sitting should you have the time and the balls. Kind of a modern erotic thriller with some cringe worthy bits to it - especially if you have a penis.

Allendy Garcia a.k.a. 'Molly Massacre' and her partner in crime, Selena, run a type of independent OnlyFans that is horror themed, there is also the asshole boyfriend, Chad. They have a plan to make quick easy cash and ditch him for good. Would a plan ever go smoothly in a horror book? Never! It unravels pretty quickly, turning into a total clusterfuck. I can't really give away too much beyond that as the book is short, so if you are looking for something quick, fun and totally fucked to read on a flight or something, this would do it. Excellent job by Noir!

Demonika



ALEISTER CROWLEY IN ENGLAND: The Return of the Great Beast  
Tobias Churton  
Inner Traditions  
January 11th 2022

It is more than fair to say that Aleister Crowley is not only one of the great thinkers of the last hundred years but one of the most misunderstood and maligned.

Now, most people reading this review will have heard of Crowley, be it through an Ozzy song (Heavy Metal loves Crowley, though it often gets him wrong) or a book on the Great Beast. But the majority of books on Crowley, be they good or bad, tend to focus on his earlier years. Moreover, by doing this, they miss out on a great deal of Crowley's story.

In *Aleister Crowley In England*, Tobias Churton, the biographer Crowley truly deserves (look at my previous reviews of Churton's books on Hellbound.ca for proof of this), covers Crowley's final fifteen years on this Earth in fascinating and enthralling detail.

At this point in Crowley's life, his myriad travels abroad came to an end. However, as with all of Crowley's Magickal Life, his adventures were far from over! As with Tobias's previous books on *The Great Beast*, his research draws on previously unpublished diaries and letters, and thus is invaluable and without

peer. Here are tales untold before. *Aleister Crowley In England* covers the period from 1932 to Crowley's death in 1947. He begins with Crowley's last minute escape from Nazi Germany and his return to his native England, penniless. Whatever his other skills, Crowley was not fiscally wise! Money (often other peoples') ran like water through his hands. Tobias explores Crowley's work as a secret agent from MI5, his involvement in the war effort in World War 2, and also his Magickal Work, all of which are linked inexorably together.

I enjoyed the story of Crowley's notorious and disastrous, though very entertaining, 1934 trial for libel, which caused his bankruptcy. Likewise we learn of Crowley's connection with the Californian branch of the OTO, and his connection with Father of Rocketry Jack Parsons. Crowley was also in touch with many spiritual leaders, artists and activists.

In many respects Aleister Crowley was born out of time. Our world of mass communication would have enabled him to spread the Gospel of Thelema on a scale he never could have dreamed of. What kind of world would we live in if that had happened? One with more free thinkers and less sheep.

Overall, this book is a fitting companion to Tobias Churton's previous work on Crowley. A fitting end to his chronicles of a man who lived a life less ordinary, who relished every breath he took. This book is essential reading for anyone who would aspire to live their life rather than to simply exist.

Steve Earles



### TOME (JUNIPER #2)

Ross Jeffery  
The Writing Collective  
October 20th 2020

This was a great read. I was a little bit apprehensive to pick this one up after reading Juniper which I didn't exactly love.

This was a really great dark horror story. As they say, the Devil is in the details. And that's one of the things that I loved the most about Ross Jeffery's work here. He does such a great job at lining every scene in the novel that all of the characters, including the prison itself, are fully fleshed out.

Since the novel jumps around from various perspectives, I found the deeper into the story that I got, I didn't need to read who was speaking or whose eyes I was looking out of to know which character it was.

There are not a whole lot of authors that really can add that extra depth to their characters.

Michael Cushing



### DREAMS FOR THE DYING

Adam Light  
Corpus Press  
June 14th 2021

Truthfully, I am pretty fed up with reading horror collections, so sitting down to this one I was not thrilled - but shockingly I found myself totally engrossed and not being able to put it down. Adam Light really hit the majority of these completely out of the park, there was not one turd in the bunch. Playing into my curious nature, he even shared notes at

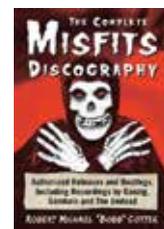
the end of each story which gives you a little insight into his mind set, or the four W's which only added to the whole collection for me.

In this book we see 11 short stories that cover everything from delightful Halloween chillers like 'Tommy Rotten' and 'Trick 'Em All' to the "wtf did I just read?" variety in 'Valley of the Dunes' and 'The Continuance Agency.'

Getting started with a really strong one off the top was 'Taken,' a long-haul trucker doing his lover's bidding, which kept reminding me of *Psycho* for good reason. Lots of good meat and potatoes in the middle with everything from crawling into your own bellybutton (yes, you read that right) to deranged hillbilly children in the woods who may eat you up.

The final nail in the proverbial coffin was 'Panacea,' a woman dying of cancer, her husband trying the last and final hope in mailorder 'cures,' she is of course miraculously cured... but the side effects - well that's the entire deranged story. All in all this collection of Light's work is a good glimpse into his diverse style and I really enjoyed it.

Demonika



### THE COMPLETE MISFITS DISCOGRAPHY:

Authorized Releases and Bootlegs, Including Recordings by Danzig, Samhain and The Undead  
Robert Michael "Bobb" Cotter

McFarland September 6th 2019

I'm very familiar with Bobb's writing as I reviewed some of his books for the excellent *Hellbound.ca* website. Bobb knows his stuff, but also has a great sense of fun, which shines through in his writing. He likes his subjects, but he's not afraid to point out their mis-steps (sorry, couldn't resist!).

Originally Bobb had intended to do an actual biography of The Misfits. On the strength of this informative and entertaining book, it's a great shame he didn't get to do so. However, this book isn't just about the recordings of Danzig and Company, and thus, we learn a lot about the bands as well as the music.

Bobb likes the Graves-era Misfits, as do I, 'Mars Attacks' is a great tune for instance, while he doesn't like the horrendous *Danzig V: Blackaciddevil*, and he's dead right.

With Danzig, you start off with the excellent Rick Rubin produced albums and it gets tired from *Danzig V* on. But *Danzig* is still one of the greatest albums ever, and has one of the great productions. Never underestimate the work Rick Rubin can do with the right artist (compare *Death Magnetic* with *St. Anger* [Metallica's very own *Blackaciddevil*] for proof.)

Elsewhere in the book we find a treasure trove on the Misfits and Samhain, both authorised and bootlegs.

Overall a terrific book, I'd love to see Bobb do a similar book on Metallica, who knows what Cliff Burton-era bootlegs are out there, or Black Sabbath, there must be some great bootlegs from the *Born Again* period. Who knows, probably only God and Bobb! Over to you Bobb. In Bobb we trust!

Steve Earles

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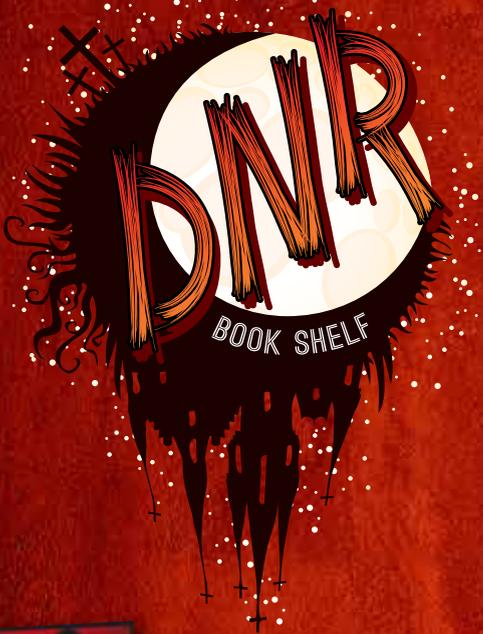
CLIVE BARKER. BOOKS OF BLOOD: VOLUMES ONE TO THREE

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# ELVIRA<sup>®</sup>

## MISTRESS OF THE DARK<sup>™</sup>



**Interview with Cassandra Peterson by Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter**

The woman behind the icon known as Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, the undisputed Queen of Halloween, reveals her full story, filled with intimate bombshells, told by the bombshell herself. So be sure to check out her new book entitled *Yours Cruelly, Elvira: Memoirs of the Mistress of the Dark*.

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

Cassandra Peterson: You're talking to Cassandra Peterson, and I am definitely most



Photo by Pamela Littky

famous and infamous for being Elvira, Mistress of the Dark.

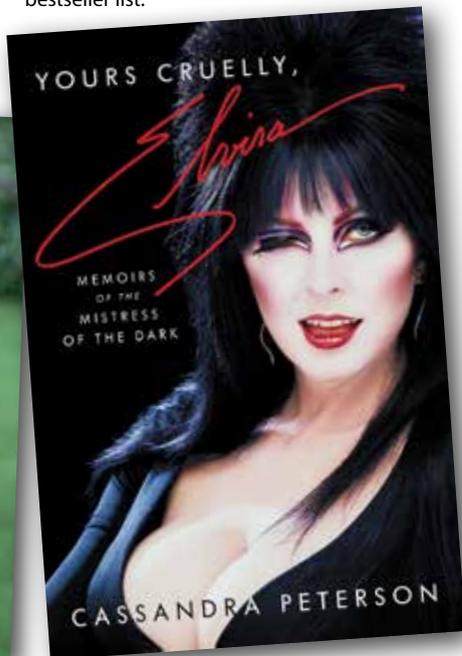
**AU: For people who haven't read the book yet, can we have a brief origin story on the creation of your iconic character Elvira, Mistress of the Dark?**

CP: After being a struggling actress for a decade or so I finally landed a spot on a local TV station in Hollywood, hosting horror movies. I had to come up with some kind of a look and a character. I had previously been in The Groundlings comedy improv group, which one million and one different actors and characters have come out of. So I was more prepared than the others apparently because I got the job. In a very short amount of time the show became the number one show on the station and then I began getting offers to be on every kind of talk show and guest

appearances and showing up at conventions. It just took off from there and here I am 40 years later still doing the same thing.

**AU: Tell us about the book you just wrote, what can readers expect?**

CP: Well, they can expect a pretty damn crazy ride. I think fans will be shocked by some of the things they hear. I think people who don't know the character that well will enjoy the book for other reasons. It's kind of an interesting life story about a woman who starts out living on a farm in Kansas, and makes her way to Hollywood and finally becomes famous. So it's a bizarre journey that I think will hopefully interest a lot of people. It's been doing pretty well so far, on the New York Times bestseller list.



**AU: Was it a cathartic experience to reveal some of these dark secrets?**

CP: Yeah, very, very cathartic. I've never written a book. I've written several screenplays, two of which got made, I've co-written *Mistress of the Dark*, and *Elvira's Haunted Hills*, but I had never written a book. So the process of going through it and talking about my life and about some of the struggles, especially with my mom, who I had a difficult relationship with her whole life was very cathartic. One of the most cathartic things was being able to talk about my relationship I've been in for 19 years, with a woman, which I kept quiet due to the fact that I play a character, and the character of Elvira is a big, straight horn dog. I didn't want to squash anybody's dreams, you know?

**AU: Yeah a lot of people were surprised when you mentioned that you were in a**

**same sex relationship, but I think maybe that you were also surprised when it happened?**

CP: I was very surprised. I mean, I have been straight, you know, my whole life. And when you read my book, you'll see how straight. I sometimes say to people who ask, "Why are you with a woman?" I'll say "Because I ran out of men," I think I went through them all. But yeah, it was very surprising to me. She's very special. She's very androgynous. She has a lot of male energy to her. She was different from any other woman I've ever come across in my life. So that and I was in a very vulnerable place in my life. I had just divorced after 25 years. Divorced my husband, had a young child and I was really having a hard time and I really didn't think I'd ever get into another relationship. I truly believed that was it for me. I'm done. Next thing I knew she was a friend of mine from the previous six years and she came over and after a few months, things got very romantic. Like I said, I think it shocked me more than anybody and it shocked her. Freaked me out completely, I had a hard time with it at the beginning but we were able to work things out.

**AU: What are some career highlights and lowlights you could share?**

CP: Well, there were a lot of lowlights in my personal life before Elvira. A lot of highlights too, a lot of great things. I was kind of a groupie, I met some of my all time favorite bands and then a lot of people in Vegas that were iconic, namely Elvis Presley, who luckily gave me the best advice I've ever gotten from somebody and that was to get the hell out of Las Vegas where I was performing as a showgirl. At the time I believe I was the youngest showgirl in Vegas history, but if I hadn't met Elvis I would now be the oldest showgirl in Las Vegas history. Which would really be a bummer. So yeah, I had some amazing times before I was Elvira but after I was Elvira I really struggled to keep the character going. My ex-husband was my manager and once he was out of the picture, I had a very dark time where I thought Elvira is done, this is over. I also missed some great opportunities, like doing a show for a CBS sitcom and due to a really weird event the show ended up not being picked up. I missed the opportunity to be the voice in *Thriller* with Michael Jackson, Vincent Price got that part. But if anybody could get that, as I mentioned in the book, I would hope it would be Vincent Price because he was my horror icon. Some of the highlights are obviously getting my first movie made, *Elvira: Mistress of the Dark*. It just really is one of the highlights of my life career wise. I loved working with my two writing partners, John Paragon, and Sam Egan to flesh



out the character. Where she came from, why she looks the way she does, who she is, all of those details. I got to utilize some of my comedy chops in the movie and made a movie that I think has made a big impression on a lot of my fans. I hear over and over again from people who say, when I was at a really dark time in my life, that movie cheered me up. It gave me hope.

That seems really crazy, because it's kind of a movie that a lot of people could describe as fluff. But I think it shows a struggle. It kind of mirrors my life in a way too. The struggle of a woman who nothing's happening for and she's getting into situations where you then deny her what she wants. But she keeps going forward and finally accomplishes her dreams. Long answer. Wow.

**AU: When you were a groupie, were you seeking autographs? Or what were you seeking? Because you really defied your virginity through all those years.**

CP: Yeah, I didn't know what I was doing. I love music and it started out, yes, by wanting autographs, then I want your drumstick, I want your guitar picks. That's how I started out. It was like getting close to somebody that was famous. I always wanted to be famous too, or paid attention to or in the limelight. And music was so important to me. I wanted to be somehow involved with it because those days really, women were not playing music. Yes, of course there were female singers, but not in rock and roll so much. So I kind of decided, as I mentioned in the book, that if I couldn't be a rock and roll star, I would be with a rock and roll star. So my escapades started out gathering autographs, then kisses and ended up later... you know... more ;)

# DO NOT RESUSCITATE DO NOT READ

**AU: How did your love of horror movies start?**

CP: I loved horror movies as a kid. It started in about second or third grade. I was taken to see *House on Haunted Hill* starring Vincent Price by my cousin Danny. It was kind of an epiphany for me. I fell in love with that movie. My parents were so pissed at my cousin for taking me to that, but I became really obsessed with it and begged him to take me back to more and I really got into it. Then I somehow found a *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine. I ordered little Aurora model kits out of the back of it and as time went on, I just got more and more into horror and horror collectibles and seeing the movies for my whole life, so the fact that I got this job I really can't say it was a coincidence. I think there were a lot of things that kind of culminated to end me up where I am. Another one was my Mom and Aunt owning a costume shop and me constantly wearing costumes. I ended up in a career where I wear a costume every day, you know? Not many people do that I don't think, unless... I don't know what you're wearing right now.

**and they have a song called "Lose Yourself Completely In The Idle Worship Of Elvira."**

CP: I know the Ripcordz! Yes, I have that song on my computer. They sent it to me a million years ago. I didn't even know they were from Canada.

**AU: Well, the singer Paul Gott will be glad to hear that, he thought there would be no way you'd remember the song.**

CP: I remember it 100%!

**AU: My friend Tank Standing Buffalo is the artist designing your new tiki mugs. What can you tell us about his yet to be released Elvira tiki mugs?**

CP: Awesome, that is so cool. Yeah, I love the tiki mugs. It's a whole different thing for Elvira, but I find that horror collector people, and tiki collector people all fall under the same big pop culture umbrella. My manager is really into tiki collecting, so he was thrilled, and I was thrilled and I really think he did a good job. It's kind of difficult to turn Elvira into a tiki mug, you know?

unfortunately, I can't talk about the details of it. But it is so freakin' super awesome that I'm really blown away. I'll just say it has to do with the book but it is going to be in film or television. I have another project, another film that I did. It's going to be coming out soon and again I can't talk about that. What a bummer right? But I have two kickass projects I'm working on right now and I'm super excited about both.

**AU: You were hosting horror movies on Shudder this Halloween, will that be an annual thing?**

CP: I don't know, I'm really not sure. I mean I love Shudder and I loved doing that show. It was really fun. I'm not really sure how long I'm gonna keep doing the character, it's kind of like going out on top when she still looks the same and everything.

lifetime. I just keep it all, I like to collect it all.

**AU: Who wrote the iconic theme song for the show?**

CP: It was my ex-husband who wrote that song. That was probably the only good thing he did, except our kid. That was a very good thing!

**AU: Do you have input in the Elvira comics written by David Avallone and published by Dynamite?**

CP: Totally, I check in with Dave every single issue. We get together and talk it over. I get all the copy and can tweak it. I get all the art, so I have a lot of control there. I love David Avallone. He just has done the most awesome job. But actually we're thinking right now about maybe doing a graphic novel of the book, which I think would be super fun.

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

CP: Wear a coat and don't forget your rubbers. That's boots, okay? But anyway, I hope to get up to Canada soon, I freakin' love it up there.

*You can find Yours Cruelly, Elvira: Memoirs of the Mistress of the Dark at all cool books stores and online.*



Photo by Aaron Cobbett



**AU: We're still in pajamas here.**

CP: Me too, my pajamas say Queen B, I don't know about yours.

**AU: Would you say you're a romantic?**

CP: I would. Yeah.

**AU: What would it say on Elvira's Tinder profile if she was single?**

CP: Available to all comers. Elvira is pretty ballsy. So the kind of guy she looks for is big, brawny, muscular, macho, but not macho enough to not do everything she tells him to do. That's her kind of guy.

**AU: I know you love the B movies. What is the best worst movie?**

CP: The best worst movie, I have to say, it's so typical, but it really is *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. I mean, it does not get better than that. You know? It's a boring answer. But damn that movie... it's one of those you just have to see to believe. And I don't think there's ever been anything else that bad. There's a lot of bad movies out there, but that one just takes the cake, and then on top of it, to have the director wearing a fuzzy pink angora sweater and heels while he directs it. You know, Ed Wood I mean, it doesn't get better than that.

**AU: There was a punk rock band here in Canada from Montreal called the Ripcordz**

**AU: What are some of the other more interesting Elvira merchandise you'd had? We really enjoy the mousepad and the salt and pepper shakers.**

CP: Well, yeah, I think the salt pepper shakers were a big one. People love that. I don't know if you've seen, but my new favorite thing that just came out is the Elvira Chia Pet. My hair grows green but it looks awesome. Honestly, if you go to elvira.com and I'm going to make a little plug here, I've got a whole catalog right now of stuff at every price range you can imagine. Like the new Elvira Vespa that is made to look like my Macabre Mobile, my '59 T-bird, but you know, also items for Valentine's, and a million, zillion other items. Elvira everything!

**AU: Was there one or two Elvira pinball games?**

CP: Four! Yeah, there are Elvira and the Party Monsters that was the first one and then Scared Stiff. Then Elvira's House of Horrors and most recently they did an upgraded version of that one for my 40th anniversary, so it's a super awesome special one that is freaking awesome. I have one right here in my office.

**AU: What is on the horizon for you? Any new projects?**

CP: I have something coming up and

**AU: What is the secret of your immortality?**

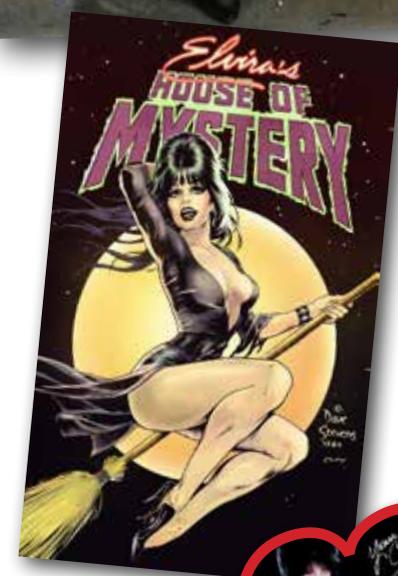
CP: Ah, well, I have yet to find out. If I could say oh, here's this product that you can drink or you can put on your skin. I would be bottling that stuff so fast. But there's actually nothing I can tell people except maybe eating a mainly vegetarian diet and working out like a beast my whole life.

**AU: We were curious, you briefly mentioned in the book that you saw Rick James' wang, how did that happen?**

CP: Oh, yeah, that was so funny. I was working on Don Kirshner's *Rock Concert*, a big 1970s rock and roll TV show, where I was doing makeup and taking photos for all the bands. So I go into a room with Rick James and try to put makeup on him and he just wouldn't stop pulling his pants down. I was just like, "Sit still, keep your pants on I'm trying to put makeup on you. You have to be on in like 10 minutes!" and this guy just wouldn't stop. Mostly I was laughing, and I was just like, "Put that thing back in your pants, I need to put your makeup on!"

**AU: What happened to the iconic red couch from Elvira's Movie Macabre?**

CP: I have it in storage. I have the couch, the candelabra, my Macabre Mobile. I recently had a big auction here in Beverly Hills and sold a lot of my stuff, including my high school diploma and a lot of Elvira things. But I kept a lot of good stuff. You cannot believe how many storage units I have full of stuff from my



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# ELVIRA

## MISTRESS OF THE DARK

### The Cult of Personality

By Vince D'Amato

I've been aware of Elvira, the iconic and seemingly immortal "Mistress of the Dark," since I was a kid in the 80s. Back then, I even remember her being referenced to in a prime-time sitcom of the era, as "That scary lady with the big --"

"--Smile!" the little kid's teenage sister quickly interrupts, to much canned laughter. And even as a kid myself, I got the joke, because even though I'd never seen Elvira on television, I sure as hell was keenly aware of who she was. But what did she do, exactly, that scary lady with the big --? Well, back then, I wasn't entirely sure.

The phrase "The Cult of Personality," while it wasn't officially coined for Elvira, sure as hell seems to fit perfectly on her. I was still a pre-teen when Tim Burton's *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* started showing up on the movie channels in Canada after its theatrical release, and when Cassandra Peterson showed up in Burton's film as a biker two-thirds of the way through, I knew right away who she was, just by her facial features: this was the actress who portrayed Elvira. But hold on a second, she wasn't Elvira in this movie -- this blew my mind a little. Up until that point my young mind hadn't really considered disassociating personalities from the actor who portrayed personalities in the media. Of course, Cassandra Peterson's presence was perfect in Tim Burton's film, because "Pee-Wee" himself was also a personality (alter-ego) portrayed by an actor: Paul Reubens. Here was another actor-personality association I wasn't altogether aware of until Reubens showed up in the original *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* movie a few years later, in a truly funny role as one of the bad-guy vampires (he had the best lines in the entire film). A few years after that, Tim Burton would make one of the best films of the 90s, *Ed Wood*, starring Johnny Depp as the incompetent but utterly charming 1950s/60s filmmaker Edward D. Wood, Jr. This film shed light on Ed Wood's career and personal life like no one had been privy to before (and this of course skyrocketed the popularity of his hopelessly incompetent but

charming films like *Plan 9 from Outer Space*), and herein we get to see that Ed Wood had, in the early part of his Hollywood career, sparked a lengthy friendship with "Vampira", a late-nite TV horror-movie hostess from the 50s. At the end of Burton's film, he tells us that Vampira actually tried to sue Elvira, unsuccessfully, for "stealing her act." The character of Vampira was created and portrayed by actress Maila Nurmi, whose dreams of becoming a successful actress in Hollywood ultimately eluded her (she passed away in 2008 in California and was laid to rest in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery). While we have to give Maila Nurmi credit for creating the campy "Vampira" character, it is ultimately right that she did not win her lawsuit against Elvira, whose witty and sharp humor is actually still incomparable to this day. To regurgitate a cliché, she (Elvira) is something else altogether.

I'm not entirely sure when exactly I was introduced to the character of Elvira as a direct viewer, as opposed to a simple bystander of her pop-culture media fame. The earliest thing I can recall in my memory was in the 2000s during my rabid collecting and ingesting of all things Giallo and Italian horror. In North America, one of the only ways to see Rosalba Neri's *The Devil's Wedding Night* was on a double-feature DVD featuring Elvira as the host presenting the films. This, here, is my first remembered experience of Cassandra Peterson actually performing as the iconic Elvira -- and I thought she was absolutely hilarious, in every way intended by the comedienne behind that high-haired cleavage-showing fishnet-wearing campy personality. Still, it was a little while before I realized that Cassandra Peterson was actually a comic genius.



Cassandra Peterson does not have a make-up artist, she does her own; and there was (is?) a YouTube video that showed her applying her own make-up for a TV special, showing just how much care, control, and investment she had (has) in her own creation. While the video I'm talking about here is possibly decades old by now, I can vouch for the fact that this still happens, as I was lucky enough to be invited to the Hollywood Horror Film Festival in 2018, the same year Elvira was a special guest, where she still applied that iconic make-up herself.



But following my DVD discovery of her, I leapt right into tracking down her 1988 film *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*, which I found thanks to an old Anchor Bay DVD release, and subsequently discovered that Elvira's first film is one of the best horror-themed comedies ever made, up there with Steve Miner's *House* and Fred Dekker's *The Monster Squad*. But of course this high regard is due to Elvira's inherent campy and hilariously self-aware comedy schtick, which all sort-of works on a wildly meta level of comedy; and the fact that Elvira is so self-aware and plying it all deadpan just adds fuel to the comedic electricity of the whole thing. I love this quote from *The Village Voice* review of *Elvira Mistress of the Dark* upon its initial theatrical release in 1988:

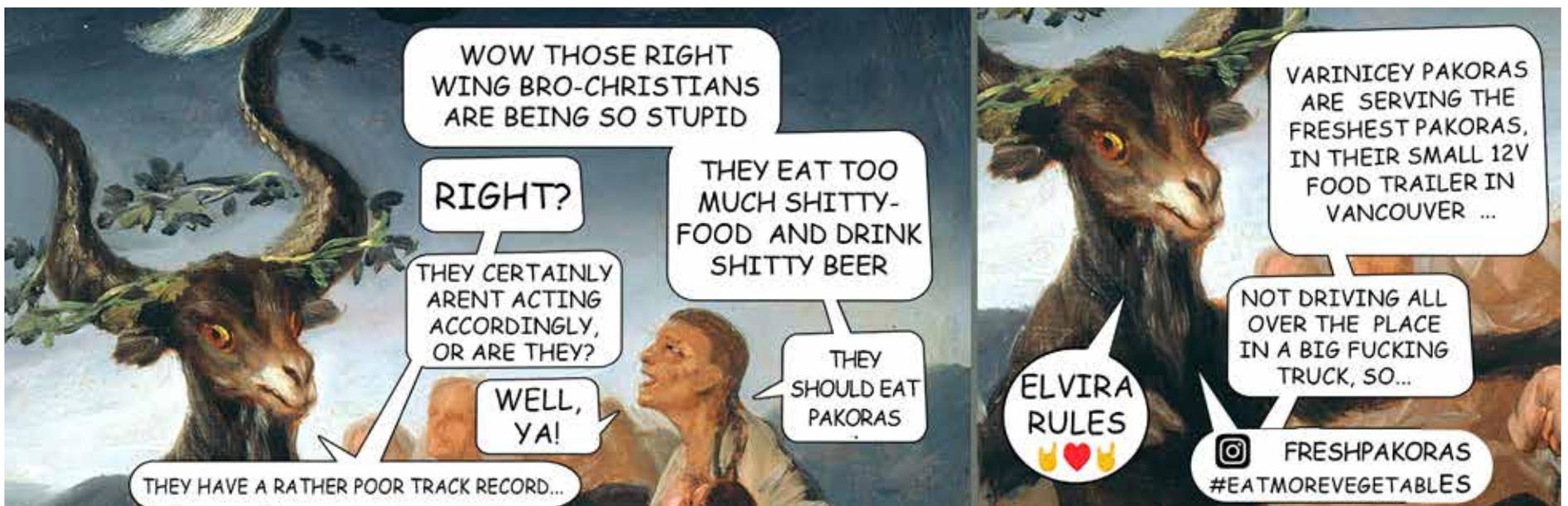


"...Peterson's biggest talent is her ability to deliver the dumbest double-entendres imaginable and still keep her cool." It's obvious that as a performer and co-writer, Cassandra Peterson was able to synchronize her talents with co-writers, producers, and the director of her first movie, who were all able to weave her humorous character self-awareness and self-reflexive comedy into the actual plot of *Mistress of the Dark*, to the film's absolute benefit.

One wishes she could have repeated this synergy for her next film, *Elvira's Haunted Hills* (2001), but in the case of the latter where the camp remained, the expression of the more spontaneous and comedic synchronicity unfortunately lacked. *Haunted Hills* is fun for a watch for sure, but *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark* is good for an endless number of re-watches (just like *House* and/or *The Monster Squad*). *Mistress of the Dark* is actually the type of genre-bending and charmingly goofy film that is special because of the serendipitous talents involved at exactly the right time (the type of thing that can't really be repeated), but which had somehow eluded the laud it truly deserved within its initial release in 1988 -- just as I sincerely believe Elvira deserves laud for her genuine comedic genius behind the nearly blinding light of her own cult of personality.

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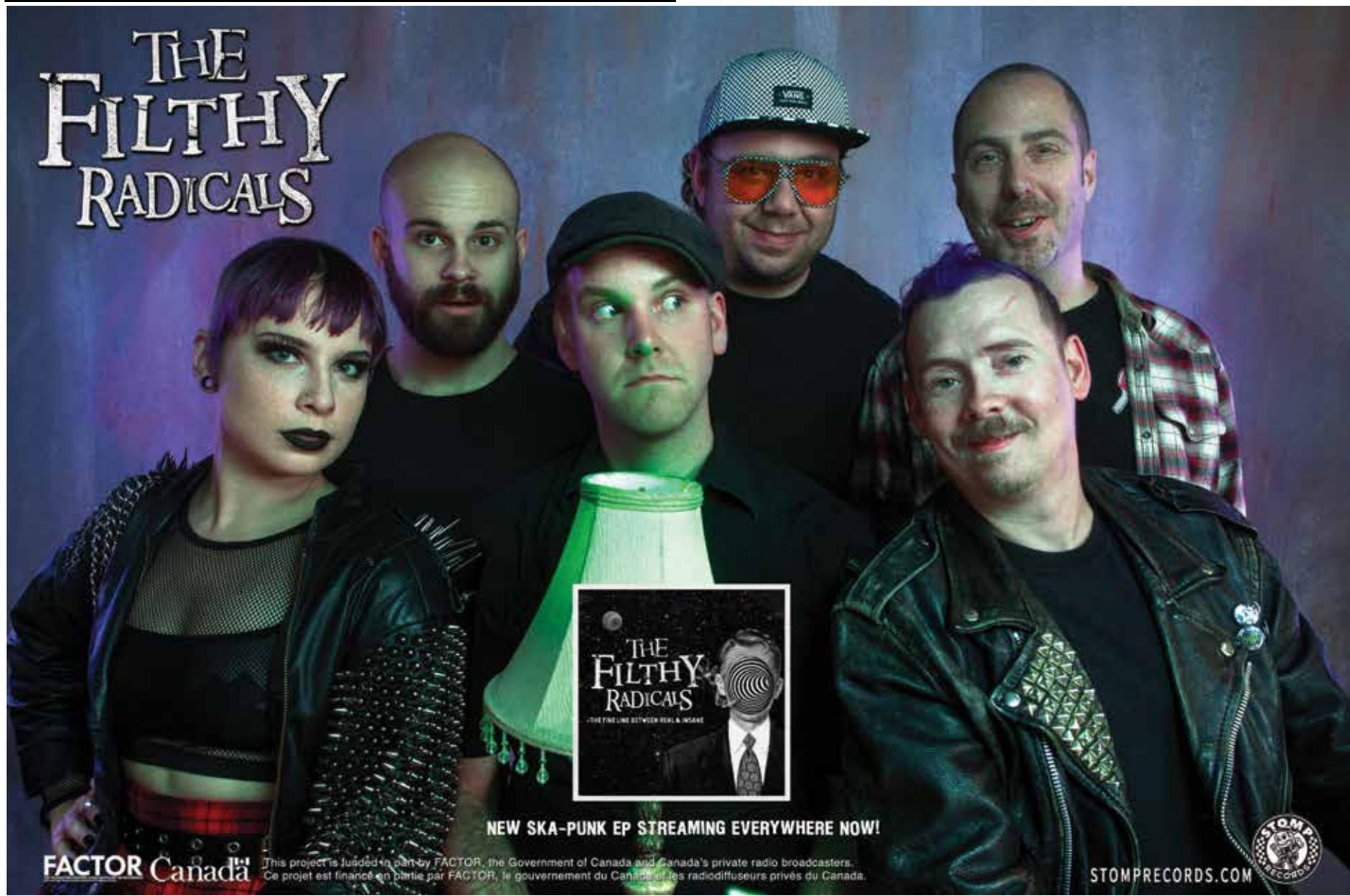
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# UNEARTHED FROM THE HAUNTED VAULT

IN ONE EAR

## Vampire Vavoom

Cosmetics and cleavage turn all-heart Cassandra Peterson into high-stakes Elvira. *By Les Wiseman*

She is the ghoul of our dreams. The insomniac's mistress. She has come-hither eyes. Little Bo-Peep sighs. She is dusky and musky. Her lips are the engorged red of the vampire just feted. Her raven beehive is Joan Jett gone Supremes. Her décolletage is Sophia Loren and Raquel Welch packed in one dress. Elvira, mistress of the night, is one of the great babes of pop-camp culture.



in whorls and knots. Ah, those champagne wishes, caviar dreams.

Cassandra Peterson of Randolph, Kansas, alleged an overturned boiling kettle when she was two left scars "on almost every inch that my costume doesn't show," and led to her being called "a monster" in school. I found this story a bit specious for in my research I had unearthed a *Celebrity*

phical expose. *Elvis*, that portrayed Presley as a drug-fried masturbator who would swallow a small pharmacopeia while girls clad in white panties wrestled at his feet? "I wouldn't read the book," she said. "People don't understand what a terrible life Elvis had. He couldn't leave his room." (One wonders why he would want to.)

Linda Thompson Jenner, the former Mrs. Bruce Jenner, now shock-producer David Foster's significant other, was up at Whistler that weekend. Since she had been a girlfriend of The Pres, too, my mind reeled with the prospect of getting the two women together to swap Elvis tales. "Tell me ladies, why did The King refer to his nethers as 'Little Elvis,' as Mr. Goldman alleges?" But it was not to be.

Elvis also advised Peterson not to rot in Vegas, and she joined the stable of gartered gams at Paris's famous Lido Club.

Originally just an undead sexpot hostess, on the order of a Count Floyd with hooters, on a Los Angeles late-night TV horror-movie compendium, *Movie Macabre*, Elvira has blossomed into an international phenomenon; her bodacious likeness now sells posters, a DC comic-book series, records of camp classics, authorized videocassette compilations of her favorite ghastly movies, and the upcoming *Elvira: The "B"-Movie*. For those too squeamish to accept her invitation to enjoy a cup of warm blood with her, she even hawks Coors beer.

Her endorsement is also valued by charities. Thus her webbed, dusty coffin found its way to Whistler, B.C., and the Delta Mountain Inn's \$150-a-plate celebrity-encrusted gala in aid of Rotary International Clubs' PolioPlus charity. At the requisite get-acquainted cocktail soiree, a snapping of necks announced the arrival of a heroically proportioned female in a slinky black dress, metallic belt slung low over her hips, a cascade of fluorescent red locks hanging down her breast. Dean Hill, noted LG-73 deejay and shindig ringmaster, pointed her out. "There's Elvira," he said.

Well, amigos, it was a little like having a date with Superman and Clark Kent turning up. Like not getting a Longines, if ya catch my drift. Sure, Cassandra Peterson, Elvira's alter ego, was beautiful and sexy, but a tad lacking in the ethereality department.

Next day, at an appointed time, I threaded my way through celebs cluttering the Delta Mountain Inn lobby. A nod to *Malone's* Cliff Robertson, a joke with *St. Elsewhere's* Ellen Bry, lewd comments about Mary Hart with *Entertainment This Week's* Robb Weller, a beer with *Knot's Landing's* Kevin Dobson—big-time elbow chaffing. There, invitingly languid, she awaited. Kleenex at the runny nose, arctic-explorer parka, rubber boots, worn gray jeans, baggy navy blue pullover, hair

*Sleuth* nude layout startled Peterson once did, and, boy, those scars sure must have hit the airbrush. What cannot be disputed is that the Elvira look requires two-and-a-half hours of face and body makeup, plus certain prosthetics for that trademark cantilevered silhouette. "It's terrible," Peterson laughed, fingering her bangs out of her eyes. "But it's great having an alter ego. I can go anywhere in Hollywood and nobody knows who I am."

Traumatized at age 12 by the sight of Ann-Margret in Elvis Presley's *Viva Las Vegas*, Peterson moved to Vegas five years later and was a showgirl in the Dunes Hotel's *Viva Les Girls* revue. There she received an invite from an impressed audience member, The King himself. "Not bad, eh?" she said with a wink when I mentioned this had impressed the hell out of me. "We used to hang around his living room. Elvis would play the piano for hours, and I would sing. He really encouraged me to take up a singing career."

What, though, I asked her, had she thought of Albert Goldman's biogra-

Alter Ego: TV pop-camper Elvira is really Cassandra Peterson, below.



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Later she toured Italy as lead singer of a pop group until she met a Vegas acquaintance on the street who introduced her to "Il Maestro," Federico Fellini. "Of course, I was completely freaked out," she recalled. "I was a big Fellini fan. When I met him I expected this really scary guy, but he was absolutely the nicest, funniest sweetest man. He told me that I reminded him of his wife, Giulietta Masina, which was not really a very big compliment as she weighed about 500 pounds at the time. And he gave me a job." In *Fellini's Roma*, she played a biker chick and a prostitute in the bordello where the young FF goes for rites of passage.

Back in L.A., Peterson joined The Groundlings comedy improv group with Paul Reubens, later known as Pee-wee Herman, and *Saturday Night Live's* Laraine Newman, Phil Hartman and Jon "That's the ticket" Lovitz. While supporting herself as a temp secretary, she answered a call for a horror movie hostess. "I thought it was a stupid-sounding job," she said. "But I was desperate for money, so I took it." Believe it: she had to undergo a "scream test" with epiglottal close-ups. Pay: \$125 a week. "Actually, I think the director was auditioning by the size of your bust, if you want to know the truth."

Peterson and a friend came up with the Elvira image. "And I said, they're never going to go for all this cleavage, but when I

showed the director, he didn't blink an eye and asked that the skirt be slit higher on the leg."

A few thousand eyeballs strained at their sockets in late 1981 when Elvira debuted one dark and stormy night on KHJ-TV's *Movie Macabre*. The following spring, when it was announced that Elvira would be broadcast in 3-D, over 2.7 million pairs of 3-D specs were sold in L.A.-area 7-11 convenience stores.

The voluptuous vampire was soon in demand on talk shows. Johnny Carson asked her her favorite horror opus, and when she saltily replied, "*The Head With Two Things*," dropped one of his bloodhound deadpans and pleasantly countered with, "Don't coo a con artist, baby." MTV naturally jumped on her to host their annual Halloween specials. Joan Rivers found it hard to keep up with the modern Morticia's salacious wit. And a couple of years back, Mayor Tom Bradley declared March 9 Elvira Day in L.A. Her fan club numbers 35,000 upstanding members.

"In the beginning, it was more a sexy thing: 'Come in, darling, and drink some blood with me.' But we got more into a comedy vein. . . ." She rolled her eyes at another unintended vascular vampire slip. "I'm the queen of the bad puns." No slight claim for Elvira's on-air humor is unmitigated cornpone. She really only gets away with it because she has a cute wink.

"As Elvira, it's sort of a mask. I can get away with anything and I don't feel embarrassed. And because the show is syndicated—in 63 markets—I can get away with murder because there are no censors for syndicated shows. I don't say any dirty words; it's all double entendre. A lot of the lines go over people's heads. But a lot of people seem to think I'm a serious character, so I get a lot of mail from Satan worshippers and mental institutions.

"Getting into the makeup changes my whole personality," she laughs. "I have no desire to change the character because when I get offered a job as Elvira, I get offered a lot of money, and when I get offered a job as myself, I'm offered no money at

all. Why should I drop something that is working so great and that's fun to do? I have a real hard time doing things as myself because I'm not really outgoing."

Still, those in the know have spotted her in *The Sting II*, *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, *Stroker Ace*, *Echo Park* and *Allan Quatermain And The Lost City Of Gold*, as well as such TV shows as *Fantasy Island* and *St. Elsewhere*.

The biggest news on Elvira's front is *Elvira: The "B"-Movie*. Peterson cowrote the script and recently sold the film to NBC Productions, making it their first-ever completely financed—budgeted at \$5 million—feature film. Production begins in August, and NBC has an option for an El-

vira TV sitcom slated for fall, 1988. "The movie won't be so much horror as comedy," said Peterson. "It'll have a lot of special effects and a supernatural side to it. It's about Elvira growing up, and I think people are interested in what Elvira does when she's not just laying around on the couch."

The interview wound down when it came time for Peterson's beauty parlor appointment. That night at the whoopdeedo, antihistaminated, coiffed to the hilt and swathed in ruby sequins, she drifted sylphlike through the social melee. Many a man fell under her spell. Elvira herself never showed up, but there was no doubt an enchantress walked among us. •



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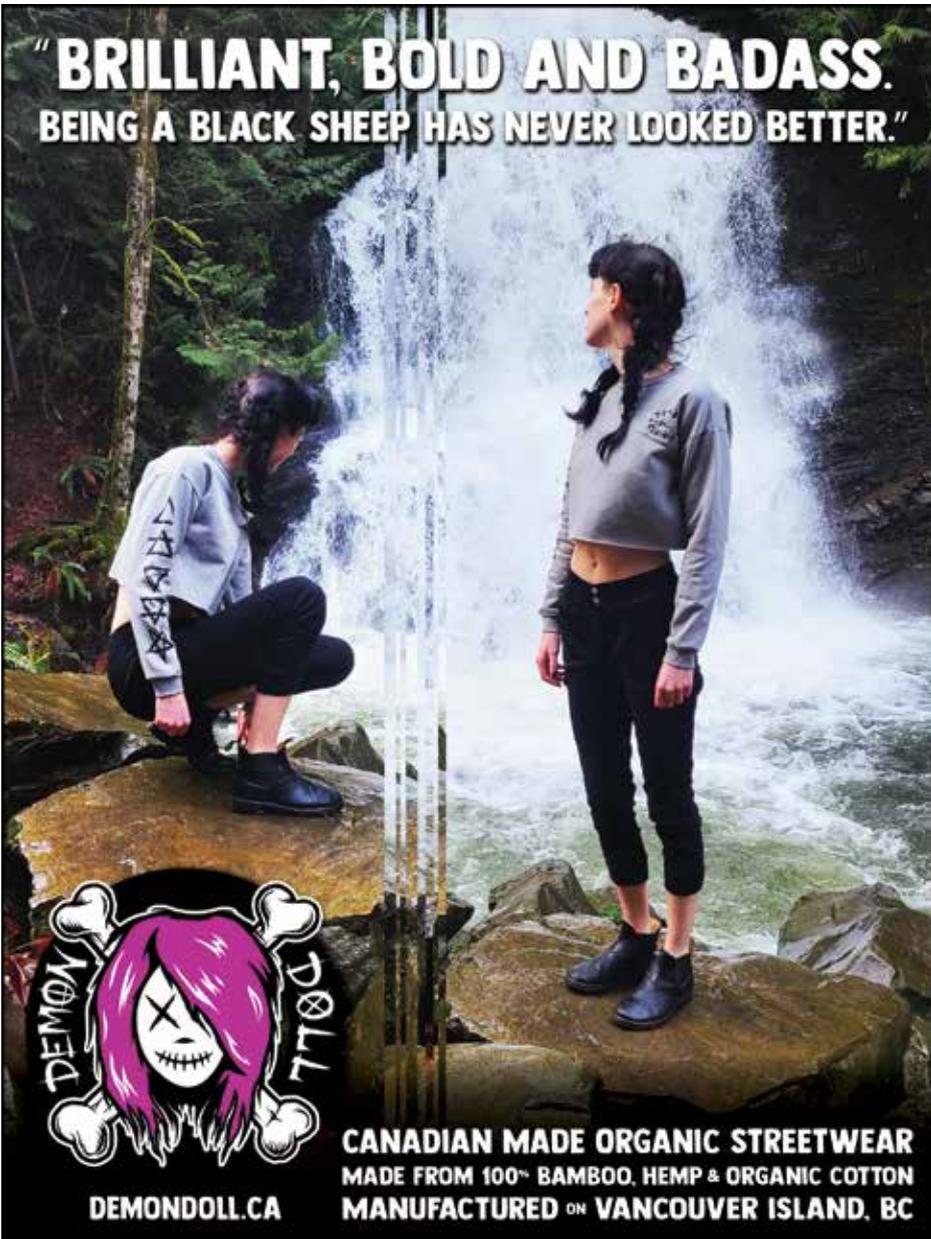
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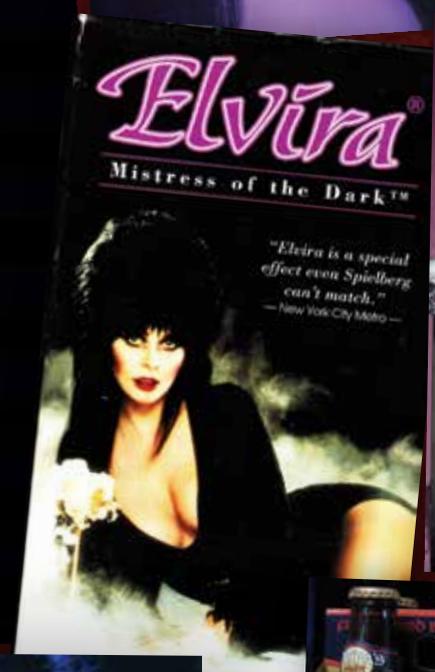
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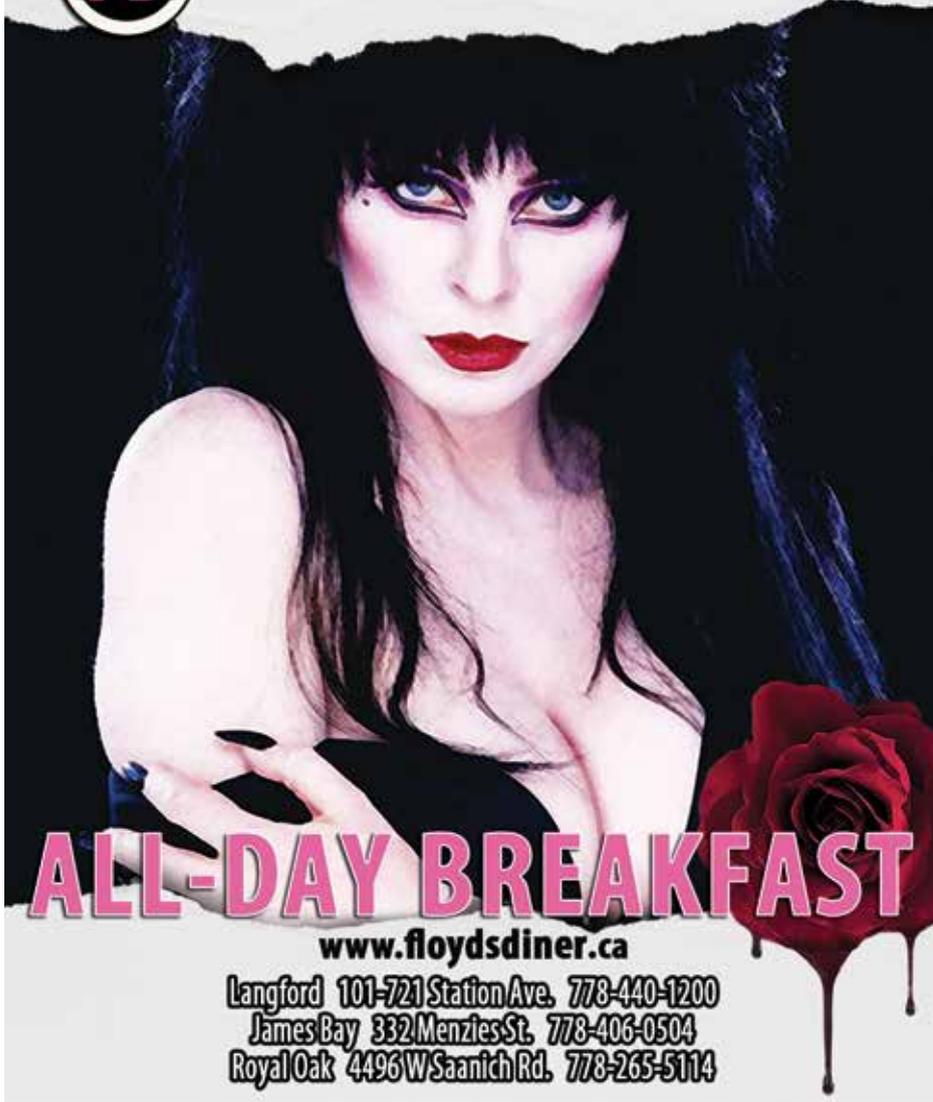
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## Elvira Pinball Art

Interview with Greg Freres  
By Ira "Monster Bash" Hunter

### AU: Who are we talking to today?

GF: I'm Greg Freres and I'm currently the art director at Stern Pinball and have been there since 2012 – so another decade in the pinball business for me.

### AU: How did you start your art career?

GF: After graduating with an art degree from Western Illinois University I landed an in-house illustrator job at Bally manufacturing that was the beginning of my career in pinball... a dream job.

### AU: Any influences on your artistic style?

GF: I'll always say *Mad Magazine*. Guys like Jack Davis, Harvey Kurtzman, Don Martin, and Mort Drucker had an effect on how I approach my work. I prefer game themes with a solid sense of humor.

### AU: How did you first get the opportunity to create the artwork for pinball machines?

GF: I met Kevin O'Connor at the advertising place that I worked at out of college and he only spent six months there when he landed an illustrator job at Bally. After he was at Bally for six months he called me and said they were looking for another in-house illustrator... would I be interested? I worked up a portfolio very quickly and landed an interview with Paul Faris, the art director at Bally.

### AU: First pinball projects you worked on?

GF: At the Bally interview, Paul Faris asked me to work up an illustration that would be appropriate for a pinball theme, just to prove that I was really interested in the job. I worked creating a Summertime theme that eventually became Skateball. Then I was assigned to work on The Harlem Globetrotters backglass, cabinet design, and playfield

### AU: Other games on your pinball resume?

GF: The earliest games from the Bally era include The Rolling Stones, Frontier, Fathom, Vector, BMX, and Speakeasy. Others include Strange Science, Escape from the Lost World, and Lady Luck. After Bally was sold to Williams Electronics, I worked on Elvira and the Party Monsters, Dr. Dude, The Party Zone, Star Trek: The Next Generation, Elvira's Scared Stiff, Medieval Madness and Revenge From Mars among others.

### AU: What pinball companies have you worked for in the past?

GF: I started at Bally, transitioned to Williams/Bally/Midway after the sale, did the playfield artwork for The Wizard of Oz from Jersey Jack Pinball during their start-up, and then landed as the art director at Stern Pinball. So the only pinball company from the original Big 4 that I never worked for was Gottlieb.

### AU: How has the pinball industry changed over the years?

GF: The last 10 years have been an amazing resurgence of the pinball industry and I'm happy to be part of this portion of the historic rise in popularity. At the end of 1999 when Williams decided to move away from pinball to focus solely on the slot machine business, Gary Stern considered himself the "last man standing" and did a great job of keeping the pinball industry alive for the first decade of the new century. At some point it may have been more like pinball on "life support." Pinball has always seen an ebb and flow in popularity. It has always been technical breakthroughs that lead to the biggest changes in pinball.

The direct to home market has also increased steadily over the past 20 years with more players interested in owning a pinball machine for their home. But the arcade and barcade market is still important to the industry to make sure everyone has the potential to discover pinball "in the wild".

And one of the other major changes in the industry is the way we produce the artwork. When I started in the industry in 1978 we were still creating the artwork with traditional media: ink, paint, airbrush, colored pencils...any tool that could get the job done. In the early 90's our department got one "Mac" to start the transition from traditional tools to digital art. As an example, the first two Elvira games were done with traditional tools for the most part, but Scared Stiff was the beginning of the new era. Linda Deal was one of the first artists in our department to use the computer in her design process so she assisted me in creating the title art for the game and some of the background behind the spider in the backglass. Fast forward to Elvira's House of Horrors and ALL of the art was created on the computer using a Wacom Cintique tablet – the major contributor of allowing all traditional artists

to make the big leap to the computer.

### AU: Did you create the artwork for all three different Elvira pinball machines?

GF: Yes, I did work exclusively on all three Elvira pinball games – Elvira and the Party Monsters (1989), Elvira's Scared Stiff (1996), and Elvira's House of Horrors (2019). I'm fortunate that throughout those 30 years of pinball development the Elvira brand remained a strong branding partner because of her amazing following and fan-base. I never thought that when we signed on to do the first game that we'd be creating a lasting trilogy of games. There are only a handful of themes that have graced a trilogy of games over the decades... Star Wars, Star Trek and Elvira.

### AU: Describe the art you created for Elvira and the Party Monsters, from 1989.

GF: Elvira and the Party Monsters was proposed as a licensed theme when we arrived at Williams in late 1988. The game designer, Dennis Nordman, and I were not as familiar with Elvira because she was mostly a west coast phenomenon, but after doing some quick pre-internet research we knew she had become the spokesperson for Coors beer. Dennis had done a previous game called Party Animal (lightly influenced by the Spuds McKenzie years for Budweiser) so it seemed like a party themed game with Elvira as the hostess in her own backyard created a likely scenario. I did some quick sketches and proposed the concept to upper management and the project was quickly greenlighted. I used coworkers as models for the monster characters on the backglass artwork and made sure to keep Elvira in the spotlight. Cassandra (Peterson)



even requested a few additional elements to be included in the artwork as subtle shout-outs to old friends and her husband at that time. A tombstone in the background has a bit of graffiti added saying "Yo Travis!", an old pinball playing friend from her pre-stardom days. The fact that Cassandra loves pinball to begin with made working with her even more exciting. She was really thrilled to be part of this machine.

### AU: What were the differences for the second Elvira pinball called Scared Stiff from 1996.

GF: We initially got push-back from Williams/Bally/Midway management about our proposal to do another Elvira themed pinball machine. But the fact that the technology of the dot matrix display had been added to the platform since Elvira and the Party Monsters was released, and the sound package had been really upgraded as well, we thought it would be good to do a sequel since many folks really liked the first game. Now we could add simple animations to help the player understand the rules and thematic elements of the game. Management also requested that our

direction had to include a backbox game play element to help set it apart from other games in that time frame. So we came up with a spinning spider mechanism designed into the backglass that could be stopped by the player to choose a randomizing award and boost the scoring potential. Along with the spinning spider we also broke up the backglass into layers to produce a shadowbox effect with a dimensional illusion. I think it's one of the most unique backglasses I've worked on to this day. With the visual theme of the game we wanted to more closely follow a path of what Elvira was known for – hosting B-movie horror films in her own inimitable style. So in this case, Elvira has invited the player into the house to watch some old B-Movies, in her bedroom! The player shoots around the playfield through a variety of movie themes in the horror genre, working up to a climactic experience known as the Stiff-O-Meter! With support from our sound design team, Elvira's extensive voice-over work, and amazing light shows, the experience of this mode is still a fan-favorite pinball moment to this day. We also worked with voice-over talent Tim Kitzrow to add more humor to the game and be there as kind of a "Count Floyd" style of character to be the male counterpart to Elvira's comments. His character was referred to as "The Stiff in the Coffin" and his knack for improvising really added a lot of great audio moments to the game. The humor in this game was definitely R-Rated. I'm very fond of Scared Stiff and thought for years it was the last time we'd be able to work with Cassandra...but wait...there's more!

### AU: Tell us about the game and the art you created for Elvira's House of Horrors in 2019.

GF: Once we convinced the Stern team that we could create another version of the Elvira pinball experience with the latest technology, we knew we had to "up" the game and make it even better than Scared Stiff. Due to the fact that we had a full-color high-resolution screen to work with we knew we could make an enhanced player experience. And then when Cassandra's team understood the new platform, they offered a package of 26 potential B-movies to incorporate into the game from her Movie Macabre series. They also offered to have Elvira in a green screen studio to create unique footage of her to set this game apart even more. This was an amazing starting point. I started the process by watching all 26 films multiple times and taking notes along the way. Lyman Sheats, one of pinball's greatest game programmers, wanted to join us because he had always wanted to do a haunted house theme game. With that said, we immediately set the foundation towards a haunted house theme and began researching of how best to integrate the concept with Elvira. While I worked out the layout of the backglass art, Dennis Nordman designed the miniature haunted house that would become the focal point of the playfield.

So obviously I had two major focal points for this backglass (careful what you're thinking), Elvira and her house. And after writing the pitch for the game – This third and campiest installment

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of the Elvira pinball trilogy is centered on Elvira's house, haunted by the movie characters from Elvira's past. These ghouls, ghosts, monsters, and strange assortment of vintage characters with horrific acting skills seek revenge on Elvira while she and the player confront them, and send them back onto the "film", from where they came. "The Taunting Is Over...The Haunting Begins"- I began to surround Elvira on the backglass with characters from the B-Movies that we had access to well before we started to design the game.

Once I got the backglass roughed out I started to design the cabinet graphics and I feel that we accomplished our initial goal of making this the best Elvira pinball game of the series and this game truly captures the essence of Elvira's career as the horror hostess with the mostest!

**AU: What's the difference between the premium edition and the limited edition?**

GF: The difference is mostly cosmetic. I chose the LE package as the one that captures Elvira in all her glory - her iconic red velvet "couch" had to be part of this package to really sum up her career on Movie Macabre. I also used this for the Signature Edition and the eventual 40th Anniversary

edition.

For the Premium Edition I wanted to give the side cabinet an approach that we might have taken in the 1980's or '90's - a large title that still works in the same graphic framework as the Limited Edition but looks more like it could have come from that era - supporting the "80's" vibe that she so aptly portrays.

**AU: Do you mostly focus on the artwork for the backglass or are you also involved with the art on the game play surface as well?**

GF: When I'm on a project I've mostly been the "project artist" that is responsible for the entire printed art package - so not only designing the backglass but also the cabinets, playfield, plastics and any ancillary parts that support the project.

**AU: Did you ever meet Elvira or interact with her when creating the artwork. ?**

GF: Yes - Cassandra is an amazing spirit and she has worked closely with our team from the beginning. She visited the Williams/Bally/Midway factory for the first two games to record the voice over work, witness the design process and work our trade shows. Her presence at the 1989 AMOA show in Las Vegas created an amazing scene at our booth with hundreds of fans lined up for hours to get her autograph. Elvira and the Party Monsters also won "Best New Product" at that show...the first time Pinball had won that award in 7 years of video game dominance! Cassandra has full art and concept approvals on all things Elvira. But the best part is she likes to pitch-in and add her personal touch to the games. And for EHOH, I was the one to oversee the green screen video shoot. This was an exciting part of the design process. I worked closely with Paul Chamnankit from our animation group at Stern to pull off this first-time attempt at marrying live-action with his 3D art backgrounds for the screen graphics and the first time seeing the results was jaw-dropping - Elvira seated on her iconic couch

telling the player exactly what was going to happen next! This was a first for pinball and I'm proud to have been part of this design process.

**AU: What is it about Elvira that is so iconic?**

GF: I really believe that Elvira's allure comes from her innate approachability and solid sophomoric sense of humor - she presents herself as an everyday girl that happens to like all things cheesy, horrific, and terrifying, knows how and when to turn on the charm and make you feel welcome, and never hesitates to make fun of herself or any man that gets in her way - she's the babe that we all wanted to hang out with!

**AU: How many pinball games do you have in your personal collection?**

GF: My current collection consists of the Elvira Trilogy, Whoa Nellie Big Juicy Melons, and Bally's Captain Fantastic. At one time I owned No Fear, ST:TNG, Medieval Madness, Strange Science, Dr. Dude, Revenge From Mars, Lady Luck, Escape from the Lost World, Party Zone - basically anything with my art attached. I recently added Captain Fantastic to my grouping because I always felt that game set the standard for pinball art. It's a pinball machine about pinball and Dave Christensen's artwork is in a league of its own.

**AU: What other pinball creations are you most proud of from your legendary career?**

GF: Fathom seems to get the most love from the pinball community. I also am proud of the accomplishment that is Whoa Nellie! Big Juicy Melons. It's a throwback theme to a throwback style of game play but it started as a wacky work of pinball art that blossomed into something unique. Most every game that I worked on has a place in my heart - each game or backglass brings me back to the days it was being developed. I can



also witness my development as an illustrator over the span of years.

A company called Art-O-Vision does some really cool scaled down shadowbox style framed prints of my work including Scared Stiff, Elvira and the Party Monsters, Whoa Nellie!, and Fathom.

[artovision3d.com/collections/shadowbox-art/Game](http://artovision3d.com/collections/shadowbox-art/Game)

**AU: Do you attend any pinball conventions or events? What are some of the best ones people should check out?**

GF: Yes I do. The first ever pinball "event" is the original Pinball Expo held in the Chicago area in October - they've been doing that show for over 35 years. Stern debuted EHOH there in 2019 with Cassandra in attendance to support the roll-out. The biggest show these days is the Texas Pinball Festival in March.

**AU: Final words of wisdom for pinball wizards and flipper-heads out there.**

GF: Stay focused, keep your eye on the ball, shoot for the blinking light and when all else fails... just keep flippin'! And support your local pinball machines!

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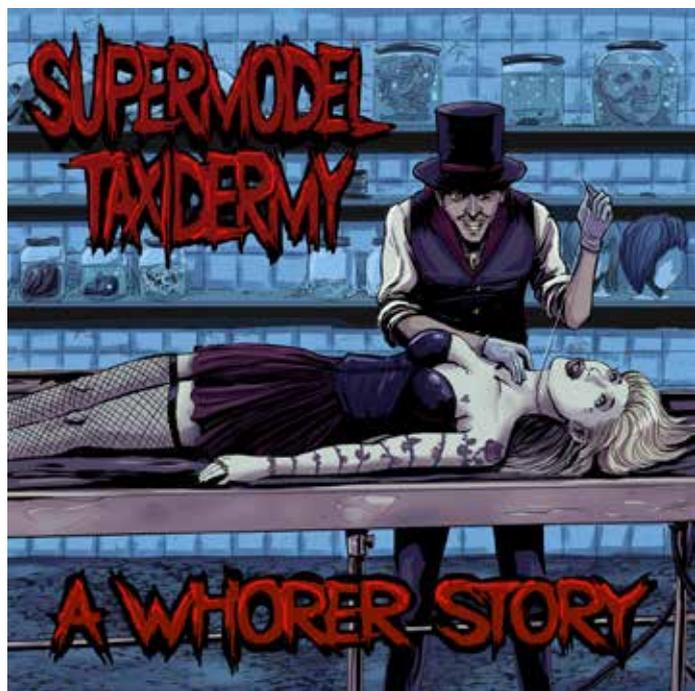
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Interview by Ed Sum

**Absolute Underground: Can we have an introduction please?**

SM: Well, my name is Shawn Maynard and music has always been a massive part of my life. I started playing the guitar at the beginning of grade seven. By the time I was in grade ten, I knew almost every Slayer tune out there. They're still one of my favourite bands to this day. So I guess that would put me in for about twenty-seven years of playing now. As for any other bands before starting Supermodel, there was nothing that made it any further than the garage/jam

spaces. Keep at it, kids! It will happen to you.

**AU: How did the band name come about and how would you say your sound differs from other groups?**

SM: The name actually came from my buddy Lonnie Wright. I liked the concept, so I ran with it. If you want beauty and not substance, here's your "mount," I thought. A Supermodel Taxidermy. The ideology that beauty is on the outside is bullshit. I was fooled by that once before, but we'll get to that in a minute.

This sound is a reflection on the style of music I grew up listening to. It's not as common anymore, but I still write this way to give the opportunity back to the newcomers just

getting into punk rock and metal. I still remember hearing The Dayglo Abortions for the first time and thinking holy fuck! These guys rip. That's the reaction I want to pass on. Supermodel, as a band itself though, is about highlighting the horrors in society and pushing them with aggression, so maybe that's what differentiates us. This "double edged" sword of a title seemed perfect. This album is about my journey out of the horror story I was put through.

**AU: Who are all the members?**

AM: I wrote the music and hired studio guns to record. Until the band lineup is more secure, I'd rather not release any names as it has changed these last few months. Don't worry though, there will be shows!

**AU: As a band that formed amid the pandemic, what were some challenges faced when it came to being able to rehearse and perform?**

SM: We just began jamming but then to self-isolate killed that idea rather quickly. So, I kept writing alone and learned how to record the demos. I also ran into the problem of not having a singer. (Trust me, no one wants to sing someone else's story). So having to learn vocals and play the guitar set me back a bit as well, but once I figured I could pull it off in the studio, I booked time at The Physics Lab in Edmonton.

**AU: Was there a tough time in deciding on what tracks to put in your debut album, A Whorer Story?**

SM: Definitely not! I should have done more.

**AU: Really love the track, "McMurray's Finest." It's perhaps the most accessible for newcomers. How did the idea of this song come about?**

SM: The idea for that song was the theme of the album, *A Whorer Story*. That song is a tragic story and nothing more. It's used to tie together my journey and give the listener some insight on how one COULD fall into the world of hard drugs and prostitution, which we will also get to shortly.

**AU: I've noticed the lyrics: there's a particular woman being referenced. Was there an angel you had in mind, or is it some other divine figure?**

SM: No, you are right about the angel. The last song on the album is called "Homage." It's a love song I wrote to my girlfriend Lindsay. When we met, she knew my story. I had told her what I was going through and she gave me the inspiration to write the song. It came from a conversation we had about our first year together. She told me, "I said to myself, this guy needs help, and I promised myself I was going to see it through either way." How could that beauty not get a song after that,

right? She's so rad, I love her!

**AU: Would you say listening to this album in the order listed is important? I feel there's a soft narrative going on. There's that voice about resistance, acceptance and change.**

SM: This album should have been a movie, but I can play the guitar so that's the route it went: I was in a rocky relationship a few years back. We were reconnected high school sweethearts, and I fell in love all over again without seeing

this person for who she was. After some time, there were clues... But, hey why would I pay attention to that? I mean, who would assume their significant other was involved in prostitution?

It started out with me chasing a drug habit, something I was blinded by in the beginning. I knew nothing about addiction. Looking back, I should have ended it there. I was running in circles, trying to help get her clean, until I discovered what was feeding the habit. This is when my world fell apart. I didn't know what to do or who to talk to, so I started writing music to help me process the trauma. This is where my "Whorer story" began. From the first tune to the last, you are hearing my journey and personal climb out of the nightmare I never wished to endure. Even though I'm not the same person I was when I began, I know I'm better for it today. This music saved my life, it was a doc in the chair ("Chrysalis")

**AU: In closing, what would you love to say to Absolute Underground readers?**

SM: Look out for each other! When you're down and need a hand in life, it's pretty amazing finding it where you least expected.

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## Tzimani

Interview by Sheldon Byer



and some songs definitely have a more mature sound to them as we've grown as musicians.

### AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

You are talking to Sebastian and Eddie of the band Tzimani and we are known to be the loudest, tightest, and cleanest two-man band to grace the metalverse.

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

The band was born out of a feverish writing session that encapsulated an inhibited sound of straightforward heavy metal mixed with catchy hooks and strong leads. The vocalist, guitarist, and primary songwriter is Eddie Vazquez and Seb Vazquez mans the tubs. We are looking to revive the more prominent melodic sections of heavy metal using power leads and songwriting that most people can relate too.

### AU: How do you pronounce your band name?

Pronounce the band name See-Mahn-EE.

### AU: Describe the band's sound if possible?

It is hard to describe it. But if you were to draw the more melodic elements of heavy metal with clean and tight riffing, you can start drawing distinctions. The heydays of the 80s commercial sound in metal is probably what we are closest to. Blending the elements of melodic hard rock, heavy metal, pounding double bass, and blistering riffs is a the core template of our sound.

### AU: Tell us about your upcoming release.

SV: Over the last 18 months we have been able to put together about 13-14 songs of entirely new stuff. We have only recently played some in our live set, but a lot of stuff is completely written and just needs to be recorded.

EV: The new material is both a step into the past in terms of the classic Heavy Metal sound, but also a step into the future. I enjoy walking the tightrope of sounding like an older band, but with a modern spin on things.

### AU: Tell us about the EP and how you've grown since its release.

SV: Well, we started as a band in 2017, and released a couple demos. March of 2018 we released the EP, and immediately began touring on it. It was a powerful release for us since it was all independent. We had some help in the beginning with Andrew Bansal of Metal Assault Records when he was managing us full time and helping us book our tours. The period from 2017-2019 was a real eye opener in learning how to become semi-professionals in the scene and learning from every tour on how best and how to improve our performances, marketability, and sustainability. The EP got us on a few festivals which was incredible, and most notably our appearance at the 2019 Legions of Metal Festival in Chicago. Historic occasion for us a band.

As we continue to progress with our sound and career, I am certain that songs from the EP will become classics and I hope that a new generation of fans will eventually discover it.

EV: The EP was written with a live focus in mind. We knew starting out that we would have to release music that worked well in the small and more underground venues. I'm really proud of how everything turned out as far as the songwriting and production and public reaction, but our new material feels more diverse in sound

### AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

SV: For new songs, we have been jamming a new song called "We Stand and Fight." It is an upbeat steel banger. Tons of fun to play and definitely refreshing to add to our set. But for the older stuff, I still get pumped playing our opener "Overdrive," and our biggest song "We Are the Ones."

### AU: How has COVID-19 affected you as a band?

SV: In a matter of speaking, we were devastated. We were doing 2-3 tours a year just getting the name out there. The biggest blow was the cancellation of our North American Night People Tour. We were so ready to fucking rock the scene and plant our flag as the most exciting metal band to come out of Southern California, and doing it as a two-piece nonetheless.

There were plans to do a European run with Glacier, Roadrash, and Loanshark in conjunction with a European release of our EP, but both prospects fell through the cracks as the world began to change and it sent a dagger straight through my heart. The passion was always there though and I never lost that fire, so now that the world seems to moving in a direction in which live music is becoming more accessible, we are ready to dust off the rust and pick up where we left off.

EV: I used the free time to write new material and practice on becoming a better musician.

### AU: What's it like being in a band with your brother? Is a bassist ever gonna break the Van Halen/Young dynamic?

SV: It is probably the easiest thing to manage. We get in bouts and stuff about things all the time, and sometimes get into it on the road, but at the end of the day we are still brothers. We have the same dreams and aspirations and plans to continue this dream and are going for it. I am honored to be in reference of those greats. I doubt adding a permanent member to the band would change it. In fact, we hope to find someone long term that can help reach the next level.

### AU: Tell us about why you're stoked to play the Hyperspace Festival in Vancouver?

EV: It is the only show that remains from our cancelled 2020 tour! We have played in Vancouver twice to successful shows. I think being able to taste the Canadian market was the catalyst in moving us into touring extensively and trying to hit Canada every chance we got. The scenes in Canada are so much bigger for this type of music, so being able to perform in Canada again at a prestigious metal event is fucking exciting.

### AU: Survival tips for a two piece on the road?

SV: We always approach a tour with two things on our mind. How can we cut costs to make this financially reasonable, and what kind of merch we can produce to help sustain the costs of living on the road. One of the most important things I learned was touring with a really small rice cooker. Rice is cheap as hell, and easy to make. We have lived off \$5 pizzas, top ramen, and gas station food. We also learned to live out of an SUV. We fold down the seats, and use an inflatable mattress and throw it in the back area and sleep next to each other if we aren't lucky enough to be hosted by folks. On our last tour, we did not pay for a single hotel once. A couple times we went 3-4 days without showering, but that is what we

did in order to come back with at least some money to invest in the next tour/release.

### AU: What are Tzimani's biggest influences?

EV: We love Iron Maiden, Dio and Mötley Crüe, but we also grew up listening to things from our era like 3 Inches of Blood, Dream Theater and Coheed & Cambria, so it's a weird blend of it all.

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

SV: We have plans to play Hyperspace and then get back to recording our new shit. Once we have that mixed and mastered, we can begin to talk tours again. But you can expect the same clean as fuck but catchy sound, but with a live bassist for sure. We also plan for a bigger production, like programmed lights and stage props.

### AU: You've covered Dio's "Night People." Why?

EV: I wanted to cover one of my favorite Dio songs, and put our own spin on it. To this day *Dream Evil* is still one of my favorite Dio records.

### AU: Best new bands you've played with?

SV: Our longtime buds in Space Vacation. We saw the Haunt, Fortress, and Saber tour recently and I was blown away. Also check out Blind Illusion.

### AU: It valentines! How do you balance the road and love?

SV: Balancing road life and home life is a fucking challenge. You are occupied every night on tour playing shows, but if you have a loved one at home cheering you on you have to find ways to

# BENEATH THE WHEEL

make your partner feel loved, wanted, and desired. You have to continuously invest in your relationship so that your partner sticks around.

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

EV: Do not miss our appearance at Hyperspace, you assholes. Let's drink some Lucky Strike beers and have a fucking good time.

@Tzimani\_Band



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## Circle A Studios

Interview by John Carlow

### Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself

CB: Hey, I'm Cody Baresich and I run Circle A Studios. Circle A Studios is a home-based recording studio in Victoria, BC, focusing on underground music styles such as punk, hardcore, metal, and grind. I've also worked with folk and electronic music artists.

### Absolute Underground: When did you start up Circle A? What's the story behind the name?

CB: I started recording around 2004, but it wasn't until around 2014 when I started using the name Circle A Studios. The name is related to me playing in anarchist punk and metal bands for years. I like to offer reasonable rates that punks can afford, while also being able to work for myself.

### Absolute Underground: Where did you learn / train?

CB: I am self-taught. One of my bands in the early 2000s wanted to record and being the young punks we were, we had the DIY mentality. Drums are one of the hardest things to learn to record, so being the drummer of the band, I cared more than anyone about getting the drums to sound good. Recording school was out of the question

so I learned all I could on my own. Some local bands heard my band's demo and asked me to help them out with theirs and it just snowballed from there.

### Absolute Underground: Were you a part of any bands?

CB: I've been in many bands over the years. I moved from Ontario to Vancouver with my band Leper around 2005. We started as Choking Victim worship, but it changed over the years as we got more into black metal. It was one of the most musically unique bands I played in. Through this band I met a lot of people that I started bands with or recorded in the coming years.

I moved to Victoria in 2007 and started a grindcore band called Mutiny. It was a short-lived band, but it was fun to be playing guitar instead of drums for once. I joined the well-known anarchist metal band Iskra in 2008. I did the most touring with this band out of any over the 10 years I was in this band. Iskra pushed my drumming to new limits.

In 2011 myself and another member of Iskra started the band Storm of Sedition. We started as a crust punk band but have transformed into a metal band in recent years.

Around 2012 I was asked to start a Celtic folk band (Knacker's Yard) with some members of previously mentioned bands, in hopes of using our musical talents to play music for a living. I was tired of working in restaurants, so I was in. I picked up the mandolin and quickly fell in love with the genre again, as I had listened to some Celtic music in high school. This project helped me learn a lot about recording folk/acoustic music, as we recorded seven albums. Knacker's Yard ended in 2020, so I started another Celtic folk band with some friends called Clanna Morna. The newest band I'm playing in is a death metal project called Hedonist.

### Absolute Underground: Mention some of the bands you've worked with.

CB: Sixbrewbantha was one of the first Victoria bands that I worked with and kept working with for several years. I feel like they have a lot to do with where I am today in regard to being busy with all the studio work. Just last year I got to mix and master a band from Bangalore, India called XREPEATX, who found me because of my work with SBB. Last year I recorded and mixed a band I've worked with for years called Altered Dead for their new album *Returned to Life*. I've recorded a lot of Victoria's Oi punk bands in the past few years thanks to Mike Underwood, including No Heart, Off The Clock, The Choice Few, and Split Arrows.

Recently I finished up recordings from Badhumanbeings, Bodyrot, Dispösal, and Gush. I mastered a great local black metal project called Fell Deeds and tracked drums for Torrefy's new album last month. I've been working with a folksy/blues artist by the name of Paul Mowbray, who is a great songwriter. Working with Paul has given me the opportunity to do some things I've never done before including record and mix a pedal steel and a job mixing classical/opera music.

### Absolute Underground: What do YOU like to listen to? Preferred format? Notable recordings?

CB: I grew up listening to all sorts of punk (skate/pop/hardcore etc.), but I mostly listen to black/death metal and Celtic/English folk music now. Vinyl is my preferred physical format. Clients that have put out vinyl releases make it onto the studio's wall. Metal bands I'm currently listening to are Mortiferum, Genocide Pact, Craft, Endstille, Spectral Wound, and Dead Congregation. For folk, stuff like Planxty, Lankum, Ewan MacColl, and The Mary Wallopers.

### Absolute Underground: Any album you admire for the recording work / engineering / production ...?

CB: Although I'm not a huge fan of hardcore anymore, I still love the production on Converge's

*Jane Doe*. It's clear and organic, but also just distorted and loud as fuck. It has a lot of character. I don't think it influences me in how I want my recordings to sound, but more so in the philosophy of balancing aggression and clarity in the final mix.

A few engineers I admire are Eric Valentine, Jesse Gander, Kurt Ballou, Greg Wilkinson, and Sylvia Massy.

### Absolute Underground: Any recording sessions where something funny /unusual happened?

CB: On the Choice Few recording one of the band members had asked me to take every one of the singer's vocal warmups and exclamations, compile them into a track, and splice that track across every song on their album in the first mix they heard. After we took it out for the real mix everyone seemed to miss or expect to hear them still, so I made that compilation track into ringtones, which they still use. Some other stuff happened in the Badhumanbeings session where they got to 'moo' like cows and bang some cans together to mimic a cowbell. It was hilarious to witness. During a session for a band called Brick River, I used a trick I learned from Sylvia Massy. I taped an SM57 microphone to the end of a garden hose and wrapped it around the base of the drum kit. It gives a cool supplementary drum room sound to blend in.

### Absolute Underground: What's coming up for you next?

CB: Looking forward to getting back to some recordings that have been postponed with Split Arrows, Glutted Swarm, Warpage, and Dead Rights, and get to recording the debut album of my Celtic folk band Clanna Morna.

<http://circleastudios.wordpress.com>

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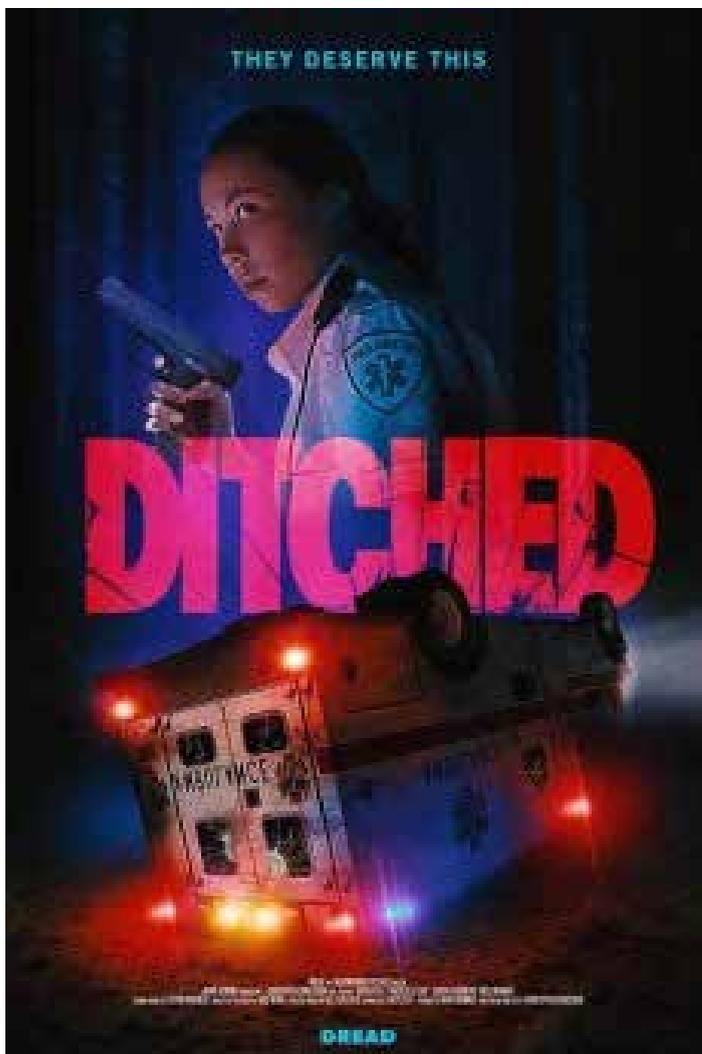


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## Ditched

Canadian horror thriller *Ditched*, starring Marika Sila and Mackenzie Gray will be released on VOD on January 18 and Blu-Ray on February 15, 2022

Written and directed by Christopher Donaldson, and produced by Mark Sommer, *Ditched* is being

distributed in North America on VOD/Blu-Ray release by Epic Pictures on their Dread Presents genre label.

In *Ditched*, a routine prison transfer crashes in the forest and desperate to escape an overturned ambulance a group of paramedics is trapped with violent prisoners. A young Inuit paramedic Melina (Marika Sila) finds herself surrounded by murderers with a mere 100 feet to climb out of a ditch to escape when they are attacked by an unseen force in the forest, Melina's short journey to safety becomes the ultimate contest of wills. The group quickly discovers that they are the victims of an ambush with the perpetrators hunting them down one by one.

*Ditched* stars the multi-talented indigenous actress Marika Sila, who came to mainstream attention in her breakout role of Sergeant Yuka Mongoyak in Jordan Peele's *The Twilight Zone* remake. Marika's

most recent recurring role on *Tribal* is airing on APTN. She also specializes in stunts and special skills including hoop dancing, fire spinning, sword, and staff handling. One of Vancouver's most venerable award-winning actors Mackenzie Gray (*Man of Steel*, *Legions*, *Fargo*, *Riverdale*) also stars. Horror fans will know Mackenzie from



his most notable roles including *Rabid* (2019) and *Grave Encounters* (2011). *Ditched* features a pumping synth soundtrack with guitar elements created by musician Clayton Worbeck (Revoluting Cocks/Ministry).

Writer/Director Christopher Donaldson developed *Ditched* as an 80s-inspired horror-thriller. Shot in Edmonton, Canada, *Ditched* answers the question of, "What would you do if you were in the middle of nowhere, injured, and you're being hunted by "something" in the night?" A very basic fear that formed the bones of the story, which then goes in a direction you don't see coming.

Filmmakers Christopher Donaldson and Mark Sommer have long careers in both film/TV and music. Christopher comes from a background of screenwriting, storyboarding, and directing commercials. He is one of Canada's most in-demand storyboard artists working on TV series like *The Flash*, *Lost in Space*, *Legends of Tomorrow*, and *Superman & Lois* in addition to the horror reboot *Child's Play* (2019). Mark comes from a music background as a former artist manager specializing in industrial rock and punk rock working with such industry stalwarts as SNFU and Tim Skold (*Shotgun Messiah*/Marilyn Manson).

*Ditched* will be playing at a string of genre favourite festivals in the summer and fall of 2021

that include theatrical screenings at Popcorn Frights Film Festival in Florida, IFI Horrorthon in Ireland, Dead of Night Film Festival in the UK, Monster Fest in Australia, plus the digital festivals Cine-Excess in the UK and Molins Horror Film Festival in Spain. *Ditched* played at EIFF, Rio Grind, and Toronto After Dark Film Festival at home in Canada.



*Ditched* is available on VOD everywhere on January 18 and Blu-Ray on February 14.

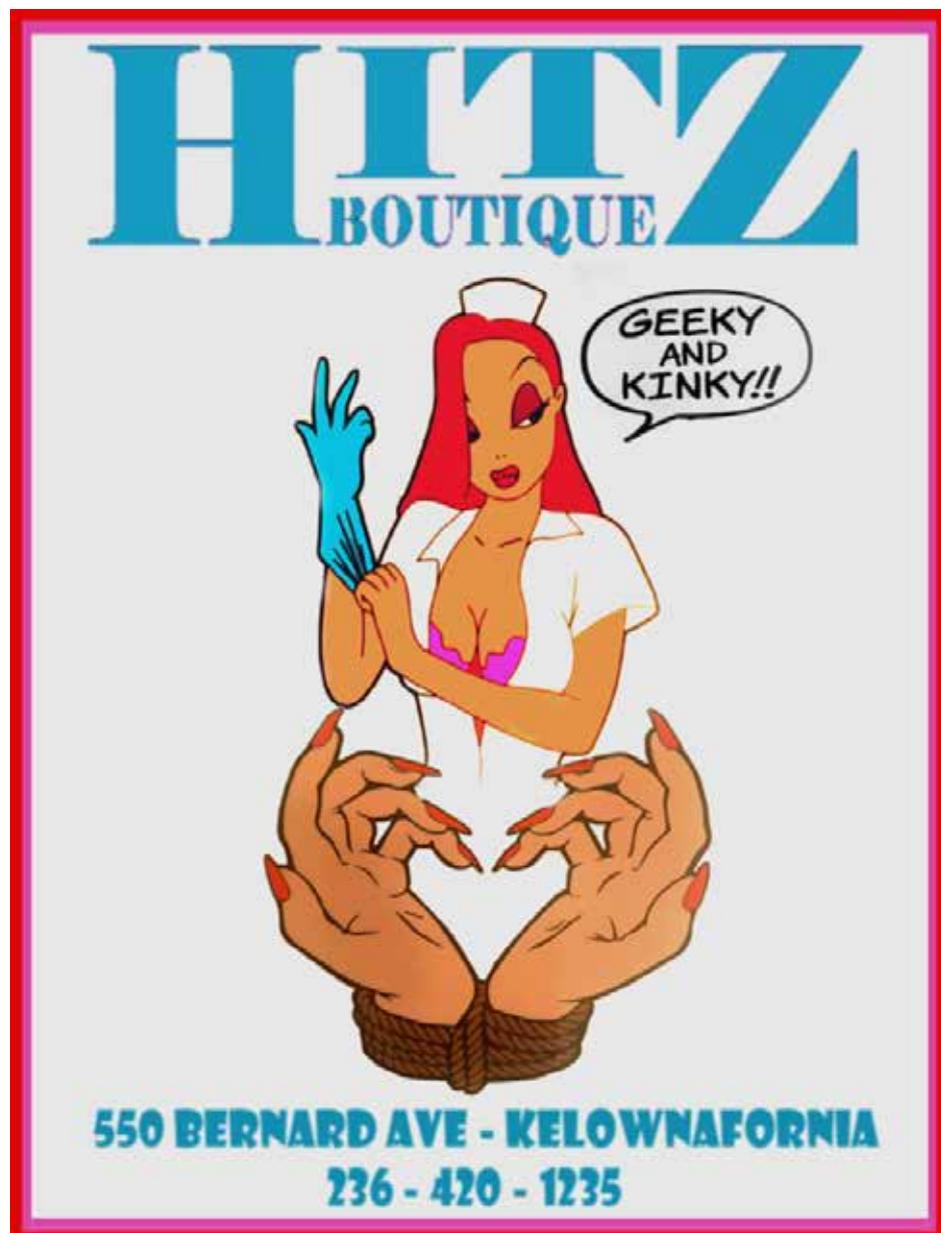
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## Soundtracks from HELL

### - Clayton Worbeck

Interview by AU Editorial

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

Clayton Worbeck: film composer and musician

**AU:** How did you first become interested in movie scores and soundtracks?

CW: Watching sci-fi/thriller/horror movies as a kid, I was always captivated by the music and sound design. I didn't pick up an instrument until I was a teen but after that, I was committed to exploring how to make sounds and compositions in the vein of those films.

**AU:** Who were some of your early influences? Any film composers or bands you've been inspired by? (I love Goblin!)

CW: I dig Goblin too! I wouldn't call them a direct influence but I love their vibe and approach. I was inspired to go down this path early on by composers such as Vangelis, John Carpenter and Wendy Carlos. Lately I've been inspired by scores from Clint Mansell, John Murphy, Disasterpiece and Jóhann Jóhannsson to name a few.

**AU:** How did you first get inspired to work on film scores? How did you become involved in the film industry and get your first break?

CW: As a younger musician and producer, I always wanted to work on film scores but didn't know enough about the process or how to get my



foot in the door. I eventually had the chance to contribute/collaborate with a couple different composers on two separate indie films. From that point on I was determined to make scoring films my focus.

**AU:** What is on your musical resume to date? Have you worked on any other film scores in the past?

CW: I have a decent resume as a guitarist/keyboardist/remixer/producer - mostly in the industrial/post-punk/metal/hard rock scene of the late 90s and 00s. I toured/worked with many bands including Ministry, Revolting Cocks, Filter, Prong, and IAMX. I transitioned to scoring films exclusively around 10 years ago. Since then I've scored feature films, shorts, and TV shows.

**AU:** Tell us about the film you just worked on recently entitled *Ditched*. How would you describe the movie, and how did you approach the soundtrack? And can you verbally describe the final soundtrack used in the film? What kind of instruments and elements did you incorporate into the score?

CW: *Ditched* is a brutally violent horror/thriller. The score matches that tone and goes beyond it. The music as a whole is like the soundtrack to a particularly nightmarish fever dream. After watching the initial cut and talking it over with Chris, I intended to use a lot of guitar music for this score but very little guitar made it into the final mix. Instead, synthesizers, samplers and bass guitars completely took over this score.

**AU:** How was it working with the film's producer Mark Sommer and writer/director Christopher Donaldson?

CW: I enjoyed the process with both of them. I've worked with Mark before on several band projects over the years but it was my first time working

with Chris. He has an appreciation of film scores which made the conversations and decisions about the music so much easier and enjoyable.

**AU:** What are some of your favourite movies and film scores? Do you collect soundtracks on vinyl? Any gems in your collection that you are exceptionally proud of?

CW: Some of my favourite scores include *The Shining*, *Clockwork Orange*, *Bladerunner*, *The Thing*, *Ravenous*, *Hanna*, and more recently *It Follows*, *Annihilation* and *Mandy*. I do have some of these on vinyl but I'm not an avid collector.

**AU:** Any advice for young musicians and composers?

CW: Put in the time to find your unique voice and let it guide you as you gain more experience.

**AU:** Any projects on the horizon that you are working on? Anything else you want to mention or promote?

CW: I'm working on a couple scores right now but it's so early on with those that I can't really comment. I will mention a documentary I scored around the same time as *Ditched*. It's called *Magnificent Beast* and it's about the origins of and reasons for the pork taboo. It will be airing on PBS in the USA starting in February.

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





### Cannabis sex toys

You read that right. It's a thing and everything I have seen has been cute, funny, and fun. I can't get enough of cannabis-themed accessories because I love weed; throw that on a sex toy and we have harmony. It's all about including as many of your partner's favorites as possible. If one of them is weed, these toys are sure to please in multiple ways...over and over.

### Glass Sex Toys

Dildos made from glass can be incredibly beautiful; however, they have to be made with expert precision. If not, they are likely to break. When a glass piece has been finished, it needs to sit in a kiln for a set time, at a certain temperature. All of this is based on its thickness and the composition of the glass within the piece.

When placed in the kiln, the heat spreads slowly, to some parts faster than others. As it sits in the kiln, the temperature evens out and the glass settles together. The heat is adjusted and the process restarts, over and over. Each piece is individual, requiring a different time and temperature and if not done properly, that dildo is sure to shatter apart. The potential for harm both physically and psychologically is simply too gruesome to imagine and no orgasm is worth the risk.

The heat is adjusted and the process restarts, over and over. Each piece is individual, requiring a different time and temperature and if not done properly, that dildo is sure to shatter apart. The potential for harm both physically and psychologically is simply too gruesome to imagine and no orgasm is worth the risk.

### Cannabis Lubes and Pleasure Oil

THC affects the way our receptors respond to sensation and when it comes to sexual pleasure,

the right strain can heighten the entire experience. Cannabis lubes and pleasure oils are a fantastic way to apply those cannabinoids topically in the exact spot you want them to be effective. If sex is a challenge due to physical or mental trauma or other health conditions, putting weed down there might make all the difference. However, it's important to note that if you put it on a place that is going inside of a body, that body could get high from it. The bioavailability of the vagina and rectum is quite significant, meaning, your body makes the most it can out of each of those milligrams. When you take 25mg of THC up your butt, it feels a lot stronger than a 25mg THC edible because your body absorbs more.

### Safety First

There is nothing hotter than safety and consent because once you have those, anything goes. If you are down to get busy, spice it up with a weed-flavored condom. If one-night stands had an official holiday, it would be Valentine's Day. If you are on the prowl, looking for love, these might be just your ticket. Made from latex but without THC, these condoms are supposed to smell like weed. It makes me curious as to the taste. The color? Green, of course!

Here is a hot tip I learned from Ms. Harvi Wallbanger, Owner and Operator of VIP Escort Agency - Flavored condoms are great for condom blow jobs but prolonged use during intercourse can cause yeast infections.

### Surprise Candles and Bath Products

Remember getting surprise bags as a kid? It was so exciting because, at that age, you still liked the stuff you got? You can have that again. Welcome to the world of surprise candles and



bath products. A piece of jewelry is wrapped and placed inside a bath bomb or candle. When the product is used, the surprise is revealed. So, here is your home run to knock your Valentine's Day out of the park; get one of these to use with your partner or give it to them. Whether it be candlelight canoodling or a sensual bath together, you can set the mood, improve the environment, and best of all, get a little gift once you are done.

Regardless of your plans for this Valentine's Day, I hope you spend it doing something or someone you love. Happy Valentine's Day!

## Valentines Day Sex for the Stoner Couple

By Julia Veintrop

The key to making the most of February 14th is planning ahead. But, in the words of Sweet Brown, "ain't nobody got time for that." Valentine's Day can be a blast, especially if you smoke weed. If you have a 420 friendly partner, kick it up this year and get freaky with some canna loving. No ideas? Don't worry about it... I got your back. Think of me as your weed wingman because I want to help you make the most of your VDay. Here are some great toys and accessories to get you in the mood for the ultimate stoner Valentine's Day sex.



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**A Single Stoner's Guide to Valentine's Day**

By Julia Veintrop

Fucking Valentines Day... How depressing. Being single sucks so hard because not only are you not getting laid, you are reminded of all the sex happening around you. It's in your face. It can feel like everyone gets to bang each other and you are stuck at home playing air guitar. Granted, some years are easier than others. A lot of factors can come into play. If you are single and just want to go to bed, cry and maybe order pizza, consider a different approach instead; a reframe of mind if you will. Here is the single stoner's guide to surviving Valentine's Day and it's all about self-love...

**Not your day off? No problem!**

Before we get into the specifics of this strategy, I want to acknowledge a few things. Valentine's

Day is not a national holiday and it doesn't mean that life is on pause. Responsibilities remain and we all have to work... especially if all your coworkers have partners. There is no reason why any of that should get in the way of the best day ever. In fact, if you do it right, you will have something to think about, adding build up and making it better.

**Masturbation... canna style...**

Sure, it's fine to talk about having sex with another person but when you talk about having sex with yourself, people get weird. Let's just get this out there, front and center. Masturbation is normal, healthy and this Valentine's Day, you are going to town. There are so many different ways to maximize masturbation with cannabis. Plus, when you only have to focus on yourself, you can really notice how the plant makes your body respond to every sensation you create. Here is what I suggest, treat yourself the way you deserve:

Set the scene - light candles, make your bed up to be incredibly comfortable and inviting, have water handy and use a fancy glass, have pre-rolls and a lighter ready, use the good dab rig and clean it the day before...

Preplan your porn and music - not only will it save precious personal time, it builds up anticipation and makes you excited.

Preplan your cannabis - whatever you are going to use, the last thing that you want to do is take too much and fall asleep. Cannabis lube can pack a punch but used properly, in the right dose unlocks a stairway to heaven; especially if you have medical issues that make sex a challenge.

Don't forget about aftercare - You deserve to give yourself whatever makes you happy so think about what you like. Go all out. If you are going to take a bath, light candles, use a bath bomb and eat dessert. Yes, I am telling you to do this. Get baked and eat dessert in the bath. For real. It's awesome. Give it a go. If you really want to kick it up a notch, opt for a cannabis bath bomb and

your favorite tasting edible to munch in the tub.

**Get yourself a present**

No matter who you are, what you have done, or what you haven't in your life, you are worthy of love. Give yourself a bit of that in a physical form. It doesn't have to be expensive or big, just meaningful to you. If you have the money to get yourself a treat, go for it but don't just give it to yourself, do it with pizzazz. Wrap up your gift ahead of time and place it somewhere that you have to look at it. Wait until after all of your self

loving to open it. Give yourself something to look forward to.

If you are single and lonely, this Valentine's Day is going to be awesome. This year, you are getting spoiled by the hottest, kindest, most incredibly generous partner and they always make sure you get off... On February 14th, you have a date with yourself and the good news is, there is going to be weed.

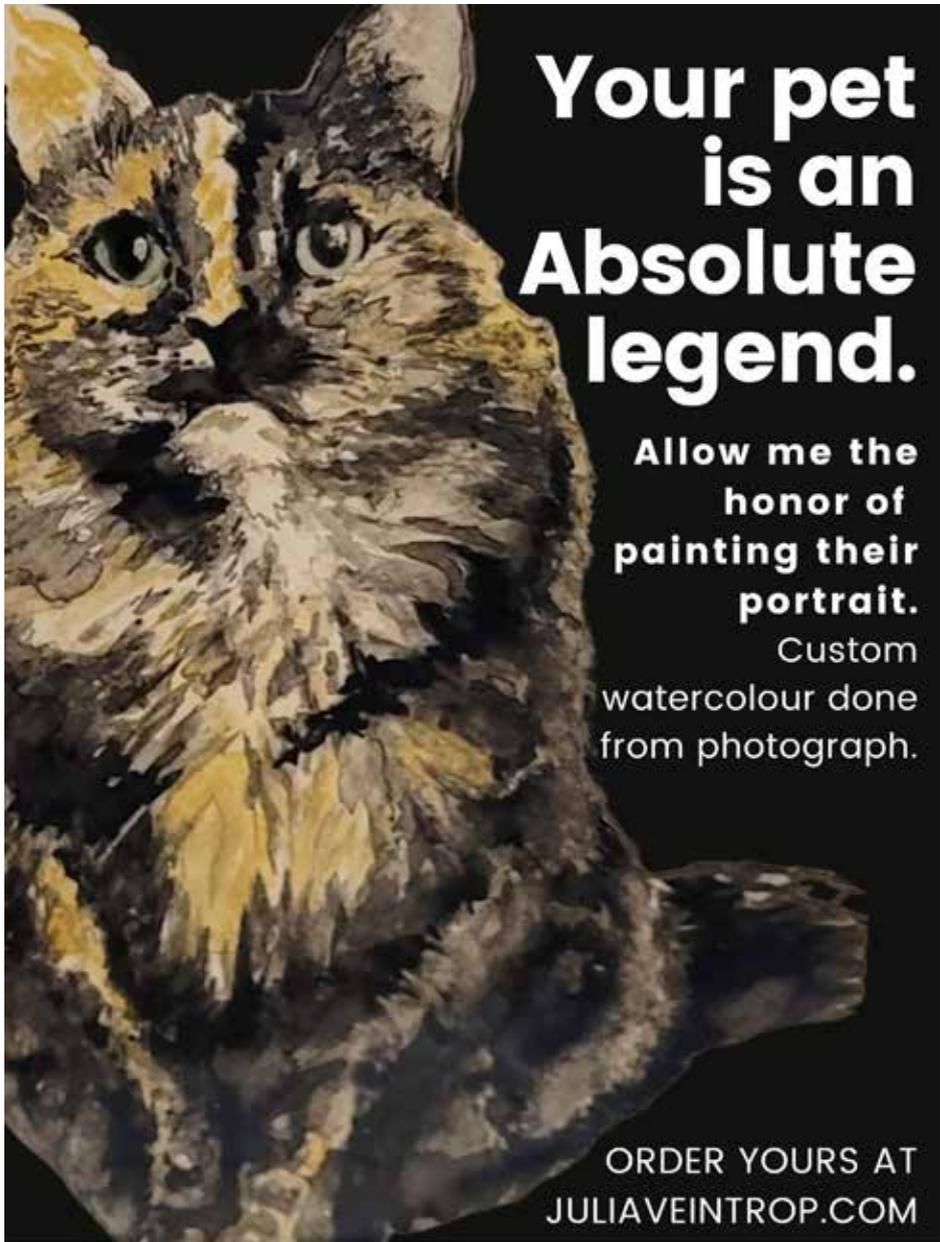
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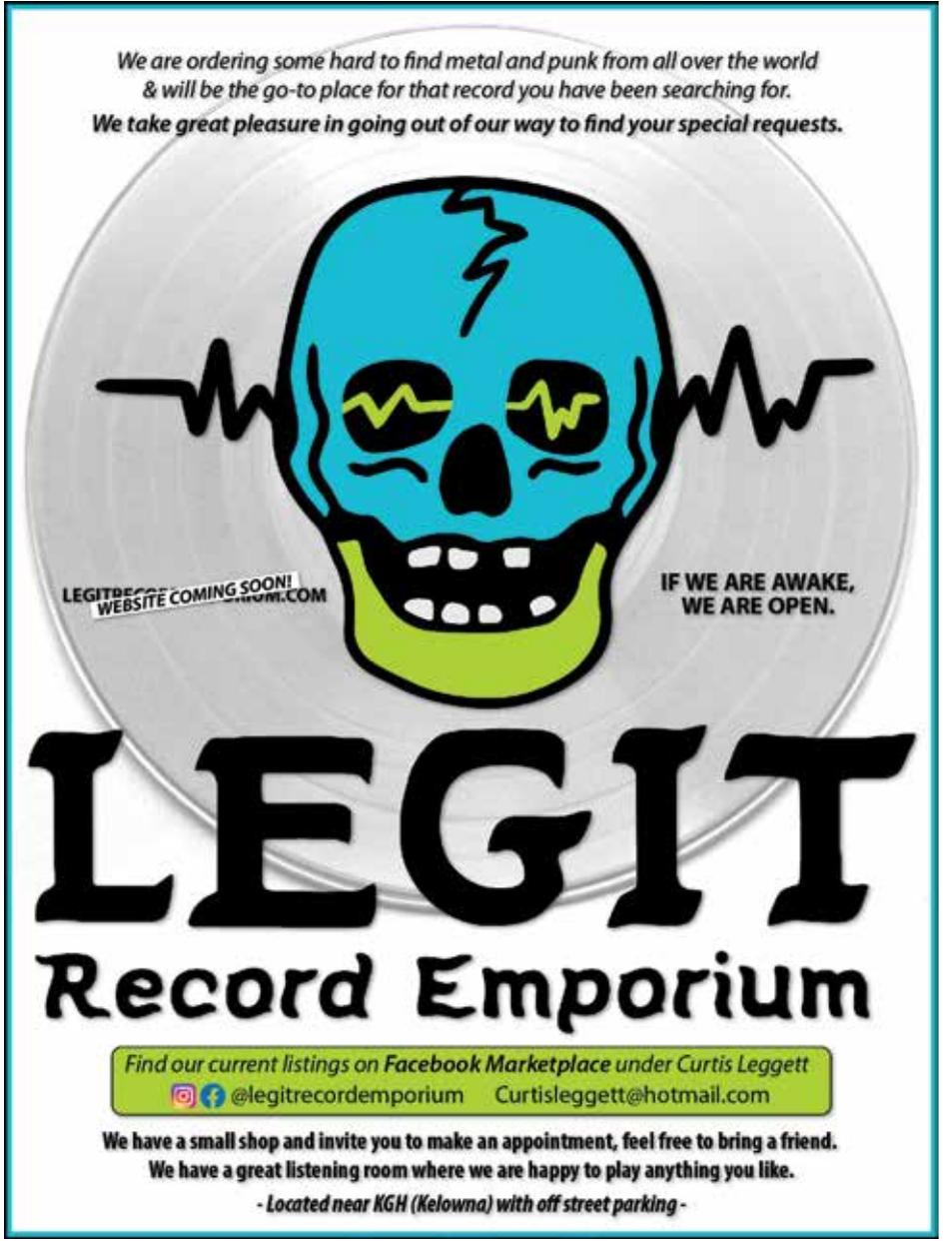


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Sidney schoolmates, Pigment Vehicle. Recorded and released mid-summer 1990, the debut "4 Song EP" quickly sold through numerous cassette editions. Having accepted Weed's 7" offer, the group returned to Henderson's studio in September and recorded a new song to accompany one taken from the demo,

## Stick Farm

Written by the band

Stick Farm was formed in June of 1989 by childhood friends **Jason Flower** (guitar/vocals, age 16) and **Jeremy Turner** (drums, age 15); following Flower's departure from local hardcore band Tomorrow's Hostility. Ex-band mate **Mark Johnstone** (bass/lead vocals, age 17) joined in mid-July, with **Chris Sartiso** (lead guitar, age 15) completing the line-up in mid-September, following the demise of a short-lived trio with Flower named Con-Fusion.

The group initially functioned under the name Get Gone, followed by Drain Pipe on early rehearsal recordings, miraculously receiving a 7" record offer from West German label Weed Records before even playing live or recording a proper studio session. The band recorded an unreleased two-song demo at Parklands Secondary in late 1989. Arriving at the name Stick Farm, they approached Dollhouse Studios operator Scott Henderson, who'd recently begun Incentive Productions, a label hosting a rising new wave of hardcore punk and Nomeansno-influenced "Victoria sound" groups, including their



resulting in the "Doors of Perception" 7" EP, released in late 1990 following the groups debut concert.

Both the "4 Song EP" cassette and "Doors of Perception" 7" EP received excellent reviews and top ten college radio airplay. By 1991, a full length album was beginning to be composed, and the group received an offer of a Western European tour. Locally, the group progressed to larger shows on Vancouver Island and the lower mainland, in turn propelling them within the local scene, at times even overshadowing their headliners.

Near the end of the school year, band tensions were beginning to rise as the material became more complex. The group re-entered Dollhouse Studios and laid down four songs; two in a new heavy progressive direction alongside

two older re-worked tracks. Within a few weeks of completing the recording, the group had unfortunately splintered, with the three remaining members dropping the repertoire and direction, while Flower joined Mexican Power Authority in July of 1991. Turner and Flower continued with a short-lived punk trio named Pez, alongside multiple attempts to solidify a new SF-style quartet. The remaining trio of Sartiso/Johnstone/Turner resurfaced in early 1992 as fjit, pursuing a more progressive math-rock direction. The result of the 1991 Stick Farm recording session became the posthumous "Gut..." 7" EP released on Weed's renamed Flight 13 Records, as well as two European compilation appearances.

Stick Farm was somewhat of a local anomaly during their two year rise. With a second wave of Victoria hardcore punk and thrash metal both at a peak, grunge yet to be exploited, local heroes Nomeansno releasing their most influential albums, and underground genres crossing over, fans and critics were hard-pressed pin-pointing Stick Farm's musically advanced, bass-centric, satirical, teenage prog-heaviness;

nevertheless they were embraced by all who experienced them. An interesting side note is that Stick Farm rehearsed right across the street from a home that Nomeansno/Wright-brothers' regularly frequented in the late 70's; Turner in fact grew up being exposed to their music. Despite being much more hardcore and metal than NMN, the association never failed to be made by critics and fans alike.

**Jeremy:** Part of me looks back at Stick Farm the same way that many mid-life crisis adults look back on their high school years - there were laughable and embarrassing moments (esp.



our crossover mullets!), but there is still some nostalgia intact. Being in Stick Farm was probably the closest I will ever get to earning some kind of teenage street-cred from my hard earned time in the thrash-zone. It is mind-blowing to acknowledge that we broke up 30 years ago (ca. 2021)!

**Chris:** Formative and seminal years of youthful exuberance. Without this band and these guys I wouldn't be doing what I do today.

**Mark:** The Stick Farm era, now looking back was one of the best times of my life. I always looked forward to rehearsals. I truly feel that if we stuck with it and worked through our differences we would have left more of a

prominent footprint on the local scene.

**Jason:** We had the odd rare differences, but the lifespan of the group was a lot fun and I have many fond memories. I do wish we'd lasted a bit longer, but the fact that we were only together for two years and had the opportunity to release two records in that time, is really quite remarkable.



person's soul.

**AU: What do you like about dark places?**

Noel: I feel a strange connection to dark places. I think they give me peace. But above all, these places inspire me.

**AU: What inspiration have you received from dark places?**

Noel: Thanks to the local cemetery in my small town, I was able to write my first book. I also write stories, and when I feel without creativity I decide to go to some forest or some shady meadow.

**AU: What bands are you listening to currently?**

Noel: Black metal groups like Batushka, Marduk...but I also listen to instrumental gothic music like Nox Arcana or Peter Gundry and by supposed bands like The Sisters of Mercy.

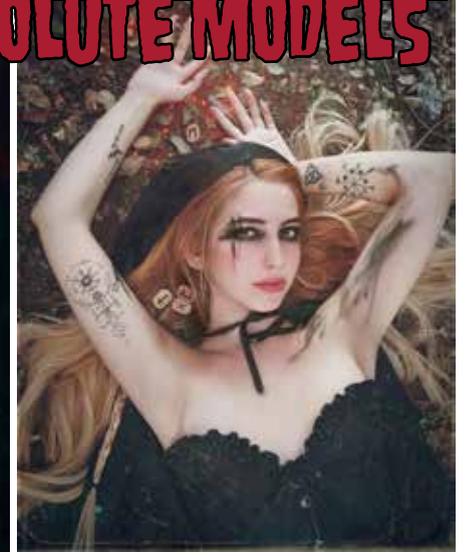
**AU: Are you reading anything interesting currently?**

Noel: Yes! I recently received the copy of the latest issue of *Witches Magazine* in which I have contributed one of my photographs, and it is an interesting read on the occult and paganism.

**AU: Do you consider yourself a witch?**

Noel: Yes, I have been practising witchcraft for almost a decade.

**AU: What values of witchcraft do you covet the most?**



Noel: "Bruja."

**AU: Do you have a lot of plants in your home?**

Noel: Yes! Luckily I live in a big house with a front garden and a back garden. I have aromatic plants, flowers, roses and two trees.

**AU: Are there many clubs/places for goths in your part of Spain?**

Noel: Unfortunately, there are not many gothic places in Spain. There are only small clothing stores and some metal and gothic music bars in Madrid, the capital of Spain. A few years ago, there was an event called Madrid Gothic Week, where activities such as reading gothic books, concerts, etc. were held, but that event was cancelled years ago. A shame.

@n\_oviembre



## Absolute Models:

### Noel

Interview with Noel from Spain

By Don McCaskill

**Absolute Underground: You seem to photograph a lot of things other than yourself, what is your favourite subject?**

Noel: My favourite subject is portraits and dark landscapes like gloomy forests or cemeteries. There is a really beautiful and eerie stillness in these places. As for portraits, I think that through photography we can see a piece of the



Noel: I think that something very important in witchcraft is herbology. I am a huge fan of plants. I also believe that dream spells are important. However, I am not a big fan of tarot or crystals although I would like to learn more about it.

**AU: What object do you consider most sacred?**

Noel: The skulls. It seems to me a metaphor of life and the death of a living being.

**AU: Do you have skulls or collect skulls of any kind?**

Noel: I have a small skull belonging to a rodent. I found that skull among

henbane plants, in the corner of a church. Unfortunately it is the only skull I have, sometimes when I walk through the forest I try to look for a skull but at the moment I have not found another.

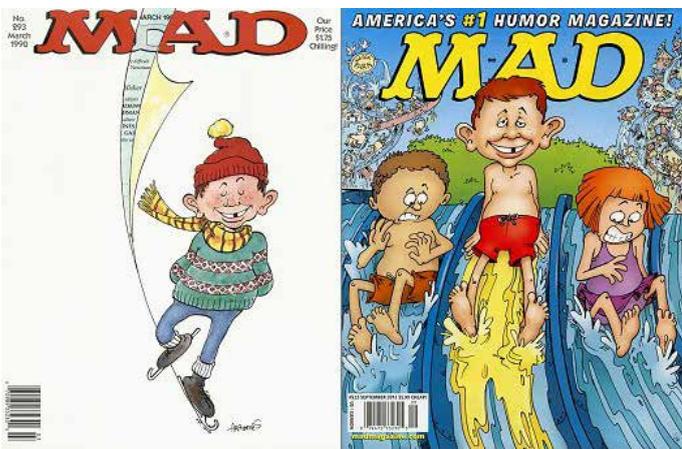
**AU: How do you say "witch" in Spanish?**

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## COMIC BOOK ICONS

### SERGIO ARAGONÉS – PART 1

Interview by Ira "Cheese Dip" Hunter  
with question assists by Ricky Long Jak  
and Gareth Gaudin

#### AU: What are you best known for?

**Sergio Aragonés:** MAD Magazine and the comic book Groo the Wanderer. The other things that I've done, they come and go, but the super fans remember them.

#### AU: How long have been drawing for MAD Magazine?

**Sergio:** For 60 years, since 1962.

#### AU: There was a news story about a final issue and now people think that MAD Magazine isn't around anymore, but it actually just started over again with a new issue number one?

**Sergio:** Well, what happened is that they changed a few years ago. When MAD was in New York, Warner's (Warner Bros.) decided to move every company back to Los Angeles including MAD. But the majority of the editors and many of the artists like Al Jaffee were living established lives in New York with their families. They were not going to move to Los Angeles. So they changed all the staff. They retired them and moved the whole operation to Los Angeles with a new editor, Bill Morrison, and the magazine started over there. Eventually, I don't know if it was because of sales, they decided to stop publishing original material and they now only use reprint material. A recent issue of MAD was dedicated to me. The whole thing. The cover was one I did, new articles inside and a lot of reprints, but from cover to back cover everything was me. So that was very interesting. That was a very nice issue. So from now on that's it. That was the end for me too with MAD.

#### AU: But your art will still be reprinted?

**Sergio:** Yeah, we've got reprints sure. So people from the new generation who are buying MAD, they still see my work.

#### AU: Thank you for explaining. I wondered why DC Comics all of a sudden moved to LA.

**Sergio:** Yeah, it was one of those bean counters that decided. Everything is based on economics. I was never involved that much with the management of anything. I just did my work every issue. I did the marginals, I did the ideas for the covers, and the Mad Looks At. I was able to travel because I always just took that work with me. I knew my deadlines and that was it. My wife and I went to Europe for a long time and the checks were just deposited automatically.

#### AU: Could you explain to people what a marginal is?

**Sergio:** I knew MAD Magazine from Mexico. I was in Mexico when MAD came out and I was just fascinated by it because I had never seen art like that. I couldn't read it, but just the art itself was enough for me. I tried to get my friends who spoke English to translate for me but they couldn't because the English that they knew was learned in school and it was not Mad English, which is totally irreverent. When I came to the States in 1962 my English was still pretty bad. I went to MAD and they



liked my work and they published it. They had these little signs on the corners of the magazine, little English signs, but I couldn't understand them. So while I was at the office I went to one of the editors who became a dear friend of mine named, Jerry DeFuccio. Jerry was incredible, friendly and helpful. So I said, "What does this mean, this little sign on the border?" and he said "Well, have you seen the movie so and so?" I said "No." and Jerry said "Well, then you will not understand it." I asked about another one and he said "Have you read the book about Hemingway?" I said "No." and he replied "Well then you won't understand this either." They were little written jokes.

So I figured there must be a lot of people who wouldn't understand the meaning if they missed the book or the movie. So I decided to put little cartoons on the borders, pantomime cartoons, and they loved it and that was it. The first issue that came out when I was there, I had the cover

idea, a Mad Look At Astronauts which was two pages, and the marginals. Later, I found out that the editors said these are funny, but we don't think he can do a set of cartoons without words that size for long. So let's just publish them until he runs out of ideas. I did it from 1962 until the magazine collapsed. The marginals are little cartoons on the borders, without words, very much in the European style. There's been collections and pocket books and they have a large book called Sergio Aragonés Five Decades of his Best Works, or something like that.

#### AU: It's universal, there is no language needed to figure out the joke.

**Sergio:** Yes that is basically it. It is just pantomime cartoons and I have done thousands and thousands of them. If you make the mathematics, each issue had like 8 to 10 of them from 1962 until now.

#### AU: Have you ever done a comic strip about Snowboarding?

**Sergio:** I once did A Mad Look At Snowboarding for Mad Magazine. That was a lot of fun, back when it was starting and they didn't allow snowboarding and on the ski places. Now it's totally popular. But then it was like, "What's snowboarding? No way are they going to be doing that here."

#### AU: Where did you grow up and how did your interest in art first get started?

**Sergio:** I was born in Spain, raised in Mexico, we arrived as refugees from the Spanish Civil War. My first language is French because from Spain we went to France and because of the war we immigrated to Mexico where I discovered that I just loved cartoons. They kept sending them from Spain. The ones in English I didn't understand. I just loved to draw. I arrived in Mexico in 1942 so there was no television, there was not many things. So everything that you did then you did it at home yourself. If you like music you played music and if you like drawing you drew all day long. Because I like humor and I like adventures and things, I just loved comics trips and animation movies. There was a theatre in Mexico, Cine Aladino, like Aladdin. All the refugee families took their kids to the cinema and the only thing that they showed were cartoons. So that was great but I never thought I was going to be a professional cartoonist when I was a kid. I went to school. I went to college. I studied architecture but knowing by then that I wanted to be a cartoonist. I made my first sales while in high school in Mexico. I did a newspaper, like many cartoonists, for the school and I sold some to a magazine. That was the beginning of the professional career. That was in 1954. Then I started selling and selling. I was still going to school, I was on the rowing

team, and having very good fun. I belonged to the Boy Scouts for a while. Then one day you are a professional cartoonist. I decided that I had to go to the States because that's where they were better paid and the circulation of the magazines were greater.

#### AU: How do you describe your artistic style?

**Sergio:** I'm very fortunate in that I think I don't have one. Because having a style you become a slave to it. Once you have a certain style, you have to always draw it like that. But without having a definitive style I can draw just as it comes to me. It probably became a style but without me wanting it to be. When you're a kid you copy other cartoonists. You don't invent what you do. I copied a cartoonist from Argentina called Oski and I loved his work. Then you see another cartoonist you like. I remember switching to a style like a guy called Virgil Partch, who signed his work Vip. Vip had such a modernistic style, and I start going in that direction. Slowly you copy something else from another that you like and once you are comfortable, you don't realize that you're not copying anybody else. You're doing your own stuff.



#### AU: I understand that early on you would draw pictures for pretty girls.

**Sergio:** Well, that was a very slick gimmick for me. Because all the other guys had to do all kinds of things to approach the girls. But for me it was very simple, if I saw a table with pretty girls, I would draw something cute and bring it to them and they laughed and they loved it. It was to break up the ice. That was very, very easy. I didn't draw a crude cartoon or something repellent to the girls, it was little rabbits and cute things with little flowers. And it always worked, so that was terrific.

#### AU: So for your first professional work in the United States, you just walked up to the MAD Magazine offices?

**Sergio:** Well, the first one was different. I tried to go to a lot of the magazines. There's a formula. When I first arrived I met a very nice cartoonist Mort Gerberg, who was published in the New Yorker, at a party and he explained to me that every Wednesday all the magazine cartoon editors looked at the work of the cartoonists. So every Wednesday you'd show your cartoons to the different magazines and you left them there in an envelope. Then the next week you'd go back and pick up the envelope and leave a new one. When you open your envelope, you see if you made a sale to that magazine. So that's how I started doing all those sales to different magazines.

But the majority of them didn't like my work because it didn't have any words and when they bought a cartoon they always put at the bottom "Without Words". The American humour is totally based on the British one, you know, like the punch line. So everybody looked for the punch line on my cartoons and there were none. I just do pantomime cartoons. So I did a few sales and things but it was very frustrating. All the editors and the people that I met told me, these are too crazy you should go to MAD.

But I knew MAD, I knew it well. They didn't have this type of humour. The only guys they had there, and they were brand new, were Don Martin and (Antonio) Prohías who did Spy vs Spy. So I decided, well I've had it here with the States. I'm not doing too good. So I have to go MAD to meet the people to see how they are. I had to meet them because I was a fan. So I went there and met Prohías. It was very funny because we started speaking Spanish. I asked him in Spanish to introduce me to some of the editors that I wanted to meet and some of the people there. He says in Spanish, "Well you have to introduce yourself. I don't speak English either." So I was at MAD and on that same day they bought two pages of material, two cover ideas, and they said to bring more. Man, it was like a dream. I asked the editor "What do you want?" I had a lot of astronaut cartoons. He said "Well, you have a couple here about motorcycle cops, so do something about motorcycle cops." and the next day, I was back at the door before they opened. They were asking "What happened? What do you need?" I said "No, I have your articles here." They couldn't believe it. I had drawn close to 15 ideas and they love it and they bought them again and that was it.



#### AU: Is it true you ended up sleeping on the floor and living at the MAD Magazine office?

**Sergio:** Well, what happened is I didn't really have a place to stay so Jerry the editor says "Well, look, you can stay here at the office, there is couches, a coffeemaker, a bathroom and everything but I



have to lock you up and then when I come in the morning I'll let you out." so I said "That's fine." So I had a very comfortable couch and a bathroom and coffee. So I stayed there and it was paradise I had

the whole office to myself. I would go and open the drawers and see all the originals of the guys. I would look at Al Jaffee's art and Jack Davis and Mort Drucker. I could see the original size because at that time they drew double size or more and they were fantastic. I spent the whole time learning English reading old Mads and sleeping there and then the morning they'd let me out. It was a free hotel, it was great. After I had made enough money there I went back to California, got married, and came back and never missed an issue. In my whole career, I just missed one issue. I was in Europe and I miscalculated the postal mailing time and that was it. In all those years since the my first issue (#76 - January, 1963) came out until the last one (#550 - April, 2018), I never missed an issue. Except one.

#### To be continued next issue...

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## Calling the Hot Shots With Suzi Moon

By Billy Hopeless

VD day, my Covid Cupids! I'm so happy as when I opened up my mail box today I received this hot flash infectious interview straight from the burning heart of one of the fastest catching rockers out there, Suzi Moon! Just remember my matchstick lovers, if you feel a fever after reading this you've just tested positive for love and that's just what Doctor Hopeless prescribes, so let her burn!

Absolute Underground: My dear Suzi, it's so beautiful to have you here for my Valentine's column guest. I'll never forget when we first became acquainted you were slinging guitar in the punk girl gang known as Civet. When that ended you quickly tried a couple other feral formations, so why have you now decided to go the solo route?

Suzi Moon: Hi Billy! What a sweet treat to be your guest for this interview! Oh man, we met a lot of years ago, didn't we!? How wonderful that the Universe has brought us back together! Well, I had an amazing time playing in Civet. We toured for a solid 10 years and I feel very lucky that I got to see so much of the world at such a young age. I left the band when I was 22 to focus on filmmaking, but that ultimately led me back to rock n' roll! I had a band called Turbulent Hearts for seven years. We had a good run and a lot of fun. I decided to go solo after that because I was ready to step into the spotlight and put the focus on my songwriting. It was a big risk, but I am glad I did it. The response has been very positive!

**AU: Hence the title of your debut solo EP, "Call the Shots" which came out and instantly went into second pressing. How does instant gratification feel and how are Pirates Press records treating you with such success on your maiden voyage?**

SM: It was very surreal to sell out of the first pressing so quickly. I certainly did not expect that! It makes me work harder. I am not one to rest on any type of success... I took that as an opportunity to do more. Like, ok, people are digging this - I gotta get back in the studio, I gotta keep pushing. I am so fortunate to have Pirates Press Records on my team because they are a label that truly values the artist's creative vision. We work so well together, and every day I thank my "shooting stars" (see what I did there!?) for their support. They are such a rad team & I certainly couldn't have done this without them!

**AU: Now on said EP, your first single and video is for the song "I'm Not a Man," which has you adamantly stating that fact. It's quite obvious you are not a man and are more than capable of rocking hard and true not due to yer gender as there are lots who don't in all genders. Why do you feel it's important to state this? Is it all a tribute to Bo Diddley's, "I'm A Man," Peggy Lee's "I'm A Woman," or Helen Reddy's, "I am Woman"?**

SM: It's actually not that deep! It rhymed really well, haha. I had the riff to start with and some ridiculous working lyrics. See, I had this small sparkly vintage purse that was shaped like a seashell, I took it everywhere for a while. My friend would always call that "my clam" so I just started writing about it... "I take my clam with me out to dinner, she has a really big appetite... etc etc" Anyway, at some point the words, "I'm not a man and I don't give a damn," popped into my head and the rest wrote itself pretty quickly. I would say that I was pretty inspired by No Doubt's "Just A Girl" more than the other tunes you mentioned, although they're all great!

**AU: Had to ask as I often find myself under the influence, you started playing professionally at the young ambitious age of 15, who were the gods and goddesses you worshipped and inspired you to play rock and roll?**

SM: Corey Parks, Brody Dalle and Texas Terri Bomb were the first women I saw live that lit the fire. They are all powerhouses who are totally tough, sexy, and captivating. Very unique performers who do their thing and fully own it. Before them, I had never seen a woman move like that and command attention in such a way. You really can't take your eyes off 'em... Onstage and off. Musically, I listened to a lot of pop punk when I was a teenager, but I also had burned CDs with Elvis Costello, The Cramps, and Swedish girl group Sahara Hotnights on there.

**AU: You've been playing tons all through this current party pooping pandemic time we're living in while most of us have been sitting on the sidelines waiting. What's your take on the whole shituation?**

SM: It fucking sucks. It sucks for so many different reasons. It really hurts my heart to see the negative effect this pandemic has had on people. I think we're all just totally exhausted by it at this point... I didn't play my first post lockdown show until September 2021, when we had that little moment of "Oh, ok, vaccines are here - time to party!" So we played a total of 13 shows in the fall,

# HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

and did a couple little tours, which were really, really good for the soul. I think that if people are comfortable going out and seeing a show, they should be allowed to make that decision for themselves. I personally wanted to keep working throughout the pandemic and did my best to be smart/safe while recording and making videos and stuff and we've been lucky to not have any crew members get sick while we've been together.

**AU: Who are your crew mates in the Suzi Moon Band, do they have a cool band name like Suzi and the Y Fronts, or Suzi and the Drive Thru D'artagnans?**

SM: My band consists of Drew Champion on lead guitar, Patti Bo on bass guitar, and Sean Peterson on drums! They fucking rock and I am so lucky to know these guys. They have all been playing in different bands for years, so they have touring experience and recording chops on top of just being totally stellar players. We have so much fun together but we're definitely not a party band. 3/4 of us are sober and we're all into staying healthy & strong. There's a common goal/vision with this band and that is so important. They don't have an official backing band name!

**AU: Well all for Suzi and Suzi for all! Oh shite I'm sorry, the passion I'm passin-it. This is the Valentine's Column we better get to the heart of the interview. Now I read on the Facebook stall walls that you and Billy Hopeless have recently decided to duet together. Why would you tangle with such an unneutered mongrel? That guys got more red flags than the embassy in China! Anyways, tell us about the product of your unholy union.**

SM: Oh Billy, you know I love getting myself into trouble and I couldn't think of a better partner in crime than you! I've been such a huge fan of you and The Black Halos for years and years and years

- it has been a dream of mine to collaborate with you and it's finally come true! When you approached me to do a duet 7" I got so excited, it inspired me to finish a song ("Love Is A Stranger") I had started writing almost three years ago. You just have that voice, man! The voice I needed in my ear to complete the song. And getting a chance to sing on a song that you wrote ("Communicado") is just outta this world! I think that people are gonna really dig what we did together.

**AU: Well we'll all pray for your soul but let's talk about good loving. What are your fave love songs that make you gush or get ya in the mood?**

SM: "Make It Wit Chu" by Queens of the Stone Age is a sexy as fuck tune. That one always gets me goin'! "New

Kinda Kick" by The Cramps is pretty hot, too.

**AU: Well concentrate on dreamboats instead of shipwrecks, who was your first crush and do you still hold them as such?**

SM: Benji Madden from Good Charlotte! I mean, I was 13 in 2002 so you know, the pop punk thing hit my age group pretty hard. I was obsessed with them! I definitely don't feel that way anymore, haha, but that band will always have a place in my heart. They have really catchy songs and killer harmonies. I'm a sucker for a well written tune, so, no shame in my GC love game!

**AU: Well Canada is for Lovers. Have you ever been to Canada? Are you planning on gracing us lucky canucky loverboys and girls with a royal visit?**

SM: Oh, I love Canada! I have been lucky to tour the Great White North a couple'a times. My old band Civet supported Social Distortion in 2009 and Nashville Pussy in 2010. Actually, that Nashville Pussy tour was the tour that led to the breakup of the band... With my sister Liza & I being ditched after the Vancouver gig by our rhythm section, with another week of tour dates to finish, scrambling to find people to fly up from the US to fill in. But that's a story for another time...

**AU: Well I hope it was good for you but before we say adieu my sweet Suzi, if you were to give all my readers a Valentine card, what would it say and what would the picture be?**

SM: There would be a little orange cat on the card, and it would read, "You had me at meow!"

Happy Valentine's Day! xoxox

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# Absolute Live Reviews

## Scare the Children November 6, 2021, The Lotus Club, Tianjin

Halloween isn't over yet. Scare the Children, the Beijing-based band with a taste for the theatrical, made Samhain last just a little bit longer as they materialized at the Lotus Club in Tianjin as part of their 2021 China tour - The Second Chapter. This show was supposed to see both Titan and Megadragon as support, but circumstances prevented both of these bands from attending the scary ceremony in Tianjin. Nonetheless, the show must go on.

Opener for this concert were Coiviealda (Tree of Life), a group of youngsters in warpaint who play a folkish style of metal which sounds at times like it would be on Captain Jack Sparrow's playlist. The crowd at the club took a little while to warm up to the band, though by the last



stage was set up, many took this opportunity to guzzle down a few brews before the spooky ceremony began.

other band you'd see in China, proving that the 2021 version of Scare the Children is not just out to amuse, but to destroy.



The costumed band members slowly emerged from the upstairs green room - custom, stitched up and grotesque masks suited for each character the band member represents in the ongoing lore of Scare the Children. While the first album, *Odyssey*, is about a cursed doll named Betsy, their next will

focus more on all the different character in the band, including the keyboard/electronics player dressed much like an Onryō, or vengeful spirit, who playfully toyed with the audience members before the members got into position and then exploded into "The Seduction of Little Timmy."



The band is much like a horror manga coming to life. While they are in fact, scary, like a Junji Ito comic, it's hard to look away once the show has started, as the band captivates with every shocking, amusing, and horrific panel. You don't need to study up on the backstory to enjoy a live show by this band, however. Songs like "The Amazing Circus of Betsy & Clown" raged as hard as any

handful of songs, they had the full support of the audience, who were stoked for Scare the Children.

As there were less bands than promoted, an announcement was made that free cola and beer would be available for the people in attendance. As Scare the Children's



The band may be called Scare the Children, but they certainly amuse and exhilarate the adults with their colorfully vivid costumes, grim humor and explosive energy.

-Ryan Dyer



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# Absolute Album Reviews

## Eliminator - Ancient Light Cherry Red Records

When Eliminator last released an album, the excellent *Last Horizon* in 2018, the world was a very different place as we all know.

The new Eliminator album, *Ancient Light* was written remotely. I observe that, although it clearly made things hard for the band, not being able to write and jam together in the same room, the results are ultra impressive.

*Ancient Light* is something of a conceptual piece about entropy (a decline into disorder), and as such encompasses the full spectrum of all that metal is able to offer, it is a splendid musical journey, both moving and uplifting. There's a power and sincerity to Eliminator's music that I love. This is metal done as it should be, for all the right reasons. Another plus for *Ancient Light* is the spot on production from Conan producer Chris Fielding, everything sounds real and right, as it should.

Eliminator will be back on the road in 2022, doing what they do best. Look out for them!

-Steve Earles

## Tokyo Blade - Fury Cherry Red Records

One of the very few good things to come out of the ongoing Covid pandemic we find ourselves living in is that a lot of creative people were able to use the time to create.

Such a band are New Wave Of British Heavy Metal stalwarts Tokyo Blade. A logical progression from their excellent 2020 album *Dark Revolution*, *Fury* finds the classic line-up of Alan Marsh (vocals), Andy Boulton (lead guitar), John Wiggins (rhythm guitar), Andy Wrighton (bass) and Steve Pierce (drums) in fine form. While staying true to the all important spirit of the NWOBHM (I best describe it as music made with love and innocence), this is very much a contemporary modern album. The song writing is strong and original, and the musicianship is first class. Very much an album of the times

we live in, in a very positive wave. Tokyo Blade are a band with their best years in front of them rather than behind.

- Steve Earles

## Lawnmower Deth - Blunt Cutters Cherry Red Records

Ohhhhhh Crikey! Lawnmower Deth are back! Those in the know will get my joke about this!

So, it has been almost thirty years since Lawnmower Deth's last album, though the band has been very active on the live front in recent years.

They also performed live with Kim Wilde, the only metal band to do so. Kim Wilde is very cool, and that makes Lawnmower Deth very cool too. I like both Lawnmower Deth and Kim Wilde, it may or may not make me cool, you decide.

Okay, hands down, I absolutely love this album. It's as funny as feck, but catchier than hell! This is a bloody great thrash album. And I love the cover, so funny.

Which reminds me, I must get round to mowing the lawn one of these days...it's been almost thirty years!

- Steve Earles

## Exhorder - Slaughter In The Vatican/The Law Cherry Red Records

Well deserved two-CD reissue of Exhorder's *Slaughter In The Vatican* and *The Law*; a most inspired idea to package these two initial albums from this seminal band. *Slaughter In The Vatican* is excellent, it stood out on its 1990 release as something special from a band with great potential.

You have to bear in mind we're talking about a period awash with classic thrash releases (Voivod for example). I think the elements of groove and death metal really made this special. It cannot have escaped Pantera's notice. Listen to *Cowboys From Hell* and then the music Pantera made before for proof.

Exhorder were trailblazers, pure and simple, and deserve that

acknowledgement and respect. They've always had it from me, and the likes of the late great Malcolm Dome, now a wider audience can appreciate it. The late Malcolm proves splendid sleeve notes to this release. An added bonus. Can I just pay tribute to Malcolm Dome for a moment? A huge part of my childhood reading about music, he brought so many good bands to my attention. And he was a proper journalist, a gentleman, fearless, for the readers, not 'Facebook Friends'; he always called out bands when they released sub-standard work. He never jumped on the social media band wagon, he was old-school, for the music, and if I could be a fraction of the writer this man was, I would be doing well. My sympathies to his family and friends. His huge written legacy is a lasting tribute.

The second CD is *The Law*, one of my all time favourite albums. Incredible grooves, great songs, Aleister Crowley inspired lyrics, if this was a just world Exhorder would have been bigger than Pantera. But in 1992 on the release of this album, the metal world had changed. It was the metal world's loss.

But Exhorder are back, and the future holds more excellent music. Maybe now the prophets truly will get the honour they deserve!

-Steve Earles

## The Residents - Wormwood Box: Curious Stories From The Bible pREServed Cherry Red Records

The Residents are a very unique band, a genre in their own right.

They are a band who seemed to have been here for ever, and simultaneously, a band not actually here yet. As the 90s began to draw its last dying breaths, The Residents sought inspiration and found in *The Bible*, a book that, for better or worse, depending on your point of view, has had a big influence on the bulk of the last two thousand years. The results are of course, strange and wonderful in equal measure.

This *Wormwood Box* contains not only the original album, but also demos, sketches, and live shows. For anyone who loves The Residents this is like Manna from Heaven!

-Steve Earles

## Theatre of Hate-Omens: Studio Work: 1980-2020 Cherry Red Records

Recently, there has been a glowing reassessment of the music that was created in the fertile petri dish of the 1980s. It was the environment where so much of the music, art and culture we now enjoy in the 21st century took place. A recent programme on the '80s on Sky Arts summed up its broad cross-cultural influence well by saying, 'it was a party that everyone was invited to' (meaning that regardless of race, creed or genre, this music was as much for you as anyone else. We are all one race, the human race). Prince is a great example, but there are so many more. Thus, we delve into work of the seminal and influential '80s band Theatre of Hate, a band still very much creating to this very day.

The first disc in this CD collection is a gathering of their singles. TOH were, and indeed are, a great singles band. Obviously their classic 'Westworld' single is included here, but tracks like 'Nero' and 'Conquistador' are truly awesome too.

Disc two is of course, the seminal *Westworld* album, which comes with a very '80s' collection of bonus remixes-a very '80s' thing, Frankie Goes To Hollywood for instance were masters at this. I love it!

Disc three is the splendidly named *Aria of the Devil*. Disc four comprises their superb BBC sessions. BBC sessions are always a treat, just another part of that great broadcaster's legacy to the musical world. A treasure trove of superb music in every genre.

Disc five is *Stone In the Rain*, which was originally a Kirk Brandon solo album but issued in the US as a Theatre of Hate Album, whatever way it was issued, there is much to love here.

Finally, disc six, *Yonjuuich*, is a collection of various mixes and shows the bands ability to constantly mutate and create in the 21st century.

Overall, a beautifully packaged and curated collection, from a band whose passion and sincerity should be an inspiration to us all.

-Steve Earles

## Elias Hulk - Unchained

### Cherry Red Records

This is one of the great obscure proto-metal albums of the '70s, and it is a gem! This is a very welcome CD reissue, as original copies are rarer than honest politicians. Elias Hulk were very much an underground band, putting in the same hard graft, paying their dues, as the likes of Black Sabbath.

The music on *Unchained* is excellent. The six-minute opening track 'We Can Fly' would appeal to fans of Black Sabbath and Monster Magnet massively, the drumming is totally insane - I love it. Elsewhere tracks like 'Nightmare' and 'Yesterday's Trip' mine the same vein of primal proto-metal heaviness. But there is also variety, 'Been Around Too Long' owes something to Jethro Tull, for instance.

Overall, an album that truly deserves to be unearthed!

-Steve Earles

## Hawkwind - Dust Of Time: An Anthology (1969-2021) Cherry Red Records

It's not often I hand out a ten, but underground legends Hawkwind truly deserve it. I once interviewed Godreah Records' Crin, a man who's not only recorded with members of Hawkwind, but has also released an excellent Hawkwind tribute entitled *Daze of the Underground*, as well as pointing out Hawkwind's massive influence on space rock and stoner rock (look at the mighty Monster Magnet or Mammoth Weed Wizard Bastard for example), he made the point that without Hawkwind, there would be no Lemmy. Without Lemmy, no Motorhead and their huge influence on heavy metal. Certainly without Motorhead we would have no Metallica, and so on... Moreover, Hawkwind's music is joyous, far-reaching: it inspires! It grew out of the 60s counter-culture, a fusion of the Spirit of the Age, Michael Moorcock's Multiverse, and a communal love of music. One of my favourite photos of all time is a picture of Lemmy-era Hawkwind on a farm, just as happy as could be. It's magical, I look at the photo, put on *Warrior On The Edge Of Time*, and I'm there! Ah, I could

write a book on this...

But at the end of the day it's about the music, and this career spanning compilation of Hawkwind's songs has no weak points. It's all good. All I can do is pick personal favourites- 'Silver Machine' (covered in fine style by the mighty Voivod), 'Assault And Battery/The Golden Void' (again, covered to great effect by The Meads of Asphodel) and 'Spirit Of The Age'.

To sum up, in a world that changes and mutates before our very eyes, Hawkwind are the ideal soundtrack, ancient and futuristic at the same time, they are the once and future band. Long may they reign.

- Steve Earles

## Ministry - Bad Blood: The Mayan Albums (2002-2005) Cherry Red Records

Ministry, without doubt, are influential, controversial, groundbreaking, and in Al Jourgansen, they have their own crazed visionary! His vision shines clear across these three albums, released during a typically prolific period of 2002-2005.

Disc One, the wittily titled *Sphinctour* was recorded on the 1996 tour to support the underrated *Filth Pig* album, and it's a true representation of Ministry's live show, plus the set list is awesome, you can't argue with it.

Disc Two is 2003's *Animositisomina*. Like *Filth Pig* before it, it was critically lauded, yet time has been kind to it, and I really like it, excellent "Magazine" cover song as well. It's with Disc 3, 2004's craftily titled *Houses of the Male* that Ministry deliver what many of their fans wanted, it's no less engaging for that and the opening track 'No "W"', is just pure raw power and innovation. It's interesting to note that the majority of tracks are single word titles beginning with 'W', it's an AI thing!

Finally, we have Disc 4, the remix compilation *Rantology*, which, as with *Sphinctour*, has an excellent collection of songs.

Overall, a superb package from one of the truly great bands.

-Steve Earles

# Absolute Film Reviews



## Poly Styrene: I Am A Cliché

X-Ray Spex front person Poly Styrene (Marianne Joan Elliott-Said) is a woman ahead of her time. She claims to know the future, and through interviews with Celeste Bell-Dos Santos, her daughter, contemporaries and fans, we can hear her voice all over again. What makes this documentary a step above others is Ruth Negga reading from Joan's

diaries as though she's her.

Those who've seen her perform live knows she was quite the fireball, but off stage-there's a lot more to her she keeps hidden away. To say "I am a Cliche" (part of the title of this documentary) is the least of her worries. She represented everything the UK punk movement was during the 70s and 80s, and perhaps even more.

a show, and to keep her in control (especially by her immediate family) was tough.

As far as alien contact is concerned, perhaps what she truly experienced was a spiritual awakening. This segment is perhaps the most telling. Some doctors believed she suffered from schizophrenia, but decades later, it turned out to be acute

In 1978, after a concert in Doncaster, South Yorkshire, she allegedly saw a UFO. Those close to her took her in for psychological treatment, and she was still steadfast; some probably thought she went mad since she was often prone to erratic things, including cutting off her hair after



John Carlow - Photographer

Local music scene ...portraiture

www.findingcharlotte.ca

bipolar disorder.

This piece is sometimes hard to watch because we're getting a psychoanalysis of this woman. Thankfully there's more to this work than just going down the rabbit

hole with this singer. It's also an absorbing look and astounding celebration of who she is, and how she made a permanent mark in punk rock history.

- Ed Sum

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## Voice Of The Streets

Interview with Chuck Andrews by Mr. Daryl Baryl

**Absolute Underground: Who are you? What are you most known for.**

Chuck Andrews. I am most known for being a punk rock music promoter on and off in Victoria over the last 20 years. The majority of shows I booked were at Logan's Pub in the last ten years.

My ex and I ran a company called 737 Productions.

**AU: Where are you from originally? How long have you lived in Victoria?**

CA: I grew up on Haida Gwaii in northern BC. This is my twenty fourth year of living in Victoria, though I did have a three month stint in Vancouver in 2005. I also lived in Nanaimo from 1995-98, which had a thriving punk scene during those years.



**AU: What's the punk/skinhead scene like in Victoria compared to back in the day?**

CA: I can't personally comment on what the scene was like in the 80s and early 90s, but I have heard lots of great stories about local shows/bands, and some pretty big name bands coming through back then. So based upon what I have witnessed in just over twenty years, I would say that it has always thrived, and is still thriving. Right up until the pandemic there were lots of house shows, gigs at Logan's, and touring bands playing elsewhere such as Lucky Bar and Capital Ballroom.

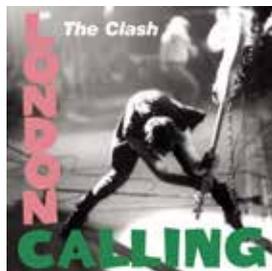
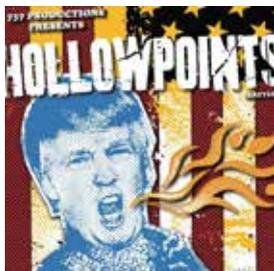
Even during the last couple of pandemic years there have been some top notch shows at Phoenix Bar and Grill and most likely some phenomenal house shows that I missed. As far as skinheads go specifically, there were a bunch of them in Victoria in the early 2000s, probably as a result of the growing ska scene, and a lot of them are still around today.

**AU: What are your top five favourite albums?**

CA: The Clash – *London Calling*, Misfits – *Static Age*, Operation Ivy – *Operation Ivy*, Ramones – *Ramones*, Rancid - ... *And Out Come the Wolves*. There is no real order here, and some of these are interchangeable with other records, but *London Calling* is always at the top of the list.

**AU: What was it like bringing The Templars to Victoria? Any cool stories?**

CA: The Templars all-ages gig in Victoria



was amazing. A few skinheads even came all the way up from Portland for it. The Lancasters were on the bill playing songs from the flawless *Alexander and Gore* record. I remember everyone in the room going wild when the underground hit "New York City," started. I will always remember the show and I am really glad that Joey and I pulled it off, and that he pulled off them playing both Vancouver and Seattle. It was quite a feat on his part.

**AU: What's the ska and two tone scene like in Victoria? We have the biggest ska festival in Canada; do you play a part in that?**

CA: I think the ska scene is probably just as strong as it has been for the last twenty plus years. One Drop

has always been a favourite local band of mine over the years, and I am happy to see that they still play gigs, and that the members are involved in other bands and in keeping the scene going. I have been involved with the Victoria Ska and Reggae Festival in the past as an organizer but I am not presently. They have brought so many amazing acts to town that I love including Toots and the Maytals, Subcity Dwellers, Barrington Levy, The Slackers, Aggrolites and many, many more.

**AU: Do you have any plans to put on future gigs?**

## VOICE OF THE STREETS



CA: I have a show booked tentatively for the end of February, but I think it is going to get moved due to the pandemic. No solid plans after that, but I am sure something will happen!

**AU: What other noteworthy skinhead bands have you brought to Victoria?**

CA: Let's hope I don't miss anyone on this of bands who are at least all somewhat related to the sub culture. Suede Razors, The Generators, Bishops Green, Harrington Saints, we brought each of them either two or three times, which makes it seem like more bands in my mind. We also worked with a couple of really great local bands too, No Heart and Off the Clock. There were definitely a couple of good parties after both the Suede Razors shows if I remember correctly, lots of spinning records and having a few good laughs.

**AU: Top three local restaurants?**

CA: Pink Bicycle, Ferris', Beacon Hill Drive In.

**AU: Ever since Logan's Pub closed, do you feel it is harder to put on shows in Victoria? Do you feel like the Phoenix Bar and Grill has replaced Logan's? Or do you feel like there is still a part of the Victoria scene that is missing?**

CA: I haven't tried to put on any shows in the past two years, and there have been a lot less shows than usual due to the pandemic. But I feel that the Phoenix has done a really nice job of filling the gap left by Logan's. Hopefully they are able to continue to do that

with great success in the future. If not, I am sure another venue will come along.





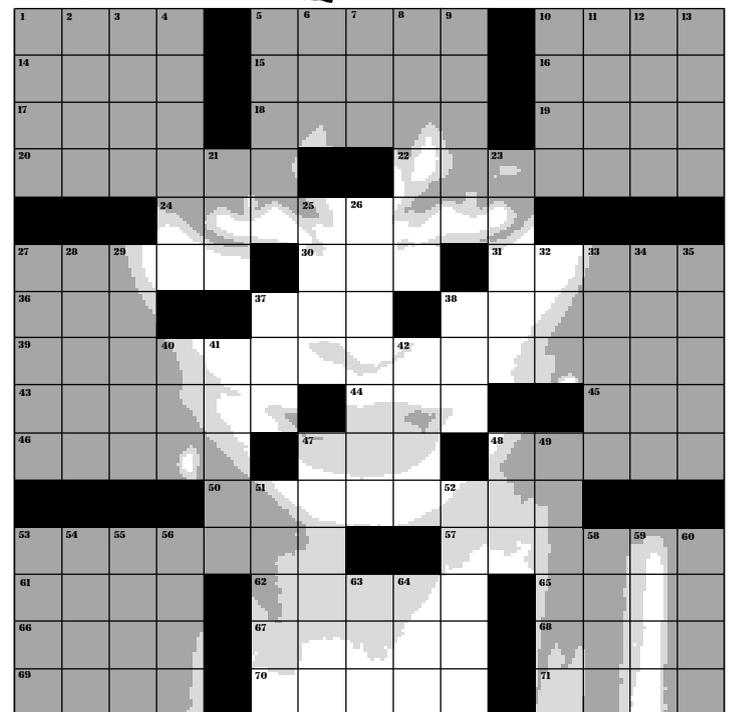
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**WINTER, 2022**

**ACROSS**

- 1. "Wild Child" Hair-Metal band
- 5. Syrian dictator
- 10. He killed Hal in 2001
- 14. Saxy instrument
- 15. Type of chord
- 16. 20th century King of Norway
- 17. Anger
- 18. You hope your idol isn't this
- 19. Quick negative
- 20. SNFU's "The \_\_\_ Voice"
- 22. The Brains' "The \_\_\_ Within"
- 24. Noted attribute of the subject of 39-across
- 27. Checked out a joint
- 30. Big 80's gaming platform
- 31. Graphics program since '85
- 36. Stadium cheer
- 37. Ink
- 38. More pathetically inadequate
- 39. Ripcordz' "Lose Yourself Completely in the Idle \_\_\_\_\_"
- 43. Involve something
- 44. Dracula's alter ego?
- 45. Capitals' nickname
- 46. One does this to stimuli
- 47. Word on a sign outside a studio
- 48. "Slumdog" actor Dev
- 50. Title for the subject of 39-across
- 53. The Creepshow's "\_\_\_ and Saints"
- 57. Forbidden Dimension's "\_\_\_ Satellites"
- 61. Crossing the Atlantic
- 62. "Congrats!"
- 65. Beat soundly
- 66. It can be grand
- 67. Be a ham
- 68. Chip in
- 69. "\_\_\_ Today, Guano Tomorrow"
- 70. Nitty-gritty
- 71. More's partner

**DOWN**

- 1. Robin to West's Batman
- 2. Soothing plant extract
- 3. Bators
- 4. New wave/ska trio (with 'The')
- 5. Degrade
- 6. Mineo who starred beside James Dean
- 7. Good sign on Broadway?

- 9. You might do this to a windshield
- 10. Family heads
- 11. Much
- 12. Device that has an atomizer
- 13. Part of a fairy tale ending?
- 21. Attorney's letters
- 23. Country where many go to get high
- 25. Take one if tired
- 26. One may be found at the back of a military newsletter
- 27. Shrink way from
- 28. Sham 69's "Leave Me \_\_\_"
- 29. Company whose ads feature animated sheep
- 32. Modifier: Abbr.
- 33. Pop album (with 'The')
- 34. You may have a lot of this

- 37. "No Sleep \_\_\_"
- 38. Musical performance
- 40. Biological pouch
- 41. Masochistic poker phrase?
- 42. Jamie of M\*A\*S\*H
- 47. Take to be true
- 48. Media freebie
- 49. Old Canadian media giant
- 51. Annoyed
- 52. Twisty roads
- 53. A beauty queen has one
- 54. Man or Skye, for ex.
- 55. Close-by
- 56. No Use For A \_\_\_
- 58. Top-drawer
- 59. "Rats!"
- 60. Beginnings of many Que. place names
- 63. John of X



Battle of the Bands - Memorial Arena - June 24th 1967



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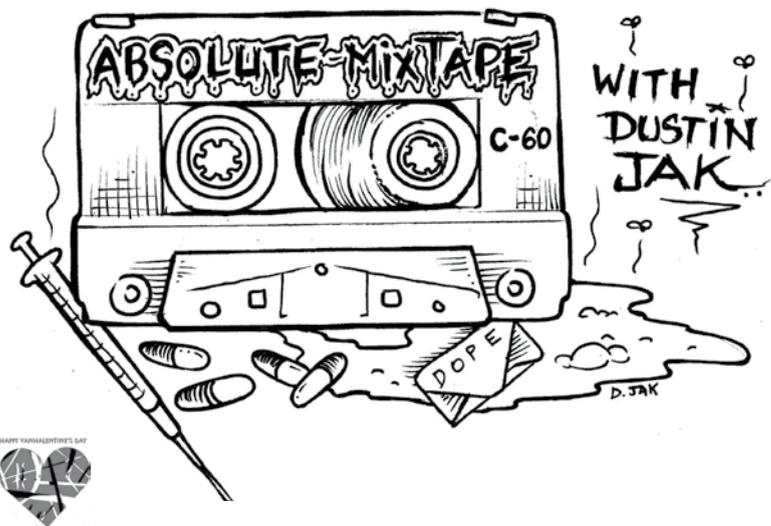
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66	S	L	A	M			67	E	M	O	T	E			68	A	N	T	E	
69	H	E	R	E			70	D	E	E	T	S			71	L	E	S	S	

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by *Dustin Jak*

14 for Feb 14

- 1) Van Halen - Outta Love Again
- 2) Exodus - No Love
- 3) Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers - Pirate Love
- 4) Golden Earring - Radar Love
- 5) Fear - I Love Livin' In The City

- 6) Alice Cooper - I Love The Dead
- 7) Soft Cell - Tainted Love
- 8) Joykiller - Love You More Dead
- 9) The Electric Chairs - Toilet Love
- 10) M.O.D. - No Glove No Love
- 11) KISS - Got Love For Sale
- 12) GG Allin - Cheri Love Affair
- 13) Geto Boys - Gangster Of Love
- 14) T.S.O.L. - Darker My Love

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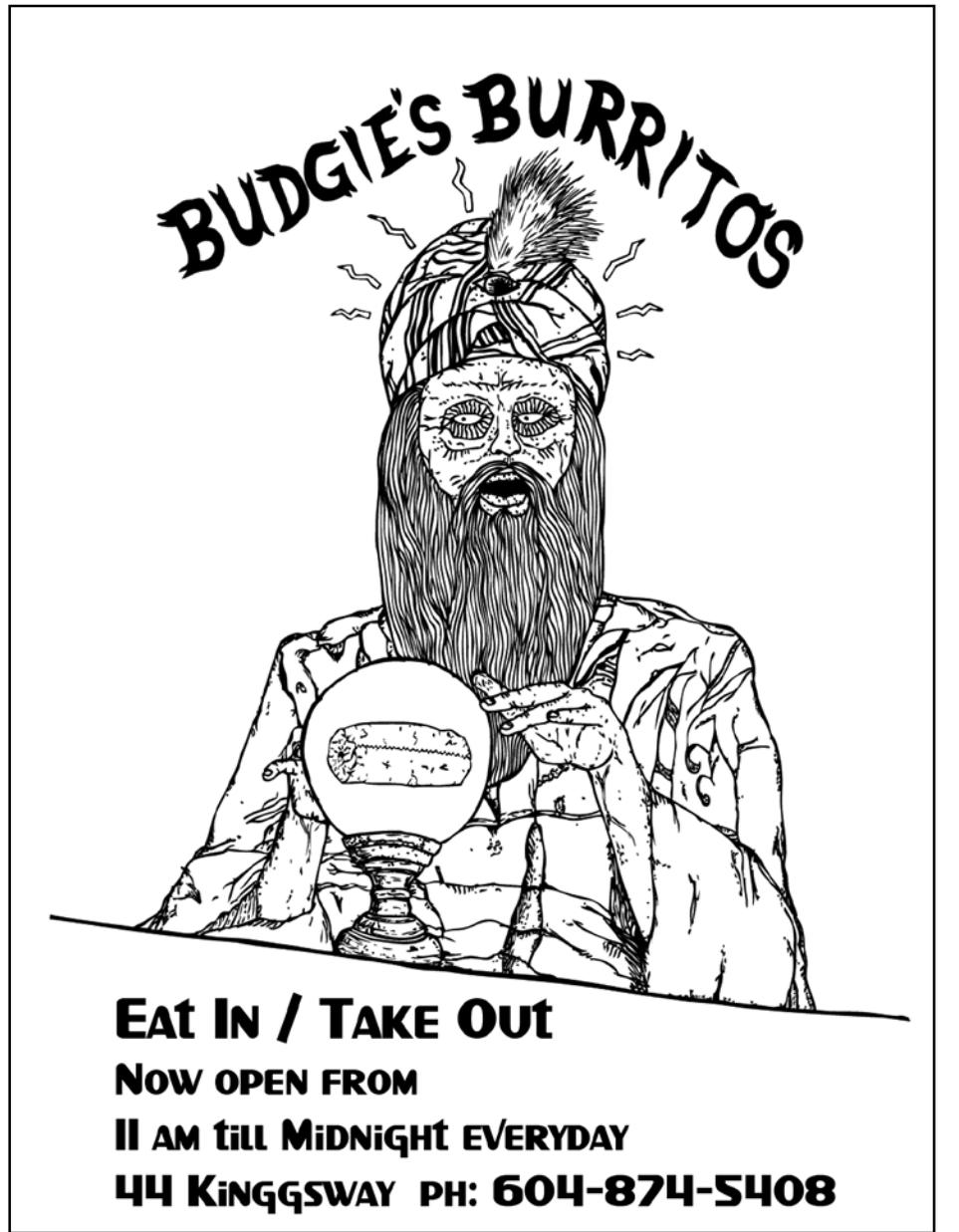


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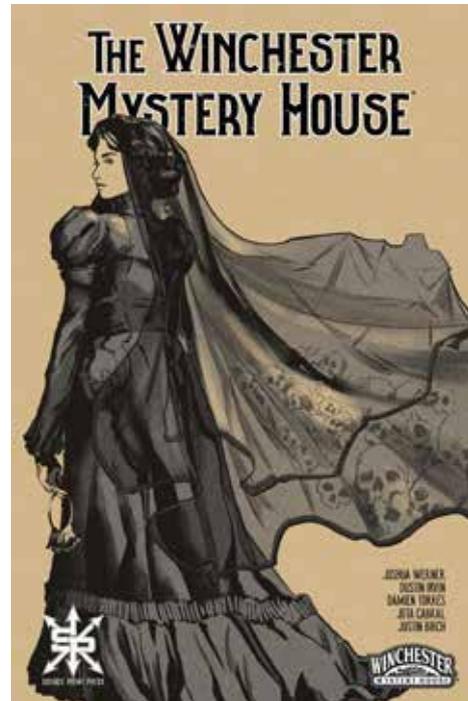
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## Who's Watching Me at Winchester Mystery House?

By Ed Sum

Coming to bookstores and comic shops on March 8th is the trade paperback collection of Source Point Press' *The Winchester Mystery House*. This release won't be the end all be all about the intrigue and wonder about the seminal abode. Instead, it's about how Sarah (née Pardee) Winchester lived the last years of her life here. One detail this work delivers is the fact she settled in San Jose, California because that's where her paternal family lives. The story by Joshua Werner suggests she's ready to settle into a life that's not altogether too occult, despite having hellhounds on her trail. The folklore says all the slain people by the gun her husband invented will haunt the family forever, and the only way to stop them on their tracks is to build a maze to confuse everyone!

In the first issue, we see what plans she has in mind for the abode she wants to make home, and who she's hired to become permanent



construction workers. The next chapter goes into greater detail about how she expanded the abode into a sprawling maze not even a minotaur can navigate. In the last issue, we can not only feel but also see how much of the construction has come together. Dustin Irvin's art turns Picasso in

more than one fantastic spread, and we get to see parts of this home that's famous. The stairs to the ceiling, the door leading directly outside on the third level, and spider-web window all mean something, and to deconstruct it will require another volume to explore.

It's sad that part of the estate's look is lost to time because of the Great Earthquake of 1906. This comic didn't cover the fallout as it skips a lot of years, only showing when she bought it and what it's become in the ten years since. As for how she'll deal with the coming tide of colonisation of the West Coast of California and why the railroad tycoons want to build through her estate,

that's for another story to explore. I can't wait to see how that'll pan out. When considering the fact that Sarah is most likely a freemason, any rival is going to be trouble.

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Recently added are Jordan Elsass and Alexander Garfin, the stars of *Superman and Lois*.

Returning favourites William Shatner, Robert Englund and Kevin Smith are still slated to appear. The latter will be bringing the *Clerks* gang back. That is, we can see Jason Mewes, Jeff Anderson, Trevor Fehrman, and Brian O'Halloran all together again! Their slice of life Americana is what made this movie a cult classic.

We also have the Trailer Park boys—Bubbles, Julian and Ricky—bringing their East coast Canadiana to the west coast!

Two other convention favourites, Ashley Eckstein and Ming-Na Wen, will be present to talk about their latest work, which doesn't always have to include *Star Wars*.

To note, this guest list is not firm, as these events are privy to the talents other ongoing contractual commitments than just pandemic concerns. Returning comic book talents include Brian Stelfreeze along with local talents like Pia Guerra, Renee Nault and Ian Boothby. A full list can be found online, and while the attending talents look impressive, please bear in mind that it can change at the last minute.

Fan Expo Vancouver requires all attendees to show proof of vaccination and to wear a mask at all times (unless consuming sustenance). Confirmed is that this event is expanding its footprint to include Hall A, B, and C, and the widening of the aisles. There will be lots of space to spread out so no congestion can take place.

For the latest updates, please visit <https://fanexpohq.com/fanexpovancouver/health-safety/>

### Fan Conventions In BC:

#### The Latest 2022 Updates

By Ed Sum

The ongoing pandemic is forcing conventions big and small to make tough decisions. As Fan Expo Vancouver looks like it will take place on February 19-21, the other in Victoria BC, Capital City Comic Con, decided its best to postpone and hope the world is a saner place September 23-25, 2022. It might move back to March the following year.

For the big city event, there's been only one cancellation so far. Matthew Lewis can no longer make it; perhaps something at Hogwarts school has come to this attention that he has to take care of.



## Sasquatch Sisters

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## Quit It!

Interview by Mal Content

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

JB: Hi there! Jordan Barrett from Quit It! here. I'm likely famous/infamous with my bandmates for my ability to nap literally anywhere. On stage, backstage, in the van, or on the street, you name it, I've napped there. I even napped in a bowling alley once.

**AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about? Where are you guys from?**

JB: We're a Calgary band. We were formally in a band called River Jacks and have been playing together for about eight years.

**AU: Describe the band's sound if possible. Where do you draw your influences from?**

JB: River Jacks hovered in the folk-punk realm for years. Quit It! has since leaned into a harder edge, dropping the folk instrumentation. Influences would include The Clash, Bouncing Souls, Propagandhi. Maybe throw a hint of Menzingers and Dead to Me in there as well.

**AU: Have you released an album recently or is**

**one coming out soon? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?**

JB: Our self titled EP is out now on Bandcamp/Spotify/Apple Music/Everywhere. We have a full length due out this year. It'll be a joint release with Wasted Wax and Meter Records. Very stoked on this one!

**AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?**

JB: Ooof stand out tracks, I love them all! Check out our video for "Wakeup Call" off our EP. It's an important song that comments on the current state of Alberta. For those who don't know, the current state of



Alberta is NOT GOOD.

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

JB: There is an emphasis on accountability in our music. This theme hits on our responsibilities to each other, as well as our roles in the social climate.

**AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share? Is there an end in sight in your opinion?**

JB: Oh jeez. Just put one foot in front of the other and roll with the punches. We've been a solid source of support for each other through everything. Just don't get too down when a scheduled jam turns into a video call. When a show inevitably gets canceled, just look onto the next one. There might be an end in sight, but we'll likely have more ups and downs before then. Keep your chin up, and be there for your pals!

**AU: Any plans for Valentine's Day this year? Any dating advice for these Covid times?**

JB: Well I'm recently engaged (yay me!) but my



partner and I don't get too festive for these things. Might just be a pizza and a movie kinda night. Dating advice? I'd imagine it's pretty easy to spot red flags nowadays. Listen to your guts! Or don't? The world is a shit show. Have some fun!

**AU: What do you miss most about live music? Any plans to play any live shows in near future?**

JB: We've been lucky to have been playing some shows in a pandemic world. The band had a great BC tour last fall. We had a solid response, and were able to get a real sense of community out there. Very heartwarming to see! We're currently discussing spring/summer plans. More news to come soon!

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

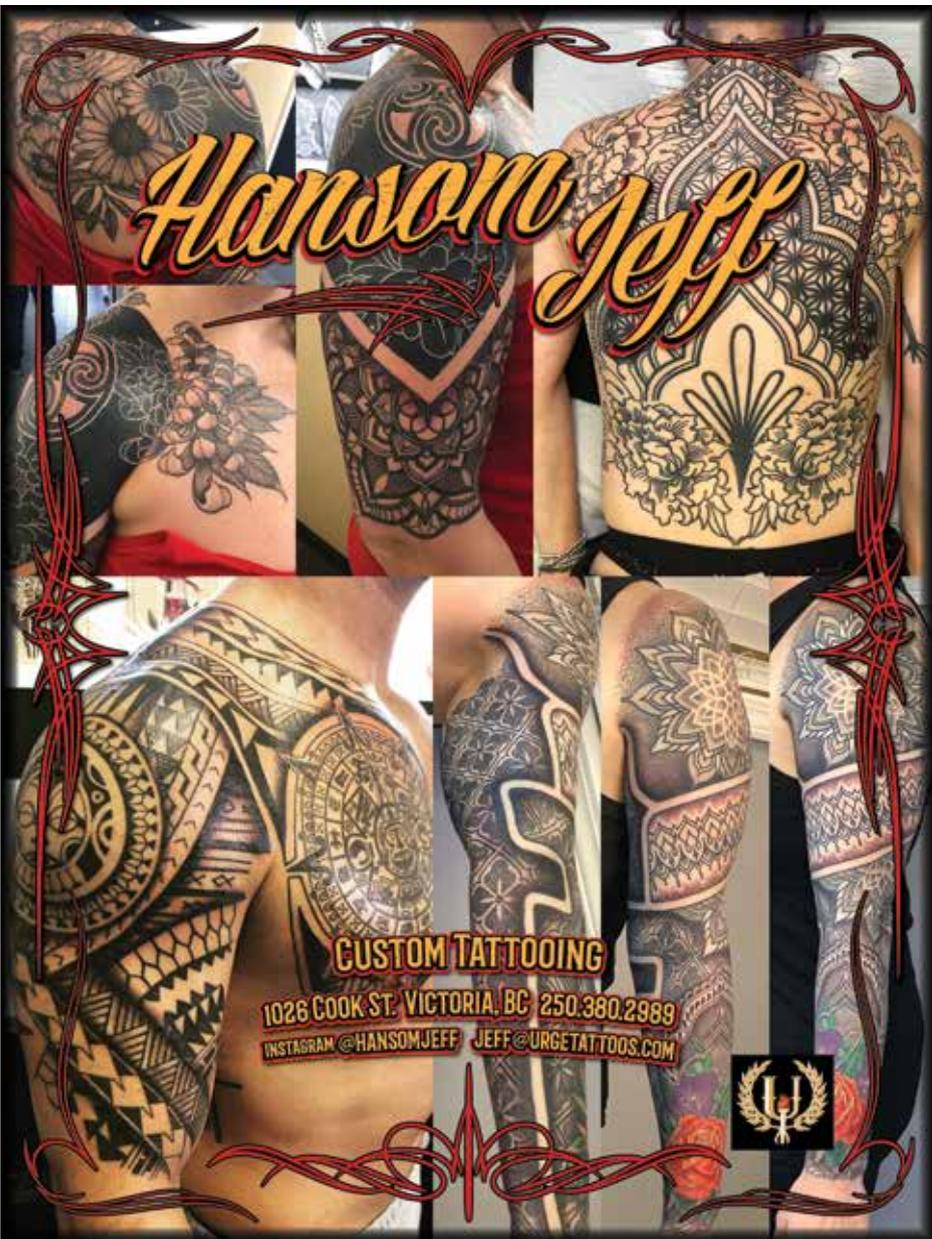
JB: Ummm.. We have a new tour van! His name is Harrison. He's a Ford. He keeps us moving.

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

JB: Thanks for taking some time for us! Keep that community going strong! Come by to a show any time and scream along with us.

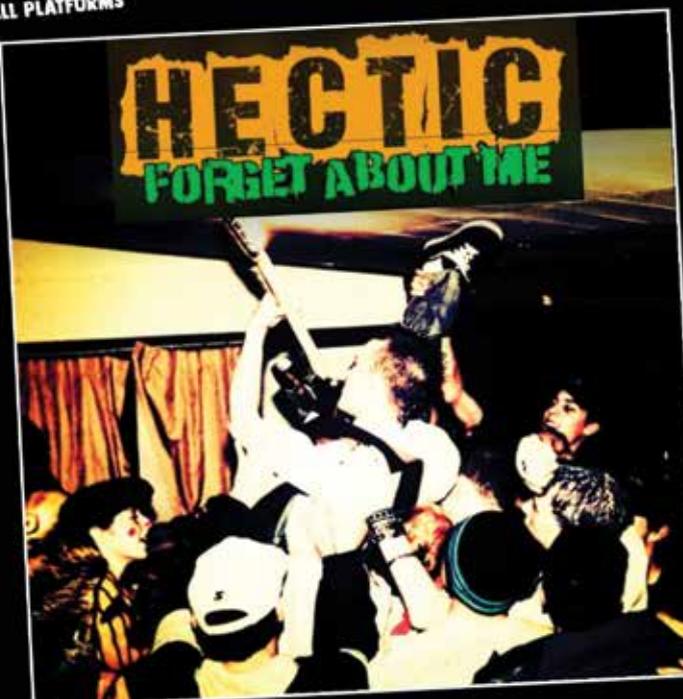
**AU: How do people find you online?**

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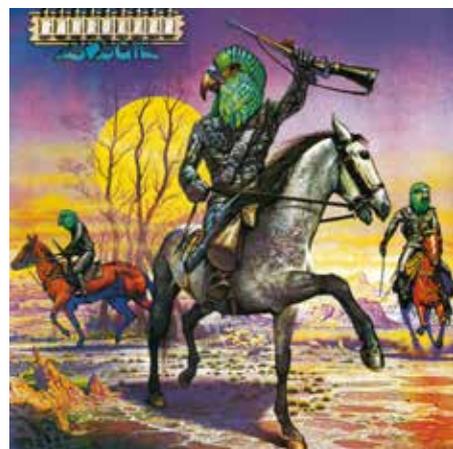
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**Burke Shelley**  
April 10, 1950 -  
January 10, 2022

It's 1971. You've just purchased an album with a bird riding a horse on the cover. The needle drops and the heaviest noise you have ever heard at that point in your life begins to crank

out your hi-fi. The guitar hits you in the face, the bass comes in with a hard swell. Then the voice of some sort of possessed witch:



"You've got me living in sin, you've got me breaking my heart..." That voice and that swell come from the man Burke Shelley - bassist and vocalist of heavy metal pioneers Budgie. Shelley formed Budgie in 1967 when he was 17 years old. Often

cited as a major influence to such heavyweights as Metallica, Iron Maiden, Van Halen & the Melvins and often covered, Budgie helped propel heavy music and put the "power" in power trio. Burke created this vision two years before the formation of their often compared Canadian counterpart - Rush. Also

releasing their debut three years before Geddy and Co, Burke and Budgie broke down the barriers with the likes of Black Sabbath and Judas Priest. A Christian man, Shelley was uncomfortable with occult themes of these comrades and Budgie focused more on "taking the piss" out of their lyrics. Budgie split in '88 after two

decades of releasing music and touring with the likes of Ozzy Osborne, the famous 1980 Reading Festival and then headlining the same festival in 1982. Getting back together in 1995 until 2010, Burke continued to rock. Shelley was diagnosed with Stickler

Syndrome and 12 years later, on January 10th, 2022 Burke passed away in his sleep. Rest in power Burke Shelley! Readers, do yourself a favor & pick up the first four Budgie albums, if they are not in your collection yet. ESSENTIAL LISTENING!

## FALLEN SOLDIERS

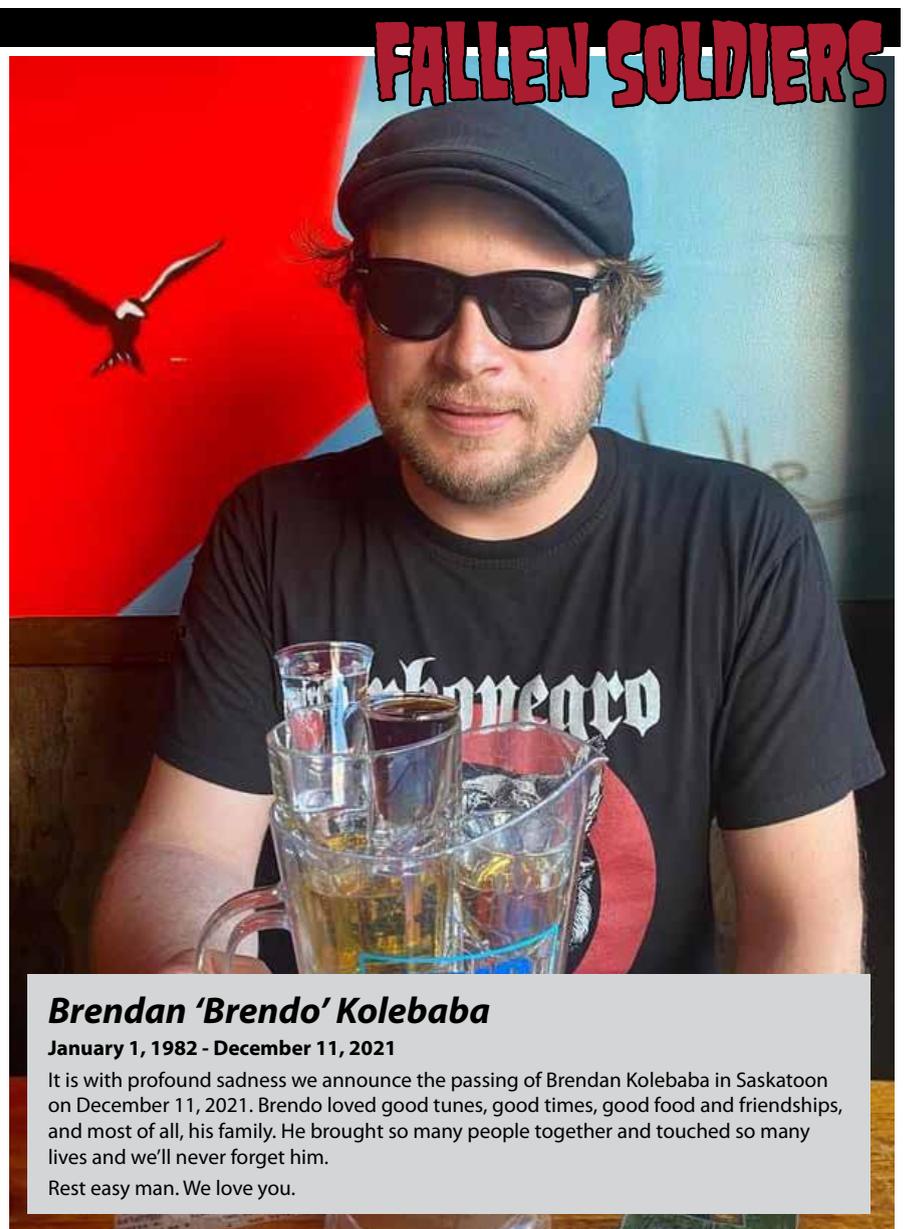
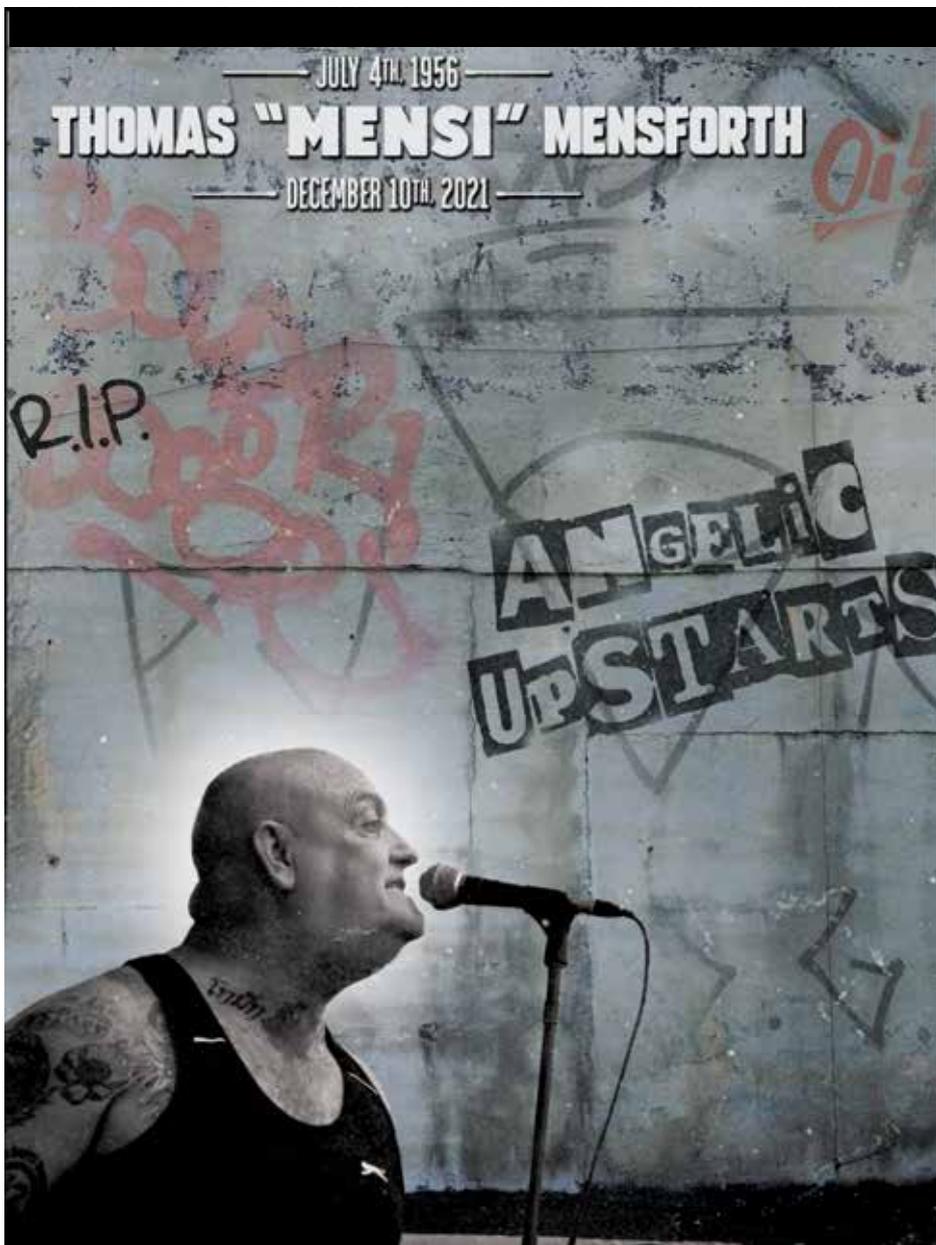
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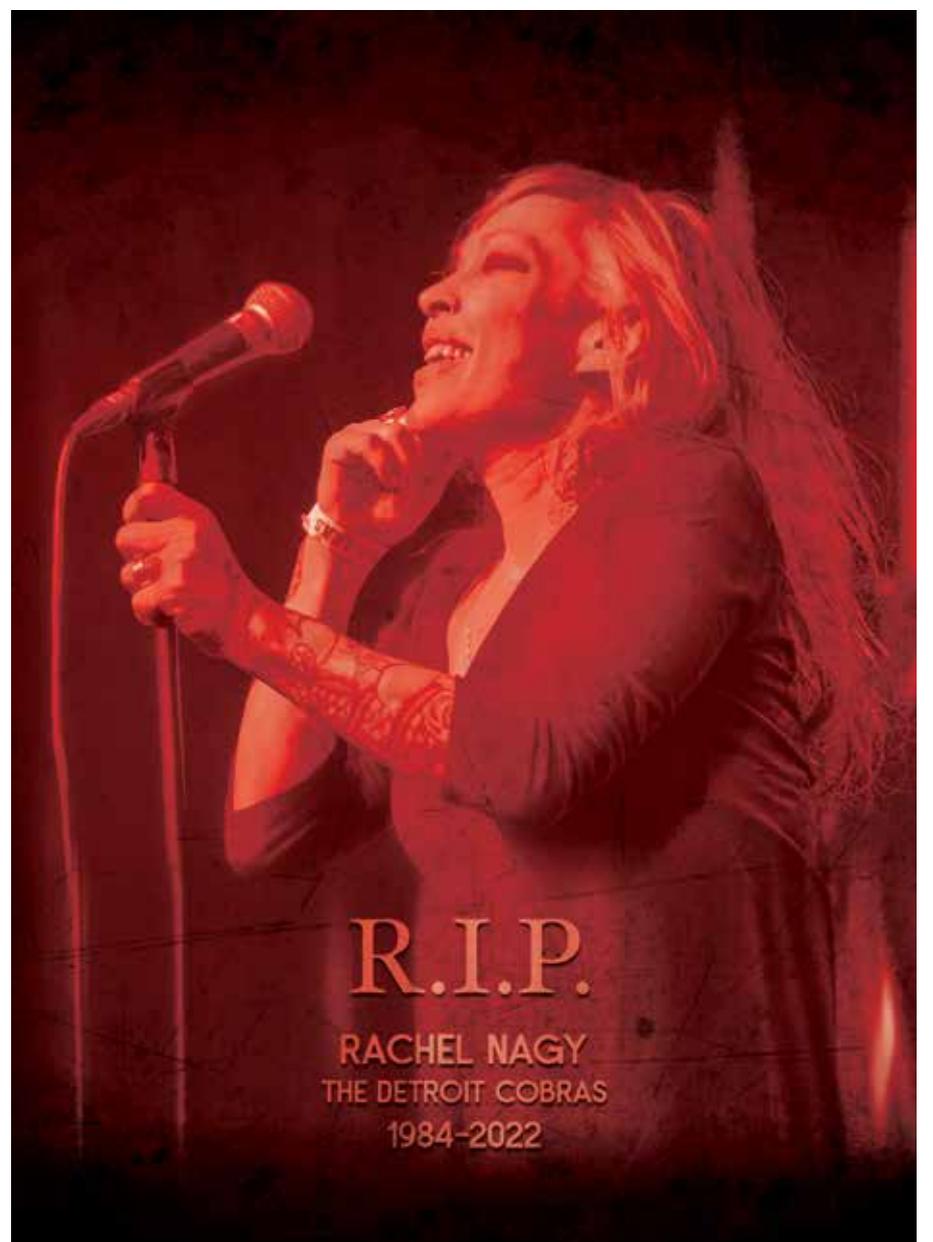
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**Brendan 'Brendo' Kolebaba**

January 1, 1982 - December 11, 2021

It is with profound sadness we announce the passing of Brendan Kolebaba in Saskatoon on December 11, 2021. Brendo loved good tunes, good times, good food and friendships, and most of all, his family. He brought so many people together and touched so many lives and we'll never forget him. Rest easy man. We love you.



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