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Published by Ira Hunter

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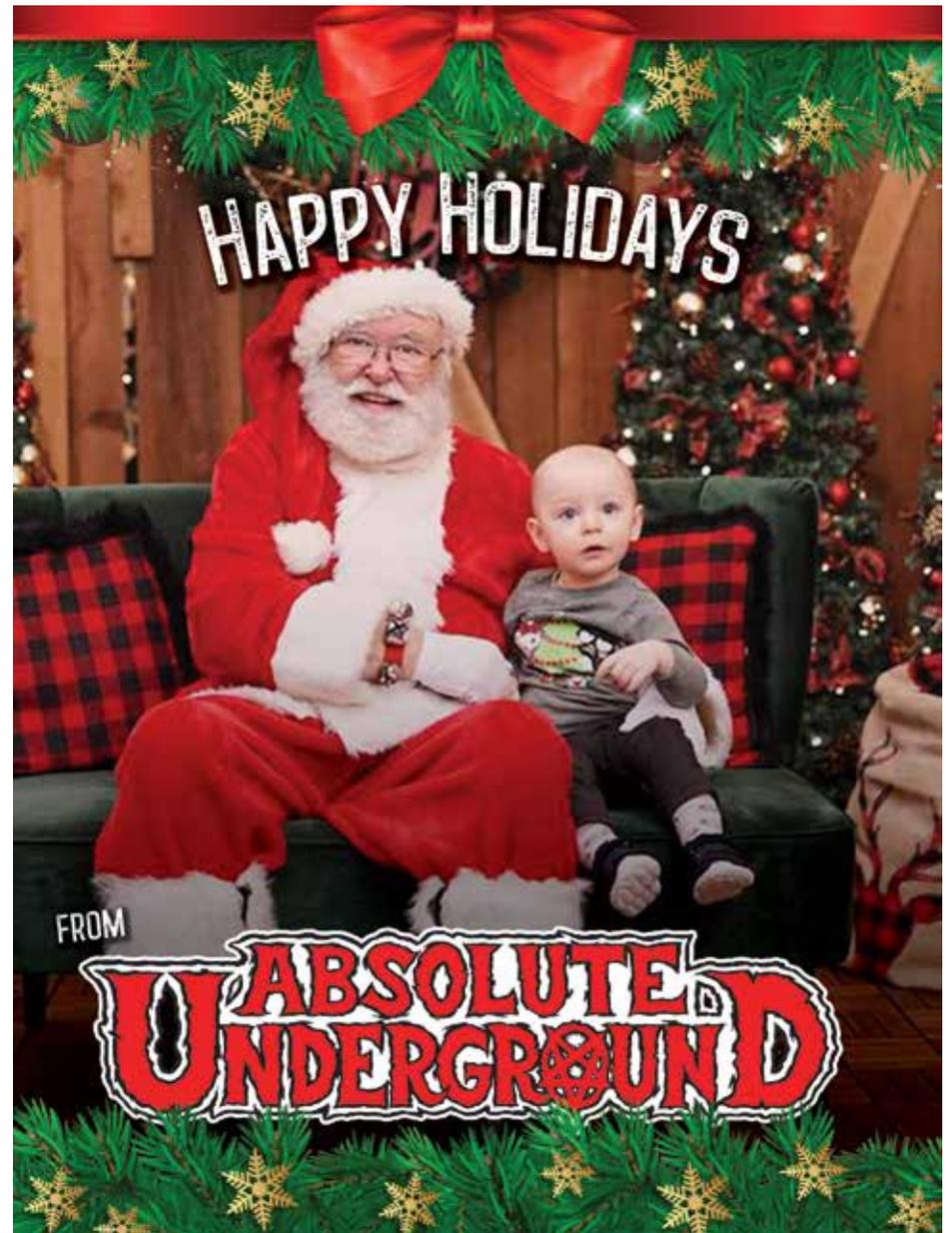
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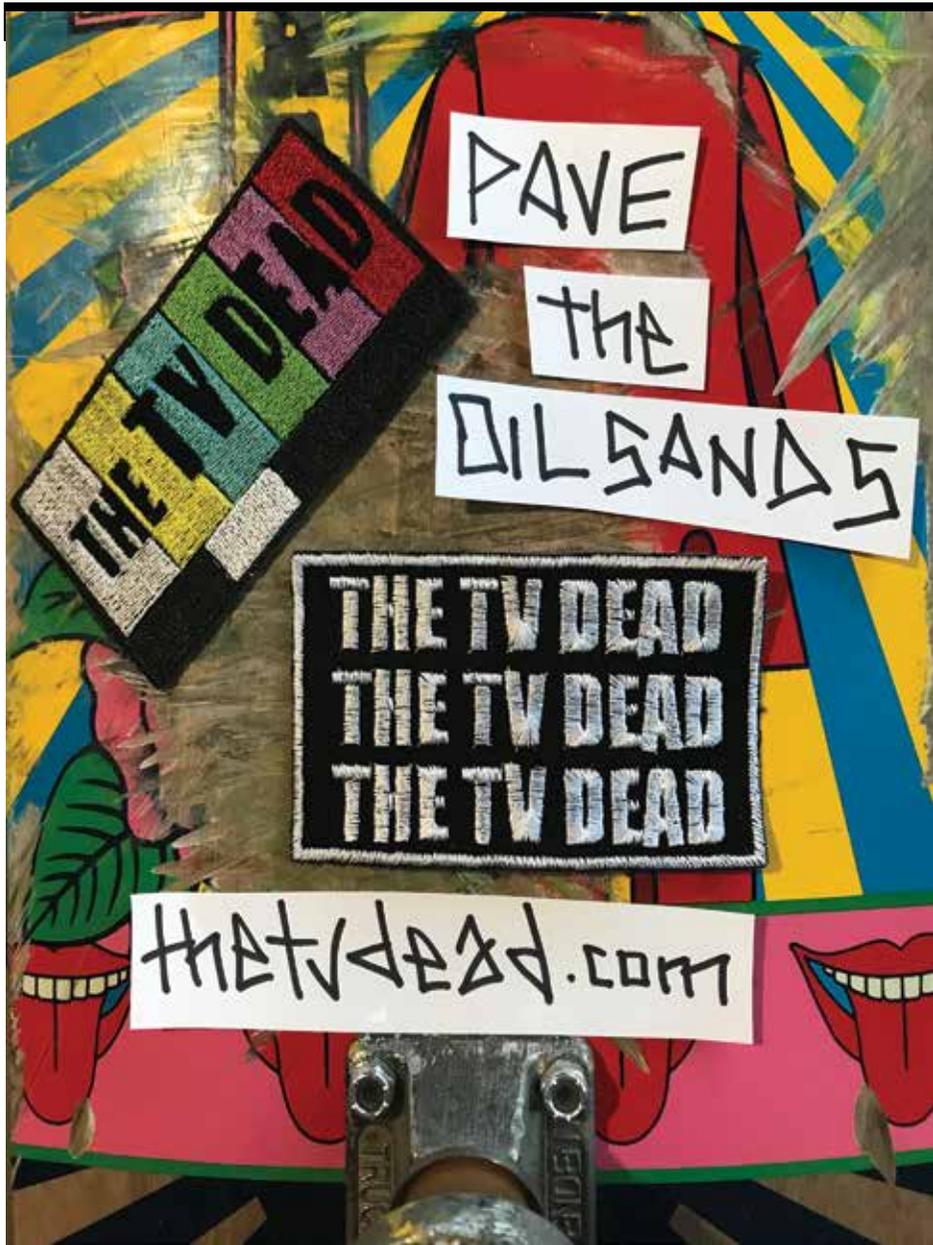
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## VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY



### Ready to leave the Nest with STRANGEBIRD

By John Carlow

Every married couple has their own version of “date night,” but apparently for Matt and Dana it’s loading the van for a Strangebird gig. There haven’t been a lot of shows to date, but this band has their first album at the gate and the bird jokes will dry up (eventually). I remember Dana being very strong at the front of the stage back in Mascara Nites era... Good times. Tried to get some straight answers to a few questions out of the band but failed miserably...

**AU: Introduce yourselves:**

Dana Dee – vox  
Matt Easton – guitar/vox  
Dave Coish – guitar  
Brendan Pye – drums/vox  
Evert Pater-bass

**AU: How did the band get together?**

SB: We started playing together in 2017, sporadically at best, especially during Covid. Our first “show” was Matt and Dana performing from the basement on FaceAss, using a drum machine and puppets of Evert and then-drummer Pete Millar. Then Dave and Brendan joined, and the rest is history!

We are a mish-mash of leftovers from current and former bands: The Poor Choices (Hi Boobi and Tina!), Cheat the Hangman, Mascara Nites, the MAGS, the Beaumonts, the Shivs, Ball Gag n Chain gang, 14 Flamingos, Start with the Cobra, Rod Iron Haulers, the Revival, Red Headed Step Child, Ghostbirds and so on and so forth.

**AU: Where did the name come from?**

SB: I mean, birds are pretty strange, right? Maybe

we’re just a bunch of bird brains who couldn’t come up with anything better...

**AU: Genre or style?**

SB: It’s all rock n roll! But, if we have to be specific, somewhere in the neighborhood of desert lounge punk and toboggan rock.

**AU: What is the creative process for your band?**

SB: Matt and Dana write songs together then argue in front of everyone at practice.

**AU: (Best answer ever) How important are the lyrics? Will they be packaged with your releases?**

SB: Birds, not words.

**AU: Influences of the band’s sound?**

SB: Wow, so hard to choose, but primarily: the Byrds, the Eagles, the Yardbirds, the Flamingos, the Black Crows, Sheryl Crow, them Crooked Vultures, Counting Crows, a Flock of Seagulls, Eagle Eye Cherry and the Eagles of Death Metal.

**AU: Who are you listening to locally? Who are you excited by?**

SB: Art d’Ecco, Tight Hair, Bad People, AK-47s, the Hex, the Poor Choices, 14 Flamingos, David Foster.

**AU: What do you think of the local scene?**

SB: It’s for the birds.

**AU: Tell us about your first album**

SB: It’s still incubating in the nest but getting close to being fully formed! Expect our first album sometime in early 2023...

**AU: What’s in the future for the band?**

SB: Mating and migration? Old age and death? Fame and fortune? We don’t give a flock.

**Look for Strangebird on Instagram at strangebird\_666**

John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography

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### Wacken Metal Battle Canada Returns For 2023

**One Band To Rule Them All! - One Unsigned Canadian Band To Play Wacken Open Air 2023**

Wacken Metal Battle Canada announces its return in 2023 to cities across the country. Hosting battles from coast to coast since 2013, Wacken Metal Battle Canada selects one unsigned Canadian band to perform on one of the world's

most prestigious stages and largest metal festival Wacken Open Air, with over 80,000 people in attendance, held in Wacken, Germany for over 30 years. WMBC has been on pause since 2019, due to the Covid pandemic, and has hosted battles across Canada from 2013 until 2019, with one skip year in 2017.

Previous winners have been The Slyde (Toronto, ON - 2019), Centuries of Decay (Toronto, ON - 2018), Profaner (Hamilton, ON - 2016), Vesperia (Toronto, ON - 2015), Mutank (Montreal, QC - 2014), Crimson Shadows (Toronto, ON - 2013).

Independent Canadian bands interested in participating can apply at <https://metalbattle.ca/apply.html>

Band submissions will open on November 29th at 6 AM PST and close on December 19th at 11:59 PM PST.

Battles will be hosted in the following cities: Vancouver, BC, Edmonton, AB, Calgary, AB, Toronto, ON, Hamilton, ON, Ottawa, ON, Montreal, QC, and Quebec City, QC.

All bands will be performing in front of experienced music industry professionals who will be making judgments at each

qualifying round based on various categories of professionalism and musicianship.

The National Final will be hosted in Toronto, ON in May 2023 (full date to be determined).

WMBC organizer JJ Tartaglia adds: "Very stoked to be getting this going again after a long 3-year break. Our team is back together and excitement is in the air. Really curious to know what bands have been up to during this time, which new bands have formed, I know there are some hidden gems out there and hope to see them emerge for the Metal Battle."

Wacken Metal Battle Canada is part of an international competition that sees bands from across the country battle each other for the chance of winning their spot among 29 other countries' champions, and represent Canada in an international battle of the bands at the world's largest outdoor metal festival: Wacken Open Air. The battles have been hosted at the festival for over a decade giving independent bands the opportunity to showcase their talents to an international audience along with the chance to

win multiple prizes.

How it works:

Participating cities will host qualifying rounds plus a city final organized by a local city concert promoter where one band will move forward to the Canadian national final (date and city to be determined). The winner of the national final will move on to perform at the Wacken Open Air 2023 and compete against the winners of 29 other countries in a final global battle. All bands will be judged during battle rounds by respected local music industry representatives.

**Links:**

[Metal-Battle.com](http://Metal-Battle.com)

[MetalBattle.ca](http://MetalBattle.ca)

[Facebook.com/MetalBattleCanada](https://Facebook.com/MetalBattleCanada)

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# THE PUNK ROCK MUSEUM



## Punk Rock Museum

On January 13th, 2023 The Punk Rock Museum opens its doors in Las Vegas, NV.

The Punk Rock Museum was founded by The Punk Rock Collective, a group of hundreds of punks who lived and created this history and counterculture. The Punk Rock Museum will exhibit artifacts from all over the world representing 5 decades of punk.

Punk Rock is arguably the most significant style of music; it shifted the paradigm about what it means to be a musician or to be in a band, by showing the world you didn't need to be a great musician to play great music!

Look at some of the biggest rock bands in the world: Foo Fighters-Dave, Nate, Chris, and Pat all started in seminal punk bands. Green Day- started and are still a punk band. Guns and Roses - Duff was in the Fartz, the Fastbacks, and 10 Minute Warning. Red Hot Chili Peppers- Flea was in Fear and the Circle Jerks. My Chemical Romance - is a punk band. Blink 182, The Offspring, Rise Against...the list of the biggest modern rock bands is full of punks.

On January 13th, 2023 The Punk Rock Museum opens its doors in Las Vegas, Nevada. This is a

museum that was built and is run by the very people who lived, breathed, and created the history that is on display. This collective of hundreds includes musicians, friends, family, road crew, managers, labels, and everyone else from every corner of punk rock. This museum is a sacred place for all to bask in the incredible and absurd history of our people. This is our church, our Mecca, and our community center! This isn't just for punk bands that have made a big impact or sold a lot of records. This is for every punk band that has ever been on a flyer, played in a basement, or recorded a demo tape. This is an all-inclusive museum dedicated to Punk Rock for punks and looky-loos alike!



### What Makes This Museum Unique?

On the wall of "Insignificant and Unknown Bands" a modern band from Indonesia can see their photo next to a band from England from 1977.

The Jam Room is where you can play the guitars from bands like Pennywise, Rise Against, NOFX, and Sick of it All, through the original amps they used. If they get broken...we will try to fix them! You can smell the history through the leather jackets worn by Iron Cross, The Casualties, and Rancid. There will be daily tours by

Casey Royer (DI), Roger Miret (Agnostic Front), Eric Melvin (NOFX), Louich Mayorga (Suicidal Tendencies), Stacey Dee (Bad Cop/Bad Cop), Angelo Moore (Fishbone), and dozens of others. You can get the real stories from the legends that were there when they happened! At our tattoo shop, you can get a tattoo from Fletcher

of Pennywise, Mike from TSOL, or Brian from the Bouncing Souls. You can get married at our wedding chapel by Jack Grisham or El Hefe.

### THIS IS WHAT PUNK ROCK IS!

Every exhibit is meticulously and lovingly designed by Bryan Ray Turcotte, Fat Mike, Fletcher Dragge, Lisa Brownlee and all the core team members. From the Germs to The Linda Lindas and all the punk bands that fit somewhere in between, every decade of punk will be represented.

Punk Rock finally has a home where it truly belongs. In a 12,000 square foot, thirty year old building at 1422 Western Ave. Right next to the Las Vegas strip...club Little Darlings. In one of the best, affordable neighborhoods of downtown Las Vegas, is where you will find The Punk Rock Museum. On January 13th, 2023 we're opening our doors, our bar, our tattoo shop, our wedding/wake chapel, and most importantly, our hearts on our sleeves.

Most people will never understand what punk rock really is... and that's the real beauty of it.

**Pre-sale bundles are available now for some once-in-a-lifetime offerings at [www.thepunkrockmuseum.com](http://www.thepunkrockmuseum.com)**



## Blag Dahlia

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

BD: Blag the Ripper. I'm known for leading the notorious Dwarves since 1983. Drugs, sex, violence and the best punk garage and thrash records is what me and my friends make. The Dwarves invented Rock & Roll!

**AU: What's new and exciting in the world of Blag Dahlia these days? Who is Ralph Champagne and what is he all about? Tell us about your new solo album? What are some of the songs about and what's the vibe of the album like? Have you released any singles or videos yet? Who is Lolita Goodbye? What record label is your latest solo album coming out on? What is your attraction to the Country and Vegas lounge act scene?**

BD: There's a lot of solo stuff that just came out. I made a solo record called *Introducing Ralph Champagne* that plays a lot with retro Americana kind of styles like outlaw country, rockabilly, lounge, Tex-Mex, Latin, novelty songs, all kinds of cool shit. We also made a bunch of cool videos that are up on YouTube including "Lolita Goodbye" that extols the virtues of mature women. It's a smorgasbord of semi-dirty songs and really cool players. Andy Carpenter produced it with me, Josh Freese and Tom Ayres were the rhythm section and there are a bunch of cool singers and country session folks on there. It's a complete 180 from the Dwarves, but still noticeably nasty. *Contraband* is the outlaw trucker song, kind

of like Convoy meets the Bandit or something. There's even a crazy country trap remix of it at the end of the record. Ralph Champagne came about because I needed something to grow old and die disgracefully with.

**AU: What is your latest book *Highland Falls* all about?**

BD: *Highland Falls* details the further adventures of Nina West, suburban nympho trickster, and a group of Midwestern misfits whose paths collide. It just came out through Rare Bird Lit along with some limited wax of the audio book narrated by Yours Truly. Plenty of naughty hijinks in this one, you might need to lay down a doily and read it blindfolded.



**AU: What was your first exposure to punk rock music? Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?**

BD: I was a big Zappa fan, then saw some stuff on TV like Devo on Saturday Night Live or Sid Vicious in Mr. Mike's Mondo Video. When I heard the Ramones it really did change my life though. I said, even I can do this! During high school in Illinois I saw live shows by Ramones, Cramps, Gun Club, Misfits, Replacements, Violent Femmes, Dead Kennedys, Black Flag, Minor Threat, MDC, Spinal Tap, PiL, Gang of Four, it just goes on and on. By the time I was 16 we were playing in clubs already.



**AU: Sex is the only legitimate reason to waste your time being in a band, though drugs can certainly help to pass the time between sexual experiences. You are known as the Johnny**

**Appleseed of punk rock, sowing your seed wherever you go. Do you know if you have any offspring out there forming a band in some dank basement?**

BD: Let's hope so! It would be a tremendous waste of genius to let my sperm go ungerminated.

**AU: Any plans for XXX-Mas this year? Have you been naughty or nice? What is on your Christmas wish list? Have you ever been in a threesome with Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus?**

BD: My idea of a threesome doesn't involve any men, even mythical ones!

**AU: What's your favourite Christmas movie?**

BD: *Female Trouble!*

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read. Movie you saw. Album you heard. Band you saw live. Best local band deserving of more recognition? The thing that blew your mind the most in 2022.**

BD: Let me reiterate that I released a book called *Highland Falls* and a record called *Introducing*

*Ralph Champagne*. Everyone else's records and books can go fuck themselves!

**AU: Will the Dwarves be putting out a new album anytime soon? Who else is currently in the band with you and what does it say on their Tinder/Grindr profiles.**

BD: The Dwarves keep getting better and better!



Rex Everything, Snupac, Fresh Prince of Darkness, Sgt Saltpeter and me are all five playing live together. It's a juggernaut of rock! Josh Freese came in and helped us record 28 songs in two days so we can make the world's only good double album! We're mixing it now, look for it to come out this time next year, late 2023. Meanwhile, all of the classic Dwarves LPs are back in print! *Blood, Guts & Pussy*, *Thank Heaven*, *Sugarfix*, *Come Clean*, *Radio Free Redux*, all with expanded art, remastered music and bonus tracks. It's sick and sounding better than ever, while the dirty pictures haven't aged a day.

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

BD: I can bowl better than you'd think, but only for the first game. After that, it gets messy.

**AU: Anything else to promote? How do people find you online?**

BD: [thedwarves.com](http://thedwarves.com) has it all, merch, records, downloads, streams, videos, discography, show links, and don't forget all the titties!

**AU: Final words for Canadian fans up here in our igloos.**

BD: We love Canada! It's good looking socialists with loose morals and hot moms. What's not to like?

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



# HIDDEN BANDS

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## Dehumanizing Itatrain Worship

**The Hardest Anime-Themed Slamming Brutal Death Metal Band on the Planet**

By Ryan Dyer

China's Dehumanizing Itatrain Worship sits atop the ranks of anime-inspired brutal metal with a sound that could best be told by the name of their

[absoluteunderground.tv](http://absoluteunderground.tv)

single "Brutal Rush." Formed in 2016, the band, made up of vocalist Kiryu Zhang, guitarist Jiakang Hu, and Khezke take influence from the anime series *Love Live!* and put their own gory twist on the tale of schoolgirl pop icons. Via channels like *Slam Worldwide*, the aforementioned "Brutal Rush" was subject to many reaction videos, making the band notorious in extreme metal circles outside of China.

"I have watched all of those reaction videos and at times it does get a little

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cringey, but at the same time I couldn't be more proud. It's my honor!" says Zhang.

Due to the current studio nature of the project, and the fact that the members live in different cities around China, the band has yet to play live, though they have kept busy, recently releasing the new single "Eien Parasites" (featuring Duncan Bentley from Vulvodynia), with a new album on the horizon. The song does feature some evolution in the sound of DIW, though Zhang says it was written years ago.

"Yes, we are evolving, but this song doesn't represent the direction of our future. For the upcoming album, there will be more tracks that sound different. There is even a salsa part in one song," reveals Zhang.

Most of DIW's songs are composed by Khezke, who lives in Shanghai. "First, he will write a part of the riff. Then we talk about how to continue it. We will continue

to revise it until we are all satisfied, and the song eventually gets finished," says Zhang. "The whole process is completed on the internet."

DIW are not the only anime-inspired death metal band in China. Human Instrumentality Project are similar in approach, though take their influence from the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* series. In contrast, DIW takes the *Love Live!* series as inspiration, a show about high school girls becoming idols. "Basically, I will rewrite the lyrics

[share-with-a-friend](http://share-with-a-friend)

of some of the songs from *Love Live!*, and put some gore stuff into it," remarks Zhang. "In the series, for example, the characters are called  $\mu$ 's and our previous album is entitled  $\mu$ 'SICK. The same writing process happened for the upcoming songs."

In addition to DIW, guitarist Jiakang Hu also plays for the deathcore band Leviathan, while Zhang plays in a number of other bands including Obsoletenova. "I've tried a lot of different styles of music (although most of the projects only have one or two albums or tracks released), like technical death metal, old school death metal, black metal and deathcore. I love them all, each genre has its own appeal," he says, before revealing *Devourment*, *Abominable Putridity*, *Ingested* and *Vulvodynia* as his personal influences. "Also, all the *Love Live!* songs."

The combination of kawaii and grotesque has been the band's visual signature since the beginning. For the upcoming DIW album, the band shall explore other series, with Zhang revealing that *Girls und Panzer* will receive the Dehumanizing Itatrain Worship treatment. *Girlz und Panzer*, *Love Live!*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* - compared to bands from the '70s and '80s, taking anime as inspiration might seem strange to some, but to Zhang, it is simply evolution, "We have metal bands writing about *Lord of the Rings*, why can't we have some *Evangelion*?"

DIW has, since the beginning, collaborated with artists and sites (such as *Slam Worldwide*) outside of China. Their previous album was a split with *Cheerleader Concubine*, while on their new song, Duncan Bentley (of

## ABSOLUTE ASIA

American slam band Vulvodynia) was a guest vocalist. For the upcoming album, the list of guests will expand, with *Bodysnatcher*, *Gorepot*, *The Dark Prison Massacre* and more set to appear.

For a Chinese band to hit international audiences on such a platform, Zhang says the process was simple, "Before *Dehumanizing Itatrain Worship*, my band *Obsoletenova*'s first demo was posted to *Slam Worldwide*. I had just contacted him via email. When DIW's first EP came out, Joseph (*Slam*'s owner) found me on Facebook and he told me he wanted it to be released on *Slam Worldwide*. To be honest, I am a loyal fan of *Slam Worldwide*, so I am really happy to be included on it."

Zhang, in addition to being a vocalist, does graphic design work, doing album covers for fellow Chinese bands *Scarlet Horizon* and *Horror of Pestilence*. "Most Chinese metal bands know my name and they will find me through WeChat. Just message me, so I can work."

While DIW is at this time strictly a studio project, Zhang aspires to playing live and even abroad someday, though it would take the right offer for the band to come together from their different cities and perform, "If there is an organizer willing to invite us, we will consider it."

[facebook.com/DehumanizingItatrainWorship](http://facebook.com/DehumanizingItatrainWorship)  
[stillbirthrecords.bandcamp.com/album/eien-parasites](http://stillbirthrecords.bandcamp.com/album/eien-parasites)

# Cernunnous

Interview by Devin Meaney

Greetings Cernunnous! Please take a few moments to introduce yourself and your music!

C: Hi folks! I'm the 'Horned God' of the cosmic apocalypse. Pleased to hear that I've been welcomed to share words with y'all. I bring forth an 'old school' style of one man black metal. As a musical entity I guess my pronouns are I/me.

**AU: How long have you been producing music under the moniker Cernunnous?**

C: Well I first dropped LSD in 2008 and there was something different afterwards. The quest for a personal project was always on my radar. *Behold the Blizzard* was written that year and it really had no direction with the band I was in at the time. The voice started to speak to me its nameless name. Cernunnous just means 'horned one' in Roman. The true voice is a nameless species that has the power to enchant those who are willing to listen.

**AU: What is something that inspires you to write black metal?**

C: Mostly muscle memory, to be honest with you. It's like an itch that needs to be scratched. Sometimes words are hard to find...it's kinda like that first blast of elf spice.

**AU: What is one of your favourite bands/ favourite artist?**

C: I will say Graal. Harry Neal John MacRae is a great man.

**AU: I know you released the album *Cosmic Horns* in 2020. Do you have any plans for something new?**

C: Yes. No time table is certain but there's other ordeals that need to be taken care of first. If the apocalypse would hurry up we'd be able to get

it done in no time at all, but alas, it's "business as usual" stuff.

**AU: I know you can find a free stream of *Cosmic Horns* online at Spettro Records... is there anywhere else your music can be found?**

C: Echoing throughout the cosmos. For eternity.

**AU: Aside from music...what gets your motor running?**

C: Politics. Except I'm not going to expose myself on that one. No, I'd rather travel to the dark corners of the realm and harvest the liberty caps and ingest them in order to break their conditioning. Some have a way of twisting words to derive the cancellation effect.



**AU: I heard you are an excellent baker. What inspires you when it comes to the creation of delectable cuisine?**

C: I feed my sourdough starter every day. It has a name. Miguel is a hungry bastard and he decides when he is ready for bread. The timing is everything and it can be consuming...but damn...it's good bread! I even save old dead dough and make bread crumbs and continually add dead bread to the mix and the zombie bread reigns supreme.

**AU: Lastly--How would you describe your music to anyone who hasn't heard of you?**

C: Like psilocybin-fueled frozen flames licking the stratosphere.

AU: Any final comments?

C: Necrotic Void is a side project worth investigating once we complete the record. It was stalled by an interstellar storm that has led to a fail in communications across the galaxy and caused great disorder. Stay tuned as it may be completed in the near future.

<https://cernunnous.webnode.page>

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## In the Street – Cumberland Backyard Mini Punkfest

Outhouse Productions (Pender Island) and Milli Lyman Pilsgnar (Vancouver/Pender Island) and Mean Bikini (Cumberland), on their double album release tour are joined by Night Mirrors (Courtenay), Backtalker (Nanaimo), and Highland Eyeway (Vancouver).

To an outside observer, it may seem like a long return day/night trip to travel from Victoria to Cumberland for a DIY house party. When I first noticed this event, my eyes shot right to the bands. Backtalker I knew from many gigs I've shot with them on the bill. Everyone else was new to my ears. That was the bait. I've never doubted the talent that is always simmering around us in B.C. in every genre and all styles of performance. This particular set offered a sampling of skate punk, harder/ party punk, metal and psych or without labels, just an honest, fun, talent fueled adrenaline fed feast for



the ears, accessible and for anyone. All the best elements of a great event were on hand, from the stuffed donation jar, to merch commerce, new music being discovered, and artist mutual

appreciation right down to the gear sharing. All this positive happening with an eye over the shoulder waiting to be cautioned or shut down (Which thankfully didn't happen).

Host to attendees, everyone was welcoming and always had everyone's collective happiness in mind. Arrived and left feeling welcome and appreciation of the talent was genuine. Bought some music, added more people and bands to my radar and stirred interest in the area for future shows. Check out some of these bands, keep plugged in to sources that keep you informed about the talent that's out there....either in your area or a car ride away. It's worth it.

Words/images : John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography



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# INK SLINGERS



## Pacific Rose Tattoo

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are your skills to pay the bills?**

MK: My name is Mitch Kirilo, I am a tattooer, machine builder and one of the owners of Pacific Rose Tattoo alongside my wife Amanda Vieira.

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

MK: I did my first tattoo in a shop in 2007. Upon receiving my own first tattoo at 14, it set me on a head first plunge into tattooing. Dedicating all of my free time and effort into learning and drawing. Finally

by age 17 I got into a street shop and started to learn the ropes. Since then I've had the opportunity to learn under many other tattooers over the years and continue to do so currently.

**What styles would you say you specialize in?**

MK: Most of my tattooing these days revolves around making



tattoos that will last. Heavily influenced from traditional Japanese tattooing, as well as surrealism and traditional. Though I enjoy tattooing most styles, I really love to make bold and heavy images, often with a more aggressive look overall. Tuff Tattoos for Soft People.

**AU: Tell us about Pacific Rose Tattoo. Where is it located?**

MK: We are located on unceded

Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories also known as Vancouver, BC. Tucked away in the heart of the downtown eastside.

**AU: What makes your shop unique? How would you describe your shop's style?**

MK: Pacific Rose Tattoo is unique partly due to the building we are in. We have a street level shop that is split into a lobby and two floors, and a massive upper studio on the third floor of the heritage building. This allows us to offer a few types of experiences. Whether you are looking for a quick walk in and picking some flash off the walls, booking a custom piece or need some privacy, our space is able to accommodate it all. The shops style is a pretty broad mix of everything. We have folks that do everything from single needle fine line, to heavy blackout work and everything in between. With such a broad mix of folks at the shop we have amassed a wild array of art on the walls, steadily working towards covering every last inch

of the walls and ceiling with all kinds of art.

**AU: What brought about the name change from Gastown Tattoo Parlour to Pacific Rose Tattoo?**

MK: Our original name Gastown Tattoo was created back in 2011 with the intention to solidify our place in the area and keep the tradition of tattoo shops naming themselves after the neighbourhood. In more recent years the true history of the area has been brought to light and we learned more about Gassy Jack whom the area was named after. His history of marrying an underage indigenous girl amongst other things made us want nothing



to do with him or his memory. Our values align with the folks who were here since time immemorial and we wanted something that felt more true to us. Pacific Rose Tattoo came to us as a name that still held a timeless energy and also marks a place on the map for us.

**AU: Who else works at Pacific Rose Tattoo with you and what are their areas of expertise?**

MK: At the moment we have some of the best, working in a wide variety of styles. All of which can be seen on our website and social media. Here is a list of our current tattooers:

- Alec Benjamin
- April Johnson
- Arlin french (not a typo, it is two lower case fs)
- Cam Jennings
- Chris Stiles
- Craig Moston
- Diego Avellar
- Hannah Prive
- Ingryd Guimaraes
- Jade Harper
- Jon Walters
- Jordan Frank
- Jota Moloch
- Keegan Lam
- Miguel Flores
- Mitch Kirilo
- Nick Davies
- Olivia Gibson
- Sam So
- Suzy King
- Josh Nieman

**AU: Do tattoos have to have a deep meaning or can they simply be about awesome art?**

MK: Tattoos can be whatever you want. They are a great way to remember something special, but they can also just be fun to collect as art. Many folks will get a tattoo as a form of self

empowerment or to overcome any kind of body dysmorphia. No matter the reason, tattoos can give you a better sense of self. If they make you happy, thats all that matters.

**AU: What are you most proud of in regards to your shop?**

MK: I am very proud of the team of folks we have involved at the shop. Everyone really cares about tattooing and community. Our front of house staff who handle much of the booking and behind the scenes stuff take great care of the tattooers and clients, and the tattooers are all such lovely unique individuals. I am



very proud to work with them all.

**AU: What kinds of music or bands do you play at the shop when working?**

MK: We certainly have a strong presence of punk and metal, but you will often hear some slow country, hip hop and everything else. We like to have fun and keep things interesting.

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

MK: We love tattooing! Thanks for reading.

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

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**PUNK NEWS (2022)**

**ACROSS**

- 1. Animals or animal-like people
- 7. Engineering calculator key
- 10. Slow's "Have Not Been the \_\_\_"
- 14. "It's \_\_\_\_\_!" (A great deal)
- 15. Bergmann
- 16. Word with exam or sex
- 17. CALLING IT QUITTS (Sept 2)
- 20. Cow call
- 21. Bother
- 22. LOSING A PUNK GIANT (Oct 29)
- 31. Your nana might call you this
- 32. Advantages
- 33. One of Adam's band mates
- 34. Some trains or buses
- 36. Golf assistant
- 38. It's a main line
- 39. Ex Filipino President Estrada and namesakes
- 41. Sniffers leader and namesakes
- 43. First Nations' monument
- 47. It distributed Black Flag's "Damaged"
- 48. Vapid guy in Screeching Weasel
- 49. Greetings
- 50. VINYL RELEASE (Aug 1)
- 54. Web portal started in '85
- 55. First third of a kids' game
- 56. ON THE ROAD AGAIN (Mar 17)
- 65. Rasta hello
- 66. Campground company
- 67. "Bewitched" mom
- 68. Bird or bug
- 69. Sun. speech
- 70. Ran

**DOWN**

- 1. Prohibit
- 2. First word of a Paul Anka hit
- 3. US police agency
- 4. "\_\_\_ Mad"
- 5. Shooting marble
- 6. Least trustworthy?
- 7. It is counted by dieters
- 8. Globe
- 9. Lays bare
- 10. Over charges
- 11. It ended up on Ararat
- 12. When doubled, a Kenya revolt
- 13. Prog rock super group
- 18. Captain Kirk had one

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68							69				70				

**CROSSWORD NO. 82**

**THE END OF 2022**

- 19. Specific time period
- 22. Presidential initials
- 23. Witch's curse
- 24. Related to a tropical fruit
- 25. Swashbuckler Flynn
- 26. The bedbound?
- 27. Beginning
- 28. A sax selection that gives one the blues?
- 29. "\_\_\_ of the Century"
- 30. Pig palace
- 35. Kreator's "\_\_\_ is Real"
- 36. Corporate mascot Joe
- 37. Album of software programs?
- 40. Broke into. Again.
- 41. Guitar accessory?
- 42. Film success
- 44. Having a good streak
- 45. Singer Reed
- 46. Hours in Montreal
- 48. Classic Dr. Who opponents
- 51. Country singer Musgraves
- 52. Post-sec. inst.
- 53. 46-down, for ex.
- 56. Paint producer
- 57. It was part of Ireland's "troubles"
- 58. Free (of)
- 59. You can have a cuppa
- 60. Mme in Madrid
- 61. Football stats
- 62. Sound at a spa
- 63. Lydon's bassist
- 64. Term popularized by TMNT

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## La Chinga

Interview by Heath Fenton

For the last decade, La Chinga has been gaining some sublime momentum as they cook along the rails of the rock train. Steeped deep in old school boogie rock with some psychedelic tweaks, they can shake and rattle with the best. A power trio in its finest sense, La Chinga have 1970s guitar rock tattooed in all caps on their necks and foreheads. Do yourself a favour and check La Chinga and let them rock the foundations of your soul as they will pound you loud and proud. I spoke to guitarist Ben Yardley about the band, and this is what he had to say.

**Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with and what are you infamous for?**

BY: Ben Yardley. Infamous for guitar playing.

**AU: Who are the other members in the band and how did La Chinga come to be back in the day?**

BY: Jay plays drums and Chris sings and plays

bass. We've all been friends for years. About 10 years ago Chris had a gig that he didn't want to say no to and the two other people in his band at the time bailed so he asked me and Jay the rest is history.

**AU: Where did the name La Chinga come from and what does it mean?**

BY: The story goes that Chris was surfing with a guy from Guatemala, and whenever a big wave came rolling in the guy would yell out "La Chinga!" We wrote a song with the same name, and we played it at one of our first shows before the band even had a name. When we were done people kept yelling "La Chinga" at us. It was then that we knew it had the magic.



I've heard several different meanings from different parts of Latin America. The literal translation means the fuck. It's a phrase that is usually said when something good is about to happen. I've also heard that it means naked lady in certain countries. Both of these are good.

**AU: It's not often a band can keep their original line-up for over 10 years, but here we are with La Chinga. What is the secret?**

BY: Really the thing is that we love hanging out with each other above anything else. Also, we never really need to plan or talk about what kind of direction or music we're gonna play. We just get in the room and let it happen.

**AU: La Chinga is starting to get around with forays into the US and Europe. How has the response been to the band outside of Canada?**

BY: Great! We haven't done too much extended touring recently, but we're about to release a new record so that may change. We've been to Europe a couple of times and the reception blew our minds. Reception in the US is also totally great.

**AU: Are there any plans for a new album and**

**new tours?**

BY: Yes, we have a fully recorded fourth record that's going to be released on Ripple Music out of San Francisco. That record will be out in 2023 sooner rather than later hopefully. It's taking a long time to get it together, recording during Covid, etc. We're just excited to get it out and get out there and play some shows

**AU: La Chinga often gets lumped into the stoner rock genre, and maybe unfairly, because to me you guys are much more. Does it bother you to sometimes get pigeonholed into the stoner rock world?**

BY: The Stonerock world is a great community. I personally don't think our band really plays that kind of music. To me it's more 70s style riff rock with some psychedelic elements. I can see why we are considered that style of band. A lot of what we do comes from a similar place. Personally, stoner doom is not a sound that I am particularly fond of.

**AU: How does a typical La Chinga song get written?**

BY: No real formula. Usually Chris will come in with a riff and we'll build a song together in practice. Sometimes I'll come with the song if I'm into it. Generally we throw ideas up against the wall and if something sticks and it feels cool, we will put a song together out of it.

**AU: What are some future goals for the band moving forward?**

BY: Get our fourth record out and get out there and play some more shows. Keep on keeping on. We never really think in terms of long-term goals or any of that.



**AU: Where can people buy/listen to the band's records?**

BY: Our first three albums are all available to stream on Spotify. You can also buy vinyl and CDs on Bandcamp.

**AU: Are there any upcoming shows or events you would like to promote and talk about?**

BY: Keep an eye out for a new album coming out in 2023

**AU: What can one expect when seeing La Chinga perform live?**

BY: Big amps lots of smoke. Hard psych. Theremin attacks. good times, mind-expanding guitar, solos, total brain meltdown, freedom, rock, and free love.

**AU: Any last thoughts?**

BY: Stop thinking, it's a waste of time.

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

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about Kickcancersass.ca**



## Lynx

### Claws Out and Ready to Slash

By Ryan Dyer

Ja6ur, Blade, Fangs, Flash - no, these aren't the malicious puppets from *Puppet Master*, they are Lynx, Calgary's newest group giving shock treatment to the rock scene in the city. Making sure every show they play could be rivaled with that one time you saw Hanoi Rocks in a tiny club in the '80s, the band has released two EPs and are currently prepping their first full-length album, *Claws Out*. We speak to the members of Lynx before they start to slash up the scene once again with this important release.

#### Absolute Underground: How did the members of Lynx connect the links and form this band?

Lynx: We all came together through the Calgary music classifieds Facebook group. Although we all have a story behind what brought us to Calgary in the first place because none of us grew up in Calgary or even Alberta for that matter. Facebook

music groups were the key to bringing us all together.

#### AU: Why the name Lynx?

Lynx: When we were starting the band, we honestly thought of so many names, most of them were weird shit and nothing was really clicking. Then one fine night, our guitar player Blade saw this big ass lynx cat with a rabbit in its mouth walking in his neighborhood. He decided the band name to be Lynx. There was another rock n roll band from Toronto in the '70s called Lynx. So we decided to put the two dots on top of Y to create our own identity & Lynx was born!

#### AU: You are one of the bands bringing an "80s revival" to rock and metal. What about this era of music inspires Lynx?

Lynx: The adrenaline of it all, once the lights and fog hit its a different energy! Playing fast, loud, pumping crowds up, and putting on a show! It also happened to be the music we grew up with, hearing at home or at a party back in the day!

#### AU: What are the band's major influences?

Lynx: We all bring a variety of different influences into the band. Flash and Ja6ur love metal, pop-punk, and even hip-hop. Fangs brings a background of country and folk rock into the mix, and Blade is '80s to his core.

#### AU: You have a few music videos released now, "Crazy Crazy World", "Shake it up", and "Long live Rock N Roll." Tell us about the making of these videos.

Lynx: The "Long Live Rock-n'-Roll" video we shot at our studio and an abandoned gas station. Ja6ur had to bribe the guy that owned it to let us shoot, he saved the day. It was shot by Igor at Sunshine Visuals YYC. The "Shake it Up" video was fun to shoot! We shot it at Aradia Studio in Calgary, the ladies really saved the day! No one wants to just watch four dudes for four minutes straight. It was shot by Chris Wirth and Breanna Garland of Melodic Imagery. "Crazy Crazy World" was shot in a garage with a go pro. We wanted to keep it simple and focused as it was our first video. They were all a lot of fun and as any band knows, very exhausting.

#### AU: You have two EPS out so far. What has been the response to them so far in Canada and abroad?

Lynx: Yeah, the response to both of them has been great and has led to better things. From Spain to Germany, and all the way back everywhere we've shipped CDs, the people have really dug the music we've made! We're looking to up our game with a full album on the next release!

#### AU: You participated in a few summer festivals, Decimate Metal Fest 2022, and Alternate Waves Music Festival 2022. How were these experiences for the band?

Lynx: They both rocked! We had a great time playing both stages! Meeting all the bands and getting to rock out with them afterward was amazing as well! We can't wait to do it again next year!

#### AU: You were nominated for the YYCMA Rock

## CALGARY CARNAGE

#### Recording of the year. You didn't get the gold this time, but how was the ceremony?

Lynx: The YYCMAs were a blast! It was great getting to meet friends new and old and see what the city has to offer. We got to see a lot of musicians who we haven't heard of so that was super cool. We're incredibly grateful to have been a part of that event and we hope to be invited back next year!

#### AU: What's the story behind the stage names? Ja6ur on vocals, Blade on guitar, Fangs on bass, and Flash on drums.

Lynx: Not much of a story behind the names but carrying on the torch from great '80s bands we decided to have stage names. Ja6ur uses his own name; he just adds the Gen Z touch in there with the six. Fangs first said his as a joke since it's all the teeth he has left. Blade just likes sharp edges and has a few katanas in his collection. He also picked it up in Karate as a kid and went with it. Flash was in honor of a friend who passed, carrying on his legacy of the nickname.

#### AU: Does Lynx have any pre or post-show rituals?

Lynx: Pre-show workout by Lynx - Ja6ur and Fangs get two Jack and Cokes each. Flash gets a shot of vodka and Blade orders a beer for himself on the stage. Then warm-up is always a pep talk by one of us before we hit the stage and of course, a reminder to have fun no matter what. Post-show workout - pack up and let the party begin!

#### AU: What does 2023 look like for Lynx?

Lynx: Next year we're hoping to release our full-length album *Claws Out*, and ideally start a Canadian tour for it. Besides that, we'll be playing as many shows as we can and filming a few music videos. We're always working on new material and we can't wait to share with you everything that we have in the works.

<https://lynxrocks.com/home>

## All Else Fails

**Absolute Underground: Welcome to back to Absolute Underground Mag, it's been a while since we last spoke to All Else Fails, for readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?**

BK: I am Barrett Klesko, the Vocalist / Guitarist for All Else Fails, a progressive metalcore band based in Edmonton, Alberta. We are about to release our 10th album, and have been a band since 2006. We are generally pretty heavy, with a mix of clean and harsh vocals, a lot of layered programming and soundscape work, and we incorporate a lot of elements from other genres like Tech Death, Industrial, and Ambient.

**AU: How is the metal scene these days in Edmonton post-Covid hiatus?**

BK: There has basically been a restart, a lot of brand new bands, and people seem a lot more interested in live music again. At the same time, I think the old format of eight bands playing in a bar isn't as appealing to many people as it once was. We are internally planning a lot of unusual events to continue to make shows more interesting going forward. Secret Events, pop up shows, etc.

**AU: All Else Fails is back with a new EP - "The Incident at Black Lake" that was released on Sept 30th. This is the band's 10th studio recording and the latest since 2018's The False Sanctuary (EP). What can you tell our readers about this new record?**

BK: It is very different from our past releases, though I like to think each one is. For this one we spent almost the entire pandemic writing and producing this album, we had the freedom to really dig into the songs and make them exactly what we wanted them to be. Personally, I have been going through a seriously difficult time the past few years, and lyrically this album reflects that, with themes ranging around severe mental illness, dissociation from reality, drug use, and the existential horror that is living in the modern world. It is also intended as a full-length listen, each song is written to flow seamlessly into the next in a way that brings an up and down flow to the listening experience.



**AU: What's the meaning behind the title "The Incident at Black Lake"?**

BK: It is a reference to the natural phenomenon of brine pools. Essentially they are ultra-salinized poisonous lakes at the bottom of oceans, the reference being that no matter how deep and dark things may be, there is always something blacker and harsher.

**AU: We enjoyed your music video for your track "I, Defiler," where did the concept for the video come from? We understand frontman Barrett Klesko directed this music video too as he is also known across Canada for his directorial skills for music videos for other bands such as The Order of Chaos, Until Dawn, Sweet Tequila, Cadillac Junkies, In Vertigo.**

BK: Thank you. This is the first video in a series that will link the songs together into an EP-length short film. Essentially it is a day in my life at some of the worst times. The black and white sections represent the monotony of depression and addiction, the feeling of being blank and going through the motions of what are expected.

The splashes of colour represent drug use and the appeal that being high to escape life can bring, with the highly saturated portion representing different parts of my explorations with psychedelics. The effect work represents the sensory sensitivity that I generally experience, especially related to sound, but also the dissociative elements of my reality and my internal disconnection from the concept of time.

**AU: With more EPs than albums, why have you approached over the years mainly favoured EPs over albums to release?**

BK: We really like to take our time to write, and we generally produce, and often even engineer our own music. Our sound is technically complex and sonically layered, so it takes us a long time to get our music where we want it. Personally, I prefer to listen to full-length albums, but if we went that route, it would probably be closer to 5 or 6 years between releases, and that just isn't really possible with our tour and show schedule and aspirations. I also like the ability to mess around with changing elements of our sound without having to commit to a massive genre pivot.

**AU: We noticed AEF has a new lineup with all-star Edmonton musicians that include John Saturley of The Order of Chaos, Coco Lee of Eternal Prophecy and Nelson Collins-Lee from Skepsis and The 21st Agenda joining band founder Barrett Klesko. How was it for everyone to work together on the songwriting and recording of the EP?**

BK: I have been incredibly fortunate to play with some amazing musicians over the years, but I have to say that our current lineup is on a whole new level. Aside from the pure talent of musicianship that this lineup has on tap, each member is incredibly creative in their artistry, we are each pushing each other in fascinating directions, while all being involved in the writing process. On top of that, everyone in the band is a legitimately great human being, and we are all getting along really well. Each member is basically a fucking comedian too, and that certainly makes the long studio hauls and trips between

shows a lot of fun. Fun is actually a great word for it, and one that isn't always associated with a doom and gloom genre like ours. None of us take ourselves too seriously. Well, actually maybe I do...

**AU: Any tours or upcoming shows for 2022 or 2023 you'd like to mention?**

BK: It's a little too early to announce anything, but we are hosting a secret event for our CD release. If you know, you know, and we will be hosting more going forward, so if you are in our area, please keep your ear to the ground.

**AU: Anything else you'd like to add?**

BK: Yeah, one last thing. We have recently pulled ourselves off social media. This is for a number of reasons, but mainly because I have a fundamental problem with how the various platforms are being used, mainly in the form of mass user manipulation. We realize that this will make it harder for our fans to connect with us, so we are posting our email publicly for anyone who would like to reach out and speak with us directly.

(Allelsefails@outlook.com) We will still be taking advantage of youtube, spotify, etc, and encourage anyone still using social media to support indie media and music sources for information on the scene. On a personal note, over the past few years, even before covid, our music communities across Canada have become either non-existent or poisoned by the idea that artists need to portray ourselves as larger-than-life rock gods worshipping at the altar of vanity metrics. At the end of the day, all of us are in this for the same reasons, we love music, and we want to share it with like-minded people. As such, we'll be out at venues supporting our friends, and we would love to see more people doing the same.

Thank you for your support in the Indie scene, and for helping us promote our release.

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## Nihilist Death Cult

**Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Mag, for readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?**

NS: My name is Nick Sagias and I play bass and sing in the bands Nihilist Death Cult and Tribe of Pazuzu.

**AU: You have your debut album *Death To All Tyrants*, just released on December 2nd, what can you tell our readers about this record?**

NS: It's been a long time coming... not only from working on it over the past four years (2018), but also from a true 'return to the roots' gut feeling. Through a series of events that occurred in '16-'17, I reawakened my desire for writing and playing very fast, aggressive, relentless music again. The intent is very focused.

**AU: How was it working with ex-Cancer Bats guitarist Scott Middleton to produce the record?**

NS: Both my brother and I were very weary of who to work with on the eventual recording of the songs we were working on. It was always the goal to eventually record these songs. With all the Tribe Of Pazuzu releases, I've worked with Montreal engineer Christian Donaldson. I had in mind that this needed to be a separate thing - something all its own. Even though I am the constant in both bands, as it relates to the writing and vocals, those were the two major factors in our choice

to utilize Scott. Additionally, the differences in both bands require different approaches as it relates to engineering. I've known Scott for at least ten years - following each other on Twitter, etc. - but we never really engaged too much besides following and liking each other's posts. From the beginning, I always loved his drum sounds/production. The closer we got to realizing these songs, I started sending Scott's mixes to my brother and he agreed with me about his mixes/production. It was at that point that I reached out. He was totally into it, and very enthusiastic about the whole thing. In fact, I didn't even know he was a Soulstorm fan until after I asked him to record NDC. So, it was also cool to work with someone who was familiar with things I have done. Originally, we were going to record it at his new home studio which he was in the middle of building, which was fine with our timeline for the most part, but then it got pushed back a couple times. We were itching so we got some help from Luc Chaisson, so we tracked everything at Arcade Studios. Scott mixed and mastered at his new home studio. Scott was great to work with, he understood where we were coming from and was ready to make it happen, he understood the vision we had.



**AU: You had some really cool bands before Nihilist Death Cult, Tribe of Pazuzu, Soulstorm, Overthrow, ex-Pestilence, how does working on NDC compare to previous?**

NS: Thanks, I appreciate that. Tribe of Pazuzu is still active. We have our full-length album coming out at the end of March '23. Basically, since the end of Soulstorm in '16, I just got tired of working with people who didn't have the same vision and drive. So, with Tribe, I just got the best drummer and got some great musicians to play on it and record the songs exactly how I wrote them... how I envisioned them to be. With NDC, these were basically the punk riffs from all those writing sessions for Tribe. I arranged them into songs and sent them to my brother. Honestly, if he didn't like them and didn't

want to play on them then this band would never have happened. It was the two of us for the initial sessions. In the beginning, we were just having fun as he was just getting back into it after a long hiatus (after he left Abyss). We weren't in a hurry and we knew we needed quality people to pull this off, but we also wanted it to be very small, just three of us, at that point. We didn't think further than that because it wasn't really a band yet. There was no timeline to get it done. The rehearsals were sporadic and I was busy with Tribe, recording two EPs during that time. Once we got Ethan to help us out, we started rehearsing more regularly with the eventual goal of recording. In retrospect, we probably should have gotten Rick involved a bit earlier but we weren't thinking that many steps ahead at that time.

**AU: You brought some previous members you have played with, Randy Harris (Tribe of Pazuzu) and Ian Mumble (Overthrow) to guest on the album, how did that come to be?**

NS: We had always rehearsed the songs without solos and just all rhythm guitars. It wasn't until the actual day of recording solos for the album that solos were even really considered. I had a couple places in some songs that I wanted something added, so I asked Ethan and he said he couldn't play solos, I didn't realize he was joking and I took it literally and seriously at the time because I had no idea he couldn't solo. So, I called up Randy on the spot and asked him to contribute something literally at the last minute... I think I gave him a couple hours? Haha. It ended up being a really cool addition. They both have different styles and I wanted to include Randy somehow because he's been great to work with in Tribe. Of course, Ethan stepped up and created some great solos that absolutely fit the style, which was exactly what we were looking for. With Ian, it was after the songs were recorded that I had this idea that the end of 'You Get What You Deserve' needed something... some dives... some noise. Then it kinda struck me... wait, that's an Overthrow riff at the end of that song. Why not see if Ian would like to contribute a

## TORONTO TRASH

lead for that? I haven't worked with Ian in thirty years but we've been in touch and he loved the idea immediately and recorded his lead at his place and sent it in. I think it fits perfectly in there and compliments the riff very well. Of course, it's cool to have that Overthrow angle/connection... the old with the new. I think this stuff will definitely appeal to the Overthrow fans, especially from the demo days when it was all fast. It's great to return to that fast, relentless and direct style.

**AU: The album title is *Death To All Tyrants*... Any tyrants do you personally despise?**

NS: I think tyrants are everywhere, of all shapes and sizes. There are the bullies, the liars, and the hypocrites. Sometimes that's all the same person. It does have a few meanings to it, but it always comes back to the little guy - the individual against the big corporations and government. Though the phrase *Death To All Tyrants* is nothing new, I do remember when I first heard it in Latin. I had to look up the translation and it took on a whole new meaning for me... a deeper connection... a familiar theme that goes back through time.

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours you like to mention?**

NS: No tours yet, but we have a few upcoming local shows at The Hard Luck Bar and The Bovine here in Toronto. Also, we have a show planned in Detroit with some really cool bands, one of which is Centenary, who I would love to bring to Toronto. Some future plans include Buffalo and Cincinnati, hopefully, Cleveland... would be great to do Montreal, too. We'll just do what we can, where we can. For now, we are just working hard to get the name out there, all very DIY.

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# MONTREAL MASSACRE



## Cydemind

**Absolute Underground: Welcome back, for readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?**

C: We are a Montreal-based quintet formed in 2011. Our music is a blend of progressive rock, jazz, classical, and metal. We try to innovate and bring something new to the music world with our original compositions and cover songs. The fact that we have a violinist as a main figure helps us (we think) to distinguish ourselves from other bands of similar genres.

The band members are:

- Olivier Allard (violin)
- Alexandre Dagenais (drums)
- Nico Damoulianos (Bass)
- Camille Delage (piano & keyboards)
- Kevin Paquet (guitars)

**AU: It's been five years since your debut *Erosion* and your new album *The Descent* was just released this past November. What can you tell our readers about this release?**

C: *The Descent* is a seven-track instrumental album. Like in *Erosion*, we wanted to give a sense or a storyline to the continuity of all tracks. Though, compared to our first album, we would say it is definitely darker and more complex. Also, we tried to exploit different themes in different ways throughout the whole album. Obsessions is the best example as themes of all the other tracks are depicted throughout the whole song, some more obvious than others. We thought it was a nice way to introduce the album with an opening act like this. To

second this "Overture" we went a totally different way with a feel good/funky song called "Hoax." As the name suggests, you should not expect the album to respect that tone. On the contrary, the music gradually turns into something more aggressive. The third song is pretty much a slap in the face to wake up everybody. And then everything turns into madness with "Call of the Void" and "Hemlock," which will bring down all of our fans into hell with us until we reach "Slumber." Finally, "The Last Stone" is kind of a candy track ("toute bonbon" as we would say in French) that will invigorate all listeners until they reach their

last breath.

To summarize in one sentence, *The Descent* delves into the concept of obsessions and the abysses into which they can plunge the human mind.

**AU: How was it self-producing / DIY this sophomore record compared to your debut produced by Christian Donaldson (Cryptopsy)? How was the experience?**

C: It was a very rewarding experience. We learned a lot from Chris' work in the production of *Erosion*. Though his "death metal" touch was something we wanted to move away from a little bit. Not because we didn't like it but rather because we felt our sound needed to be more prog rock/natural than heavy on compression.

In addition, in a self-producing process, you have more time to experience new sounds and new approaches. We did more research for guitars and keyboard sounds, and had more time to do guitars, bass, and keyboard recording. Perhaps the funnest part of all was recording the strings tracks in Kevin's closet! Great times!

Nonetheless, as all musicians are perfectionists, we already know how differently we would want our third album to be produced differently. Music is an ongoing learning process that only ends when death takes us.

**AU: We read that you recorded parts of the album in Prince Edward Island at a cottage? How was that experience for your songwriting?**

C: Incredibly inspiring. We like to go there and cut ourselves from the world, just focusing on making music. Time doesn't exist there so there's absolutely no stress. During the production of *Erosion*, "What Remains" and "Tree of Tales" were almost entirely written in PEI. In fact, "Tree of Tales" work name was "Deadly Swamps of PEI!"

For *The Descent*, the second half of "Call of the Void" was written there, but for the most part, we did guitar recording and sound design there.

**AU: The violin seems to be your vocal piece as an instrumental prog metal band. Has there been a thought to add a guest vocalist on future recordings?**

C: We're open to the idea, yes! Nothing planned regarding this matter, though.

**AU: How do you find taking a classical musical writing approach to metal?**

C: For us, it's what works best. Kevin and Olivier like to write on their own, really work on parts until they're polished and every note is there for a reason. We often get the compliment that our songs are well written. That's because we spend a lot of time during that process and we make sure everybody in the band is satisfied.

**AU: Who do you think is the most underrated classical composer that metalheads could possibly enjoy?**

C: That's a hard question! There is a raw energy in Vivaldi's music that we also find in metal music. Although Vivaldi is far from being underrated! Other than that, metalheads like their songs fast and virtuosic so Paganini, Chopin, and Liszt would be a sure bet!

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours you like to mention?**

C: We just did an album launch at the Plaza Theater in Montreal last November. No shows planned yet but we are actively looking for more! We are open to any opportunity.

**AU: Anything else you like to add for our readers?**

C: Keep looking for new music. You'll always end up on something to your taste.

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



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## The Prowlers

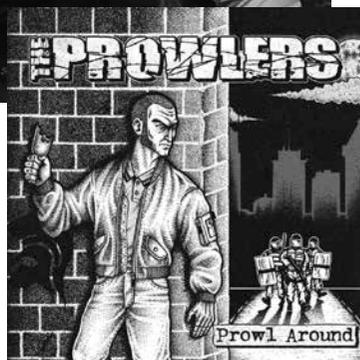
Interview by Chuck & Daz

**Absolute Underground: Not just a skinhead band, you guys consider yourselves a S.H.A.R.P. band correct? (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice)**

Yes this is probably the best way to describe us. We are not involved in politics that much but one thing is clear, The Prowlers is an anti-racist skinhead band.

**AU: Care to add a little about the S.H.A.R.P. movement? Where, when it was founded? How long have you guys been involved?**

S.H.A.R.P was first created in New-York City in the 80s. Roddy Moreno, singer of the legendary band The Oppressed is the one that made this popular. Back in those years there were a lot of problems with extreme right wing politics in the scene that wanted to take over the skinhead culture. Understanding the history of skinheads this didn't make any sense. Roddy used his contacts and made S.H.A.R.P a huge movement in the scene. Personally I have been involved with S.H.A.R.P



The first Oi Fest was organized in the year 2000 by two local girls. We did another one in 2001 because these girls didn't want to continue with it. Then in 2013 I decided to bring it back and we have been doing it every year since. Of course there was no Oi Fest in 2020-21-22 because of the pandemic situation but we are bringing it back in April 2023.

**AU: What can you tell us about your latest album, *Prowl Around*, that came out in February of 2022?**

We have had several releases (split album, 7" and 10") since our first album released in 2001 called *Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow* but never a full length album like *Prowl Around*. It might be the only cool thing that came out of the pandemic being able

since the mid 90s. Today we don't have as many problems with Nazis like we used to in those years but we try to keep the spirit of S.H.A.R.P alive.

**AU: Have any of you been involved in organizing the Montréal Oi Fest in the past?**

Yes, I organize the Festival every year and the main goal is first to keep our scene alive and second bring oi! bands over to Canada that wouldn't usually be touring Canada.

**AU: How long has Montréal Oi Fest been around?**

to take the time to write all these songs. We were really happy with the results musically and soundwise and the response has been great. We now play several of these songs live and people seem to enjoy it.

**AU: How far away from home have you guys ever toured?**

We have played a lot in Europe and in the USA and of course in Canada. I think we have made 12 or 13 European tours mostly going to France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany and more, but we were also fortunate to play in countries like Slovenia, Serbia, Hungary that are not popular destinations for touring bands. We also have played Mexico 3 times and Bogota in Colombia.

**AU: When was the last time you ever played BC?**

We actually never played BC. This is really something we would like to do in the near future.

**AU: When did the band form and how's the skinhead scene now compared to when you started?**

The band formed in 1998 and we did our first gig in 1999. The scene has really changed since then. The explosion of the internet is probably the biggest change. Now people can listen to your music everywhere and it's easier to promote. Also, bands have been touring a lot more due to this because now you don't need to be really well distributed to get attention, but just have people sharing your music. As far as gigs it was way more violent when we started, there were fights at every gig and now there isn't any which is a good thing.

**AU: Any members of the prowlers in any other bands past and present?**

Yes a lot, Montreal being a very enthusiastic scene and we have had members sharing other bands in the last 23 years.

Right now our bass player Marty is in two other bands (Ultra Razzia and Force Majeure), Erik our

## VOICE OF THE STREETS

guitar player is the lead singer of La Gachette and Yan our drummer used to play in Street Troopers and Union Made.

**AU: Any stories or relations with classic bands like The Discords or Gassenhauer?**

Yes and very good ones. This is also why we did record two covers of these legendary Montreal bands. We are covering "Drunken Skinhead" from Gassenhauer and "NDG" by The Discords. For us it's important to show respect to them for what they did in the scene. We had the privilege to do several shows with The Discords when they reformed in the early 2000.

**AU: What are some old punk venues in Montreal back in the day that are memorable to you guys?**

For me Loonies was the first Skinhead bar that I hung out in. But since then there have been some cool ones like Bar St-Laurent, Café Chaos and Yer Mad that don't do live shows but are still a great place to go drink. Of course you still have the good ol Fougounes Electriques that still exists for almost 40 years. We still play there regularly and it's always special.

**AU: What are some newer bands in Montreal we should look out for?**

There are a lot! Ultra Razzia, Force Majeure, Beton Armé, Molotov, Over the Hill are the newer ones in the past 5 years. For people not familiar with the Montreal scene there are also great bands like La Gachette, Offside, Ripcordz, Self control to name a few that are still active.

**AU: Thanks for the interview and keeping the scene alive, anything else you would like to add or mention?**

Thank you for the interview and people that would like to follow us can do it on Facebook and Instagram. Hopefully we can visit BC in the upcoming years.

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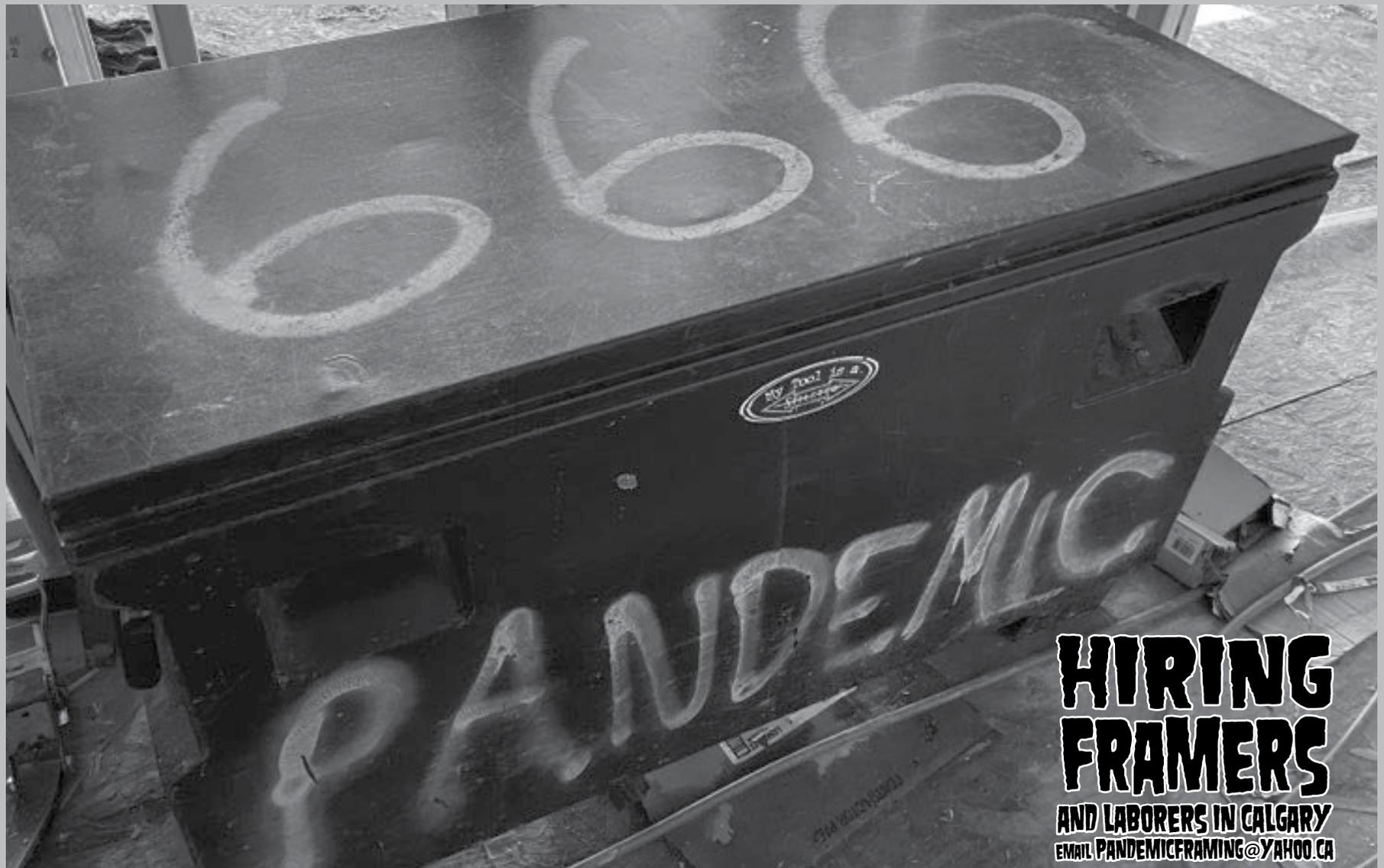


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## BREWING 101



### Winter solstice/Christmas beer

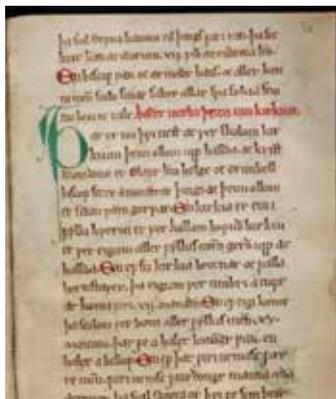
#### "Tis the season to be jolly"

The long tradition of solstice brews dates back thousands of years to the ancient druids. The shortest day of the year marked the end of the harvest and the gruelling cold days ahead. Beer would be prepared with various herbs to celebrate the sun and the anticipation of the spring. Consuming beer would create a connection with the spiritual and supernatural world. The celebration of Christmas in December was to take away from the Pagan ritual, but not to take the tradition of drinking away. In Norway, during the Viking era, Juleøl would be made every year in honour of the winter solstice. Traditional Juleøl would be similar to Sahti. This stronger

dark version would be brewed with juniper branches and yarrow. In an attempt to Christianize Scandinavia in 1000 AD and ending in 1267 AD, laws were passed that Juleøl had to be made and blessed with Christ's name. If you could not produce beer for your farm and its workers, you could be fined. If you went three years without

brewing, you could lose your farm. Crosses would be carved into brewing vessels and a knife would be stabbed into the wooden mash tun to ward off mischievous mythological characters who might attempt to spoil the beer. These characters were known to the Scandinavian people as

the Huldra (elves) or the Nisse/Kobolds (pixies). The brewers' horses would drink beer on Christmas Eve and small cups would be left out for smaller animals. Beer would be poured on the farmers' field to ensure a good crop for the next growing season. The tradition of making Juleøl still exists to this day, but has changed from Sahti to a more commercial winter ale style. A tradition of going door to door in disguise called Julebukking and receiving drinks, goes back to pre Christian Norway



in celebration of Thor and the two goats that pulled his chariot. Julebukkers would wear goat skins and carry a goat's head.

Decorating with a goat is still a common tradition to this day.

In medieval Europe, monks brewing in monasteries would often brew strong dark ales during the colder months. These brews were often consumed during times of fasting for deep "spiritual connection".

In the early 1900s, commercial brewers would brew beer for export and mass consumption. MacEwans double scotch ale became a hit in countries like Belgium. Belgian brewers started making their own

Christmas ale called 'Bier de Noel'. This was due to the popularity of imported Christmas ales. Modern Christmas ales often have cloves, ginger, cinnamon, orange zest etc...

The tradition of Christmas ale in modern history is, for the most part, strictly capitalist. With shorter colder days, reflecting on the history and having a glass for whatever reason is a jolly thing to do.

- Daniel Van Netten



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## Wes Hoffman and Friends

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

WH: My name is Wes Hoffman. I'm a singer, songwriter and guitarist for my band, Wes Hoffman and Friends.

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

WH: This band started in 2017 when Justin Unterseh (or Hes) asked me if I'd like to record a song with him in his basement. He had all the recording equipment and played drums and sang as well. So we recorded a couple simple skate punk songs. We were just going to play one show and call it quits, but we had so much fun that we decided to keep going with it. Now, here we are 5 years later. We've released an EP on cassette, and

toured throughout the Midwest in the U.S.

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

WH: I discovered punk rock in the mid-late 90s and into the early 2000s, so our sound is very representative of that era. We get compared to a lot of bands that were coming up at that time - MXPX, Face to Face, Hot Water Music, etc. We also get lumped in with some more recent bands like Red City Radio, Iron Chic, and The Menzingers. So it's kind of a mix of old and new influences.



Mostly, I love the music to be very driven, melodic, and catchy. My goal is for the song to stick in your head after hearing it even just one time.

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

**expect to hear?**

WH: In January of 2022 we released an EP called "Rewrite the Story." It was released on cassette through a joint effort with Wrecking Crew Records in Eastern Canada, and The Record Label based here in St. Louis, Missouri where we're from.

However, we have a full length album due up to be released sometime in 2023. We released the first single off of it, and the second single will be released in November 2022.

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

WH: "Rewrite The Story" definitely follows themes

# WRECKING CREW RECORDS

of going through a major life transition, which is what was happening with me at the time it was written. It's about going through a tough time, but still having hope for a better future.

Our next album will have similar themes, but there's a bit more hope. I went through the tough times, and now my life is in a much better place, so the songs are a bit more hopeful, positive, and bright.

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

WH: The standout track on our EP was definitely "What's Left of Me," and it's also our highest streamed song. On our new album, I'm really excited for our most recently released single "Where Summer Never Ends," as well as a song called "Paper Hearts" that hasn't been released yet.

**AU: What record label will this new album be released on?**

WH: We're not a 100% sure yet, but we've been talking with a couple so we'll keep you posted!

**AU: What do you like best about working with Wrecking Crew Records?**

WH: John from Wrecking Crew has believed in this music since day one. He was the first label to reach out and show any interest in what we were doing. He's extremely genuine, and truly cares about the music and his artists.

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

WH: I've been spending a lot of time playing

guitar, writing songs, hanging out with my girlfriend (going on hikes and small trips).

**AU: Any shows or tours planned to promote new release?**

WH: We've toured quite a bit in 2022 to promote "Rewrite the Story." It was so fun, and the first time we had played out of town in years. In 2023, we have some tour dates with Bad Planning scheduled in February. Look for the full list soon!

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

WH: I want to let people know to check out Wrecking Crew Records and Underground Rimouski, you can get our cassette tape through both of the venue and website. Also, make sure to follow us on streaming platforms and give our music a listen.

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

WH: Be your authentic self and live the life you want to live. We don't have much time

here, and though sometimes it seems the world is so messed up, don't let it suck your will to live. Make the most of your time here and do what you love.

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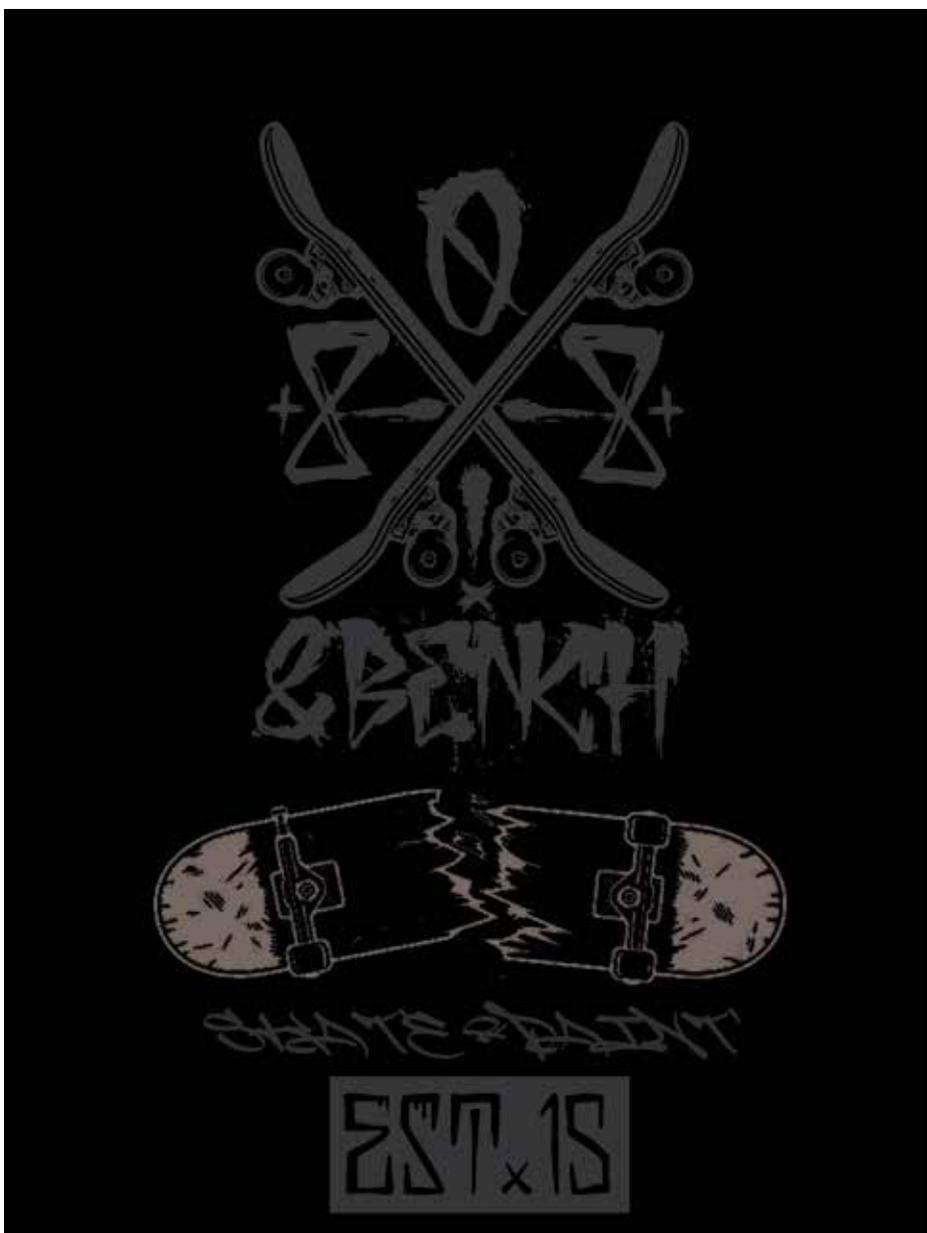
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## Asbestos Worker

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

JS: This is Josh Stever, vocals and guitars infamous for talking too much and too loud. Thanks to years of punk rock!

**AU: Give us a brief history of your band Asbestos Worker.**

JS: We started off as a one man project by me in 2018 and have since released a digital only EP, 2 vinyl LPs and a hand full of compilations. At the beginning of 2022 we became a three-piece ass-kicking machine!

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

JS: A melding of noise rock, punk rock, surf rock, grindcore, and stoner/sludge.

**AU: Is there a story behind the band's name?**

JS: Two of us Jason Peterson (drums) and myself are actual asbestos workers. Members of the heat and frost insulators and asbestos workers local #34 Saint Paul/ Minneapolis.

**AU: Where are you guys from and what is the music scene like there?**

JS: We're from Minneapolis, Minnesota and the music scene here has always been one of the best and biggest reasons to live here in my opinion.

**AU: Have you released an album recently? If so, what can we expect to hear?**

JS: Yes, *The Separation* out on Learning Curve Records and you can expect to hear alot of pent up aggression.

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

JS: I wrote this album while I was going through a separation with my now ex wife. So the albums really delves into depression, anxiety, anger but with the hope for a better tomorrow.



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

JS: My favorite track is "Fear Is the Little Death." It incorporates the litany against fear from the *Dune* novels to touch on the current fear based world we live in.

**AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?**

JS: Family

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

JS: Always naughty!

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read. Movie you saw. Album you heard. Band you saw live. Best local band deserving of more recognition? The thing that blew your mind the most.**

JS: Book: *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, movie: *Dune*, album: Grizzlor - *Hammer of Life*, live band: USA Nails, local band needing more recognition: my cohorts other band The Vault

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?**

JS: Not currently but will be scheduling a bunch soon.

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## Punks In Recovery

By Gregorio Lewis

# PUNKS IN RECOVERY

I'm sure somebody reading this column has thought about walking away from life in the past few days. I prefer to live in reality even though I don't like it. Seems like life has gotten more difficult for many of us and we find ourselves alone with our worries and concerns and fear.

It feels like the pandemic made everyone, at the very least, a little bit more selfish. It's good to be focused on your own mental health, quality of life, stability and peace. For those of us who already felt isolated and alone before the pandemic, we know all too well what it feels like to live with uncertainty. I missed the past two deadlines to contribute to the *Absolute Underground* magazine and I submitted this the day it was due. Why is it so hard to write a column when I have months and months to do it? The short answer currently, is that the pandemic really wrecked me.

I was already my cool, queer, crazy, happy self and doing okay and for me, doing okay is a pretty good place to be.

For people who already had a fairly stable life before the pandemic and who then may have struggled during it and since, their experience is going to be different than for somebody who has had a hard time prior to the pandemic.



A column titled 'Punks in Recovery' is going to have the person writing it know a thing or two about having a hard time. So it's not a coincidence that in the first paragraph I said I'm sure somebody reading this column has thought about walking away from life in the past few days.

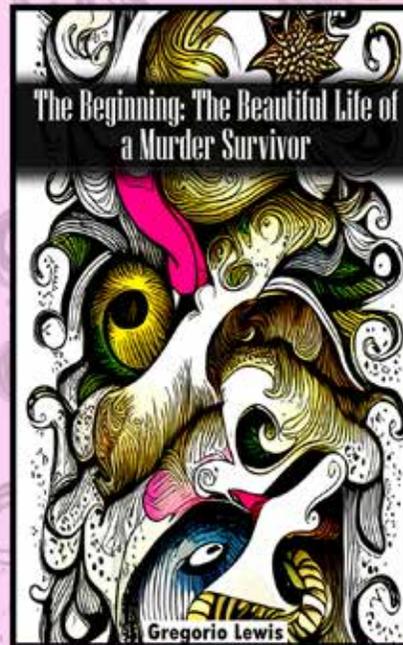
That's also why I've had a hard time meeting deadlines for the past two issues. I figured I could force myself to do something good by talking about the reality that a lot more of us are struggling, than we tell other people, And if I could accomplish a tiny bit of peace for myself by helping others know that they're not the only ones going through really tough stuff; that is something I am willing to try to do.



May the power of our decisions to heal and be well result in our healing and being well.

Thank you Absolute Underground for trusting me to get this column to them in time and thank you to all of you for reading it. Check out our punk rock and mental health recovery books and more at: [Sanityisafulltimejob.org/collections](https://Sanityisafulltimejob.org/collections)

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# POWDER SEEKERS



## Charles Beckinsale

### Part 4

Interview with Master Terrain Park Builder, Charles Beckinsale – Part 4  
by Ira "Big Air" Hunter

#### AU: Do you skateboard or surf as well?

CB: Before I moved to Jindabyne at 13, I lived up the coast north of Sydney at place called Forster-Tuncurry. I would surf every day before school and then after school. If the waves were shit, I'd go skateboarding. So I definitely grew up with those things around me and I was really passionate about them. But there was something about snowboarding because it was so foreign. Once I got down here and got to snowboard, we were lucky enough that we lived with some super cool snowboard instructors our second season. They had Simple Pleasures and then Decade those two Mack Dawg movies. Those are the snowboard videos that kind of changed my life and really got the hook in. Seeing Pete Line and JP Walker. I just wanted to mimic everything they did. I would just buy every video, every magazine. I was just obsessed. Snowboarding just hit me a little bit different than surfing and skateboarding.

#### AU: Describe the sensation of snowboarding verbally if at all possible.

CB: Just freedom. Freedom from everything. Just that acceleration when you go down a hill and that feeling of the wind on your face. The wind pushing against your jacket and pants. It's just pure freedom and adrenaline. The other thing I find when I'm snowboarding is that it's almost meditative. If you've got something on your mind that's bothering you it just seems to disappear. All you are focused on is what's happening with you and the snowboard at the time. The freedom to kind of get away from your problems.

#### AU: Do you ever snowboard stoned?

CB: Not personally, no.

#### AU: More about the natural high?

CB: Yeah. As cliché as that sounds.

#### AU: What's better, a fresh powder run or an orgasm?

CB: For me a fresh powder run. It's probably gonna last longer.

#### AU: I asked some of these same questions to Ross Rebagliati. He was with you on that one. Do you have any opinions on that whole thing that happened with him at the Olympics and the marijuana and when they tried to take his medal away?

CB: I don't think weed is performance enhancing. I think the Olympics is pretty uptight with the rules. As far as weed I wouldn't consider it like taking steroids or anything. So it's probably overblown.

#### AU: The way he explained it to me was that he had already been tested several times just to even get in there and it wasn't actually on their list of banned substances. So if he wanted to he could have sued them because it kind of defamed his character at the time.

CB: Didn't he do alright afterwards though? Didn't he start a weed company that is crushing it now?

#### AU: Yeah, definitely. But what happened was it was right when the Internet was starting and he explained that he used to open a Blockbuster Video for like 10 grand for an

#### hour. But then people could start Googling his name and weed had a big stigma back then. That's when he said, Fuck this I'm just going to start this weed business instead and just embrace it more.

CB: Sometimes you've got to turn a negative into positive. That's good to see. In snowboarding there is such a big portion of good snowboarders that smoke weed. A lot of people have to change their habits just to go to the Olympics, which I think is kind of wack.

#### AU: Do you have any tricks for training your kid to snowboard?

CB: Patience. All of us as snowboarders want to see our kids get good and be able to come around the hill with us as quick as we can. But if you do your three runs for the day and then leave the hill with a kid wanting more. I think that's a pretty valuable bit of advice. Because if you ruin it for your kid by making them do more runs than they want to do. It kind of makes snowboarding feel like a chore for them. But if they're the ones that are like "No, I want to stay and do another run." then they are keen for the next trip.

For me I have a new level of respect for any dad I see out there trying to teach their kid how to snowboard. The amount of gear you've got to put on and to get to the hill and to buy lift passes. Just

to get maybe three or four runs on the magic carpet. Just to get them going, it's a bit of a grind but it's really rewarding.

I'm lucky now we got my son on a snowboard when he was two. Nothing serious, just that little Burton Riglet thing. I'd just hold his hands and slide him around or drag him around on the flats with that little leash. Just to get a feel for it. From then I'd take him out probably like two days a week in Jindabyne or up to Thredbo. Then he was with us in Whistler and we'd get him going a bit there. He's five and he's now kind of doing falling leaf top to bottom on Blackcomb and Whistler and linking the odd turn. But it's cool he can kind of get around the hill and he's excited about riding trees and stuff now. It's pretty magic once they get to that point and the mountain turns into a bit of an adventure for them.

#### AU: How high was the biggest cliff you ever jumped off?

CB: I had a cover that was on Australian / New Zealand Snowboarding mag that might have been the biggest one. It was a big chunk of ice probably like 50 feet.

#### AU: Do you prefer a deep powder day or a perfect park day?

CB: It might have been different in my 20s but now definitely a powder day.

#### AU: How do you break through the fear of launching big air?

CB: I try to rationalize it. I'll look for where the person is dropping in that's making the jump going before me and if they're landing in the sweet spot then I just follow their line and I'm good. I think just being rational about it is probably the best way. Knowing that if you reach the sweet spot, that there's no impact there, it's safe. What will kind of like freak people out is if you start looking at the knuckle or all the things that could go wrong. I think that's what limits people from taking on bigger jumps.

#### AU: Why does there have to be a knuckle? Why does there have to be that flat part that can

#### hurt you? Sometimes I wonder because I don't always make it. Why is it I have to travel so far over that flat table?

CB: That's a good question. I think it's usually just industry practice to have something that you're clearing. I think it takes more snow to have a perfect roll shape for the jump and sometimes people building big jumps will run out of snow. The knuckle should never be sharp, in my opinion. It should always have a bit of a grace period where it's sloping slightly downhill before you get into it. But that is not always the case. But I guess without the deck, you can't really create that separation to where the landing pitch starts properly. If it was all sloping downhill after the kicker it would be a pretty weird sweet spot. It might be a bit flat. The other option is if you make like the Gap Session style jump where the snow follows the arc almost of the trajectory you fly through. But then it wouldn't feel that cool because you wouldn't really be off the ground very much.

I knuckled the 65 foot jump I built this year in Saas Fee, Switzerland and it didn't even put me off my feet. It's the way you do it. If the jump is a step up or true table. For me when I'm winching the landing, if I bring snow up and put it on the deck and kind of roll the deck in a way that is about 15 or 20 feet. It starts as flat and then starts sloping into the landing. So if you do come up short, it's not catastrophic. You just kinda land and there is a bit of impact on your legs, but you usually stay on your feet. I think that's the best way to build jumps is with this safe kind of rolled out deck. I don't personally like flat decks. I like them when they're in a big roll shape. So the second half of the deck is sloping downhill and a bit more of a safety net for the rider.

To Be Concluded Next Issue.

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## Vintage Snowboard Show At Pop Cult

Interview with Skull Skates founder PD by Ira "Hammerhead" Hunter

**AU:** You just opened up your first exhibit at Pop Cult, your popular culture museum in Qualicum Beach, BC, all about the history of snowboards and snowboarding. How long will the exhibit be on display?

PD: It's going to stay up until like April 15th.

**AU:** I wish I had my very first snowboard still. I have every one of my other snowboards but I sold my first one. It was a Kemper Freestyle 165. I was like 12 years old so it was way too big. You couldn't buy snowboards on Vancouver Island back then so I had to go to Vancouver and I didn't know what it was doing.

PD: Yeah yeah, and someone sold you something you didn't need.

**AU:** I was wondering why I was struggling to learn how to snowboard and catching edges for the first five years. It was because it was just way too big. I wouldn't even ride a 165 now.



who used to be in business with me, ordered a box of Snurfers that showed up at the shop in 1979.

**AU:** What's the idea behind the vintage snowboard exhibit you have set up?

PD: What we're doing in the exhibit is that we're saying that basically

the toboggan was the first snowboard because every kid stood up on a toboggan and hung on to the rope and rode it down the hill. A Snurfer is like a smaller streamlined version of a toboggan. They're like maybe six or seven inches wide. It's basically a piece of wood with a shovel nose and a rope coming off it. As are the early Burton Snowboards and stuff too.

**AU:** When did Skull Skates start making snowboards?

PD: Our first snowboard was in 1983 and we have the prototype here and the exhibit. We had been selling other brands but we are getting fucked over on supply. They couldn't get us what we needed or like the crappy windsurfer store got stuff before we did and we were just furious that year. It was hurting the brand and we were just like, "Okay, fuck these dudes, we can't trust them. We've got to make our own shit just so that we

can control the supply". So they sort of forced our hand and made us get into the business. We probably would have eventually anyhow. When

PD: That's funny dude. We've got that board in the exhibit. So you have to try and get by before the show comes down.

**AU:** We will be driving up island all the time going snowboarding at Mount Washington so I'll make sure that everyone knows. We have a group of dedicated riders called the Powder Seekers. What was your first experience with snowboarding?

PD: My brother,



I ride other people's stuff, I'm stoked but I always instantly go "Oh man, if this was just a bit narrower or just a bit wider or just a bit stiffer or just a bit softer," you know? So I think we would have eventually got in anyway, but mostly it was a situation where we just need to guarantee our supply.

**AU:** Did your snowboards have a specific name?

PD: It's was Crystal Ocean by Skull Skates. But eventually we actually broke them into two separate lines. So for several years there were Skull Skates snowboards and also Crystal Ocean snowboards, all designed by us. Everything we do is designed from the inside out. I don't just take somebody else's skateboard or snowboard and put my graphic on it. So yeah, we were pretty innovative in the snowboard deal just because we were all super into riding them and there was a lot of development going on. We were sort of at the front of that I think, just by happenstance.

**AU:** What made your boards unique?

PD: I'd say things like varied flex patterns where the tip and the tail were softer than the midsection. Torsional flex integrity, which means that they didn't twist. They kept their shape. My first check always on a skateboard, I grab it by the nose and the tail and I try to twist it. That tells me what kind of torsional integrity

it has. Snowboards are kind of too long to do that. So you just stand the snowboard up and wedge the tail between your feet then you grab the nose and you twist it. Little details, like we came up with this idea that surface contact and effective edge wouldn't be the same. Up until we did it, I'd never seen it.

Maybe other people could have been doing it at the same time but as far as we knew we invented it. This idea that the effective edge was slightly longer than the surface contact. What that means is that the side cut continues into the shovel. So when you're waded into a turn, you get that full effective edge. But when you're on hardpack or doing freestyle stuff, having the side cut lifted a bit at the tip and the tail means it's not catchy. It's just a lot more fluid. Also then the fact that they were made in Canada in super limited quantities, so each board had a lot of time and care put into it. We basically made them too good because Crystal Ocean boards lasted forever. You know what I mean? People would be like riding them for 10 seasons. Which is cool. I mean, we don't do that built in obsolescence bullshit anyhow. But yeah, they were pretty bulletproof.

**AU:** What were your graphics like?

PD: Graphics were pretty wack in snowboarding. We introduced skateboard style graphics into it like more our style. Our style actually in the snowboards ended up being full blown like wildstyle graffiti bases and just all kinds of stuff that I was personally into.

**AU:** Where would you have been snowboarding back then?

PD: The first time we went snowboarding was at Central Park in Burnaby on the Snurfers. Then we started hiking Seymour and Cypress Mountains. They didn't let us on the chairs until like '87 or '88. We called all the mountains one year and put our best official voice on and said, I'm calling to inquire whether you



PD - Blackcomb Glacier - 1996

allow snowboards. Everybody said "No" and then we said "Why?" Then they mostly just hung up on us. But Hemlock Valley, which is close to Mission said, "We can't let you up because our insurance says you have to load and unload wearing skis." We said "Okay if we loaded and unloaded with skis and carry our board, would you let us up?" and they said "Ah, yeah." So '83 was the first time we had lift access and that was at Hemlock Valley. That was a mind blower. Prior to that we would

hike for seven and a half hours and ride for 30 minutes. That was the ratio. Once we were on the chair, we're like "Oh my god, we can just blow off runs like one after the other. This is insane."

**AU:** Tell us more about this new vintage snowboard exhibit.

PD: The snowboard exhibit is sort of the cherry popper for our pop culture museum that we've created here in Qualicum Beach. I think we've got about 120 snowboards or maybe more. They're all displayed in the exhibit space in a chronological timeline. So we start with a toboggan and Snurfers then the early Burtons and Sims and

really cool brands that I like. Like Barfoot and more the kind of underdog sort of brands that were really innovative, but they were never big because they weren't corporate people running them. But when you put them in a timeline like that, they kind of go clockwise around the space, it's pretty cool because you can just imagine how the styles were evolving through the equipment. Riding style influences equipment and then in turn equipment influences how people ride. So there's always that awesome exchange going on. You really get a feel for that when you look at these boards. It's funny because you can tell when you're in the 80s section it's like, "Oh my god, this shit is bright and these graphics are wack."

**AU:** Did Skull Skates have a sponsored snowboarding team?

PD: We sponsored people kind of casually off and on. Our first really proper guy was a legendary East Van skater named Corey Campbell. He also skated for us on our skateboards and he was just a fucking madman. Then eventually, just casual, like I know Sluggo rode our stuff for a few seasons. Moses



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Itkonen, his skating style is just very stylish. He is one of the dudes that introduced style into technical skating. Prior to that most technical skating was pretty stinky looking. Moses was an incredible snowboarder but he had no interest in being a pro or a sponsored snowboarder. He just did it for fun. We've got a picture of him in the exhibit where he is doing a front side alley oop. It's like, "Oh, yeah, that's insane style."

**AU: What's the biggest cliff you've ever jumped off?**

PD: We always said it was 30 foot, which means it's probably more like 15 feet. But that was on rubber straps and no edges or anything at Hemlock Valley. Maybe at Cypress something closer to 30. I don't really know. My snowboarding style is similar to my skateboarding style, where I'm all about the lines and stuff. Yeah, you catch air but I think the craziest trick I probably would have ever done was just a big drifting sort of 360 off of stuff. Air was just sort of a thing that if it happened sort of randomly in the midst of your run then that's how it went. I mean yeah, we would jump off of stuff but my personal interest wasn't in hitting wind lips and kickers and things over and over. It was more like just shred the line and if there's air there, you take it.

**AU: Do you prefer a powder run or an orgasm?**

PD: That's a trick question dude. I can't answer that. That's an impossible question to answer but thanks for asking. I like being put on the spot.



**AU: We know there is a Skull Skates in Japan. How was the snowboarding market there at the beginning?**

PD: Snowboarding went off pretty big over there. In fact, the guy who runs our shop over there, I met him when he lived in Canada and basically I met him through snowboarding. He would come to our

shop and hang out and buy a board or something and then we ended up snowboarding on the North Shore hills. After his four years sort of student visa was over and he was ready to go back to Japan he asked if we'd be interested in opening a shop there. I did snowboard once in Nagano. Almost got kicked off the hill because we ducked a rope. We got pulled into the office with Japanese dudes yelling, no idea what they're saying. We denied we ducked the rope, they turned on a TV monitor and showed they had cameras in the trees, which we didn't know. You could just see us ducking the rope and blowing it. So then it was pretty hard to deny.

**AU: Does the exhibit also show the progression of other equipment like bindings and boots?**

PD: Yes it does. One of the neat parts of the of the show is most people think of like the old Sims or whatever, those early boards. But the cool part is there's a whole section on basically skateboards made for snow.

Now we'd call it like a snow skate or something. But these were just early attempts when people didn't really know what was up yet. So there's a bunch that are essentially skateboards made to ride on snow. I have an Ice Surfer from the mid 60s and a few of those snow skateboards from the 70s.

**AU: I remember I had the old hard plastic blue bindings and the thin white Sorel boots. It was just so much pain in the calves.**

PD: Just insane yeah. We've got a nice little string of bindings, including the hard plate type that people used to use with like flat boots and stuff.

**AU: I had the Alpine stance style with the 45 degree front foot.**

PD: That's what we hated about those fixed bindings, we weren't having it. When we started, it was closer to skateboarding. There were these little rubber straps but basically, like a skateboard if you don't try to stay on a skateboard, you're getting bucked. But what we liked about the rubber straps is that you could be adjusting your stance as you're riding just like you do on any kind of board sport deal, right? When the fixed bindings came out, we thought two things. One this shit is kind of wack because you jump and you are

attached. Lame right? Too easy. But more so because you couldn't move. You're locked into that one stance. In addition to the boots killing your feet, while

your knees and hips got all fucked, because you couldn't adjust your stance as you're riding. So it put you in these awkward positions often.

**AU: How long is the exhibit going to run again?**

PD: It's going to go until April 15 of 2023. We're open seven days a week. We're asking for a suggested donation of five bucks to get in.

Just to cover some of the costs of staging the exhibit. But if you don't have any money, it doesn't matter.

**AU: So this is just the first of many exhibits to come?**

PD: This was our prototype. A lot of people who have come through were mentioning, just like you said, my first board or whatever. One thing that we are going to plan hopefully in December or January, we're going to do a BYOB day, bring your own board. We'll figure out a date and start promoting it. But we want to get people to bring their boards in and just do a show and tell and bro down over the stuff.

**AU: Where did you get all the vintage snowboards on display from?**

PD: Some have been donated. Some I've just sort of picked up. At one point I bought a collection that was about 40 boards. I should mention that it's not all my boards. There's another fellow, Ben Ladouceur, that lives locally here. He's real keen and he was big on lighting a fire under me to get this going.

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## Yuletide Horrors

By Brian Clement

As we delve into the Christmas and holiday season, it's natural that some of the horror enthusiasts out there may want to track down some of the myriad seasonally-themed movies if you like your snow blood-stained and your stockings stuffed with edged weapons. I've compiled a series of mini-reviews here of several I've watched over the past few years, while leaving out some more obvious recent movies which you may also wish to track down if you haven't seen them yet (*Rare Exports*, *Krampus*, etc).

1. *Gremlins* - a bit of a gimme, since it's not only easy to find, but you've probably seen it already, though if you haven't since you were a kid you may be shocked at how violent it really is. Aside from attacking a man dressed as Santa and blasting an old lady out the roof of her house to her certain death, the Gremlins themselves are variously blown up in a microwave, pulped in a blender, and melted horrifically. Highly recommended.



2. *Black Christmas* - one of the earliest and best, this is still creepy and effective. Shot around Toronto (the "sorority house" still exists as a private residence) and highly influential to many other films. Highly recommended. (The remakes are watchable if you feel like taking a gander, though quite different)

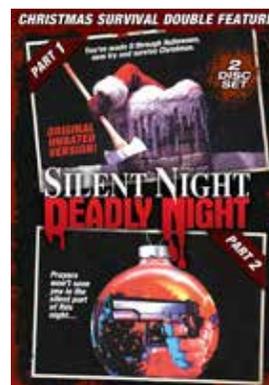


3. *Christmas Evil* - a surprisingly heartfelt and sad killer Santa movie in which a Christmas-obsessed man (who, naturally, became a maniac after witnessing his father dressed as Santa going to have sex with his mother) desperately wants Santa and the spirit of Christmas to be real - or else! Well-acted and



(slightly) less sleazy than the others here. Highly recommended.

4. *Silent Night, Deadly Night* parts 1 & 2 - notorious for inspiring protests and anger, another killer Santa movie which should only appeal to the truly depraved. Part 2 shamelessly reuses 45 minutes of footage from the original and is the source of the online meme/gif of a guy with a gun shouting "GARBAGE DAY!". Highly recommended.



5. *Don't Open Till Christmas* - probably the sleaziest and most disgusting of this group, in which various perverted and disgusting men dressed as Santa are stalked and murdered. I felt like I needed a shower afterwards, as if the greasiness of this movie was physically oozing out of the screen. Highly recommended.



6. *Santa's Slay* - wrestler Bill Goldberg appears as a maniacal evil Santa going berserk and destroying a small town. Intentionally corny and ridiculous in search of laughs, a few of which land. Highly recommended.



7. *The Lodge* - a woman who escaped from a cult is left in an isolated winter cabin with her boyfriend's kids and may or may not be going out of her mind. *The Shining* is definitely an influence, and that's not a bad thing. A disturbing, deliberately paced psychological thriller you probably shouldn't watch alone. Highly recommended.



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## Jack Sholder Hidden Nightmares - Part 4

Interview with the director of *The Hidden*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*, and *Alone In The Dark*.

By Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

**AU: Why did you retire from filmmaking and what have you been doing since?**

Jack Sholder: Well, things started slowing down for me and I got an offer to start a film program from scratch at a branch of the University of North Carolina. I had never taken a film course, I had never taught a film course. So the idea was kind of intriguing and also the idea of getting a steady paycheck. So I went and had a very good meeting with the chancellor. I said, "You know, I've never done this before." and he said "Well you are a smart guy, you will figure it out." So I took the job. It was very interesting because I did it for 12 or 13 years. I started the programming and then I ran it. I kind of had to figure out how you teach this stuff, because I had never studied it. I just watched lots and lots and lots of movies. As an editor, you kind



of learn how to put movies together and I also cut a lot of trailers. So I would basically take a two hour movie and cut it down to two and half minutes. You have to take it apart and put it back together again and so you learn a lot about it. But I had never learned it in a systematic way like you do in a film school. So I kind of had to think about why I did everything that I did while I was doing it. Why do you shoot a reverse

angle that is the same exact angle except it's the mirror image of the first angle? Why do you shoot an over the shoulder as opposed to a clean single? So I had to figure out why I did it in order to be able to teach it. Once I could explain to them why you should do it, they'd still do it wrong and I had to figure out how to explain to them in a way that kind of stuck. Then about three or four years ago I left the University and I'm trying to get another film made.

**AU: What kind of movie?**

JS: It's a vampire movie. I've had other offers to do films. Some of which were very easy to turn down and others which just never quite seemed to get made. I would not say that I'm retired, I'm still active. I'm more in the retrospective phase of my career. I get invited to film festivals, I get invited to screenings, I go to conventions and stuff like that. I'm still doing it but I'm also doing other things.

**AU: I hope your vampire movie gets made.**

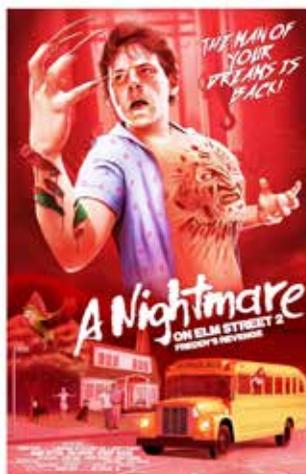
JS: Yeah, it's a very good script. I had kind of wondered whether the fact that I've been

teaching and thinking about it and trying to figure out what the rules were, would make me a better or worse filmmaker. At one point when it seemed like the making of the vampire film was sort of getting into a low level pre-production, it seemed to me like I was firing on all eight cylinders. That all of that thinking and all of the watching of students making all sorts of mistakes. All the "No, don't do that, do this. Don't put the camera there."

That all that just gave me a certain kind of a facility. Even though I had gotten pretty good at it. When you've done I think it's 14 films now. I really should know. I actually remember I was shooting this movie called *12:01* which is another one of my favorites that I've done. It was my sixth film. I remember it's like two o'clock in the morning and I was directing a scene. I looked around and I thought, "I actually know what I'm doing." It took me six films to actually feel like I had some command of what was going on.

When I look back on the other films they were very well made. I mean, whatever

else you may think of them, they were very well directed. I feel I managed to do it in spite of being in the middle of this sort of whirlwind. But somewhere around my sixth film things started slowing down. It's like when you watch a pro basketball game. Things happen so fast. They're running down the court and this guy passes to somebody else behind his back. How do you do that? Well, I think things just kind of slow down, you sort of get used to that pace. I guess that's what happened to me eventually. It's a very complicated very hard job. But like anything else, as you keep doing it you sort of learn how to deal with it. Learn what's important and what's not.



## ABSOLUTE HORROR



It's like any profession. If you just read a book about it, this and this and this, they all look like they are even. But if you're doing it for a living you suddenly realize, well I've really got to pay attention to this thing and this other thing is not so important. That's all part of it, experience.

When I would teach students about working with actors I eventually got fairly good at it. But in the early days I felt really insecure about my abilities. The more you do it, every actor is different and so the more actors you work with you just start to learn what the differences are and how you need to adjust for each actor. If you are a film student you are just not going to know that because you just don't have that experience.



**AU: Any more advice to share?**

JS: My advice for prospective film students is to watch as many good movies as you possibly can. The more good movies that you watch, it just gets into you. The other advice I would give is, the more you learn about stuff that is not film, the better a filmmaker you'll be.

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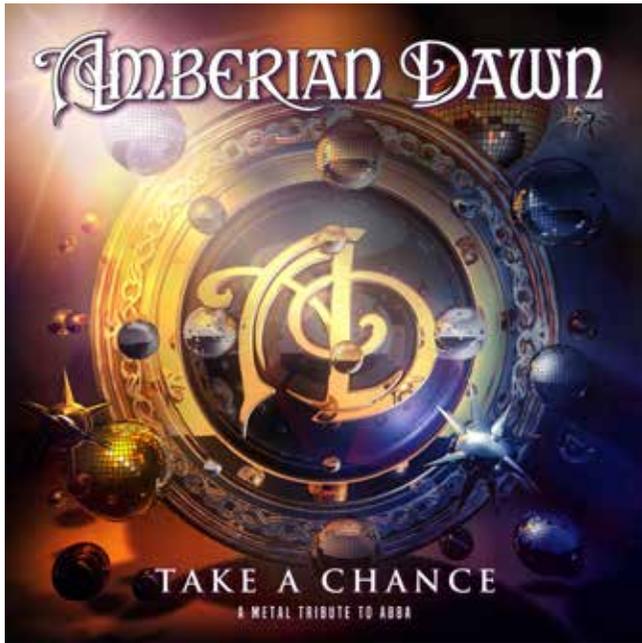


**NEW BAND CHUNK HAS JUST RELEASED THEIR DEBUT ALBUM!**

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**Keith Clark Photography**



be heard in their covers of fond favourites from the quartet. From "Mamma Mia" to "S.O.S.," that signature beat can't be twisted up too much so that it's unrecognisable. Vocalist Capri provides most of the harmony, and thankfully the support from bandmates Tuomas Seppälä (Keyboards), Emil Pohjalainen (guitar), Jukka Hoffren (bass), and Joonas Pykälä-ah (drums) fill out what's missing.

At the time of writing, two music videos are available to view online. For "S.O.S.," my favourite tune, the piano is changed to electric guitars. There's more distortion and fuzz in this newer take. I can hear some added layers from the keyboard which

**Amberian Dawn**

**A Metal Tribute to ABBA**

**Preview by Ed Sum**

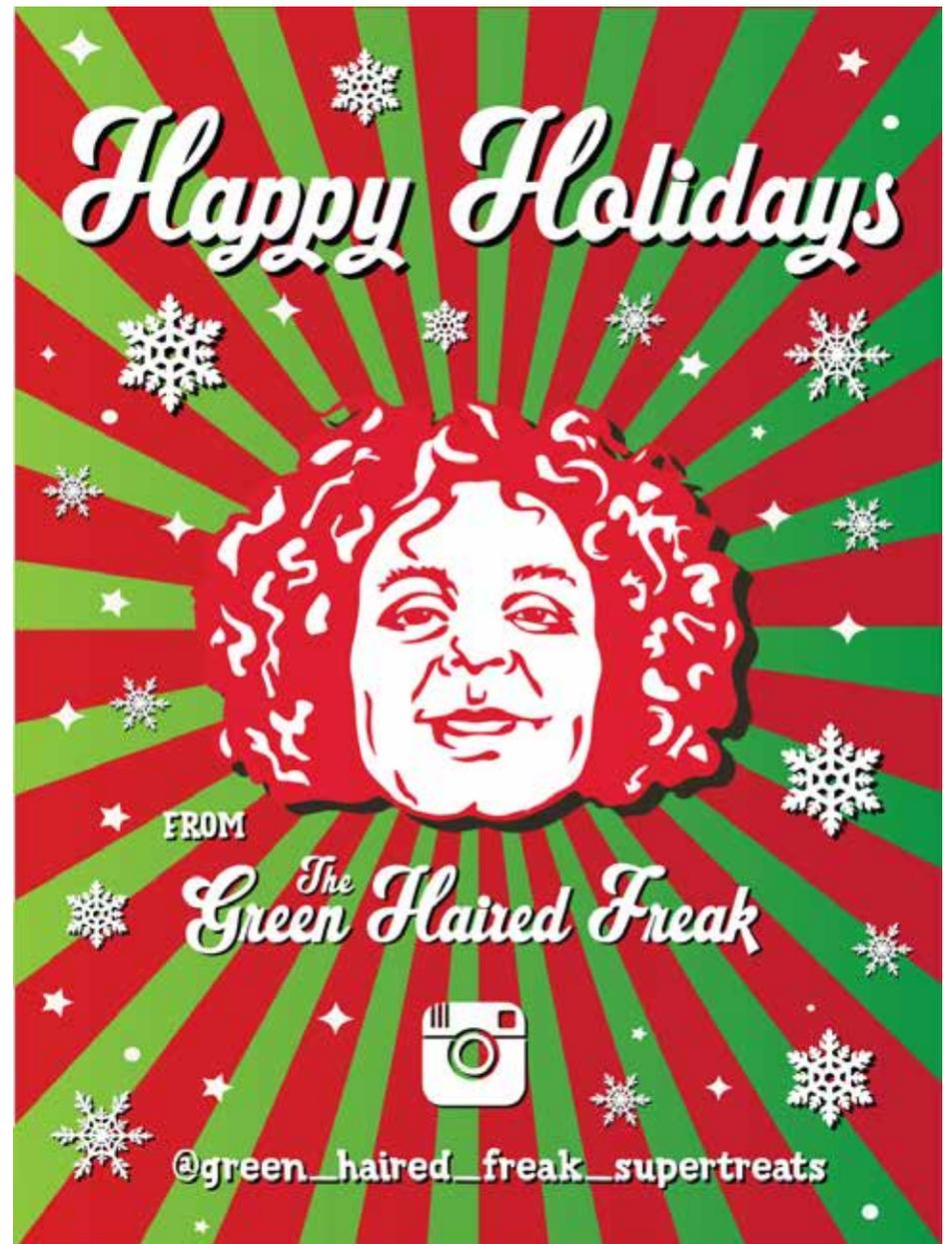
For a modern rock and roll band to cover the music of another group, usually from another era like the 70s, is more or less a rite of passage. Many recent talents have honoured ABBA and The Bee Gees with a reinterpretation of a distinct sound, but to truly crank it up requires knowing what "Extreme Music" is all about. It's more than just fine-tuning today's synths so that it'll replicate that sound from long ago. It's about being able to blend the distinct stylings of unlikely genres together. In Amberian Dawn's upcoming album, "Take A Chance—A Metal Tribute to ABBA," that means turning those disco beats into heavy metal!

Napalm Records is releasing this album on December 2, 2022. Everything this Finnish heavy metal band represents with their sound can still

aren't in the original.

"Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)" is acoustically punched up. There's less bass and a sharper synth landscape. Also, the drum work is more pronounced.

I'm surprised "Dancing Queen" isn't covered. Maybe it's too iconic to mess with, but other musicians like San Di Ego from Slovenia have achieved it, and his take is excellent. The music video highlights the glamour of the role, and the added guitar riffs are perfect. Other groups like Sinergy or Mario Marin have also adapted their tunes. A simple google search will show who has produced what, but for another band to apply their style to it requires respecting each song's sound dynamics. That's why I'm loving Amberian Dawn's take. However, after listening to this homage, I'm now out to see what past groups have been given the edgy treatment. Hm, *The Partridge Family* looks promising, but what about *The Monkees*?



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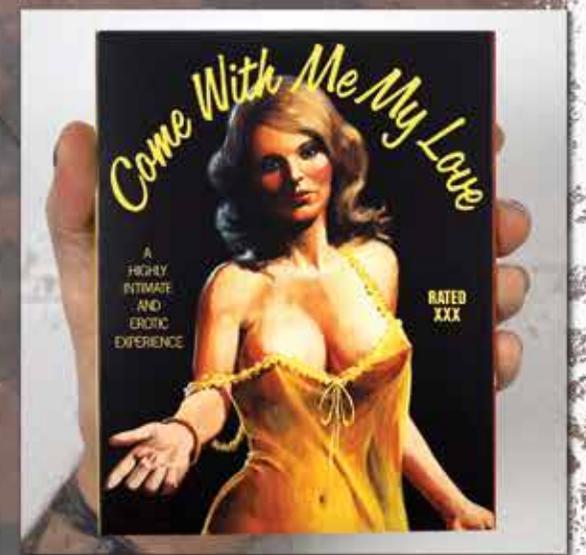
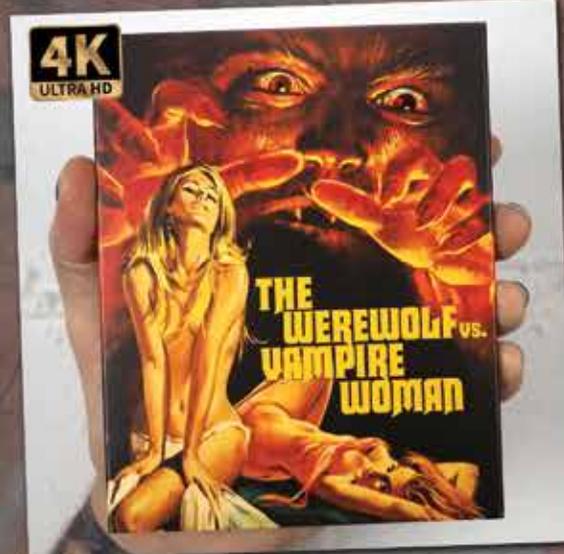
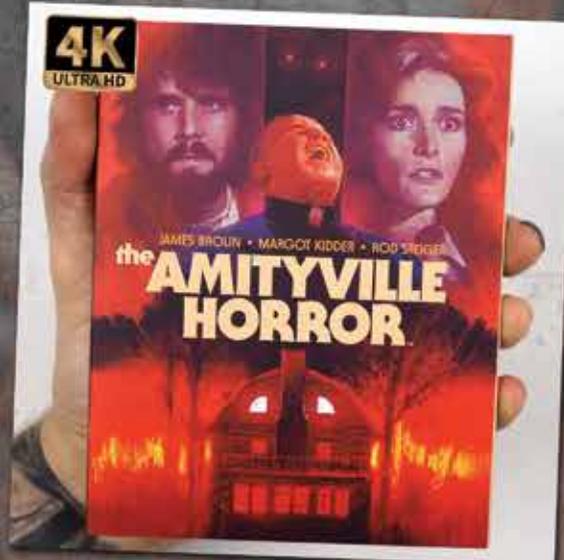
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# ABSOLUTE HORROR



within the actual Italian mob. Conversely, Tony Scott's vampire film *The Hunger* goes in nearly the completely opposite direction as Landis' movie, going for mood and visionary cinematography to one

## Fangs Spring Eternal

By Vince D'Amato

David Slade's 2007 snowbound vampire standout *30 Days of Night* owes about as much to the works of John Carpenter as it does to the original *Tales from the Crypt* story it came from, "Comes the Dawn" (filmed back in 1990 as part of the HBO series). I do certainly love those rare occasions when vampires and the snowy season come

together for a bit of a horror mash-up... And 'tis the season, as they say. And you can't go wrong with *Let the Right One In* nor its English remake *Let Me In*, if you're the sort to prefer the English versions of things; but all that being said, the real inspiration for this



particular delve into vampire cinema was the realization that my top three vampire movies have strangely never appeared all together on any of the "top vampire" lists I've seen on the internet -- and Christmastime certainly is the time for lists, is it not? At any rate, most vampire film lists will have one or two of them (my favorites, that is), but no list I've seen mentions all three: George Romero's *Martin*, Tony Scott's *The Hunger*, and Robert Rodriguez' *From Dusk till Dawn*. (I should give an honorable mention to Katherine Bigelow's *Near Dark* here as well). I remember when *From Dusk till Dawn* was first released into theatres, and famed critics Siskel and Ebert gave the film a slightly underwhelming review; Roger Ebert had specifically pointed out screenwriter Quentin Tarantino's penchant for borrowing from other sources, and as Ebert put it, "even borrowing from George Romero's films where one bite and you get turned". And so true, *From Dusk till Dawn* was the first "vampire" film that I'd known to apply Romero's zombie-mythos to its own vampire logic. Roger Ebert was always one of George Romero's biggest champions, and he even gave Romero's latter *Diary of the Dead* a positive review, even though by the time *Diary* came around it seemed that artistically, Romero was grasping for something new to say within the genre that he really did single-handedly reinvent. He would also take that socially allegorical creativity into his turn at the vampire film, the brilliant *Martin*. I remember sharing *Martin* with a friend of mine

who was most certainly not a horror fan -- *Martin* was only one of two horror films that he actually enjoyed, the other being Peter Jackson's *Dead Alive* (aka *Braindead*).

An irony surrounding the undead occurs to me -- mostly around zombies -- in that as basic as these monsters are, the undead provide such fertile stories to cinematic horror -- the boundaries are only found in the limits of the films' directors and their visions. Starting with *Night of the Living Dead*, several filmmakers have creatively twisted the limits of both the zombie and the vampire films. One of the reasons could be that the basics of both of these creatures can trigger the most primal sociological and psychological elements within

ourselves. "Zombies" can be seen as the dangerous dim-witted members of society that surround us (the central characters) in everyday life, and in both horrific and hilarious ways can explore what happens if we let that danger roll out of control. "Vampires" could be the active antithesis of that, where they represent people/things that are actively going out of their way to do you harm; they're "out to get you", which is of course a natural trigger for fear to us.

Comedy filmmaker John Landis also played around with the tropes of the vampire film in another Christmastime-set vampire movie, 1992's *Innocent Blood*, turning his bloodsuckers into more of a mindless "mob" of zombies, with the exception of the first head vampire of the film, played by the beautiful Anne Parillaud (the original La Femme Nikita). *Innocent Blood* is one of the few vampire film that comes to mind where the vampires, once turned, lose all aspects of their former human intelligence and become mindless bloodsuckers; even Anne Parillaud's character

at one point is taken over by sheer thirst and obsession, which leads to a series of troubling and funny and horrifying missteps as she tries to get a handle on the vampire outbreak she's caused

of the most beautifully-shot horror films in the latter part of the twentieth century. Admittedly, at one point in *The Hunger*, the film takes itself a little too seriously for its own good, but this



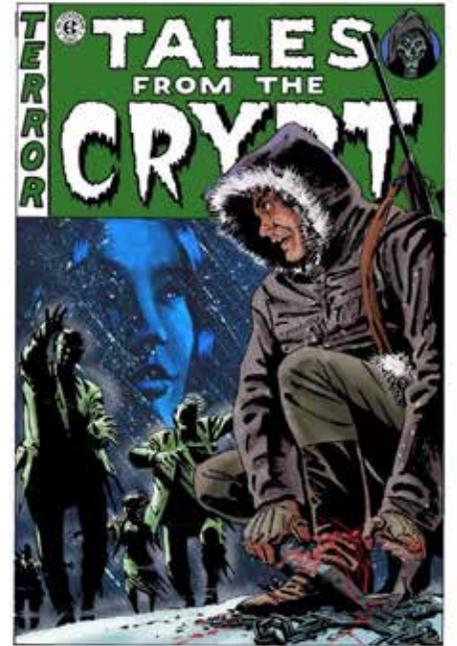
is a forgivable offense within the context of the entire movie; and *The Hunger* is one of the few vampire films that shows us you can tell a haunting story

through the use of visuals almost exclusively; *The Hunger* is not a film from which you remember moments of dialogue with any actual clarity, unlike the hilarious rapid-fire moments that come from Tarantino's pen in *From Dusk till Dawn*. But within this context of 70s, 80s, and 90s undead, it's Romero's *Martin* that still stands out as something truly unique and worthy of deeper meditation and repeat viewings. Because the creatures of the undead do provide such fertile ground for creativity within horror cinema, it's no real surprise that one can get more out of

*Martin* and *The Hunger* and even *From Dusk till Dawn* on repeat viewings (although in the case of *From Dusk till Dawn* the repeat views might purely be just for fun). Director Rober Rodriguez also twisted the "undead" genre into the fear of virus-spreading in *Planet Terror* (or, the first half of *Grindhouse*), something that had previously been toyed with by



Italian horror auteur Umberto Lenzi in *Nightmare City* (Rodriguez never hid the fact that his film was hugely inspired by *Nightmare City*, and to a certain degree, Lucio Fulci's *Zombie*), and before that, vampires were the virus-spreaders in Richard Matheson's brilliant novel *I Am Legend*, which was also the key inspiration for Romero's original *Living Dead* films. But it was British filmmaker Danny Boyle who brought the virally-infected "undead" all to a dizzying height with his breakout horror film *28 Days Later* -- a "zombie" film that never claims to be a zombie movie -- the central characters are constantly on the run from "infected people" on an intense and mindless and uncontrollable rampage. Visually, Boyle's virus film shares some cinematic moments with Tony Scott's earlier



vampire movie as well.

Matheson's novel is also unique in the genre of the dead, as it never uses the words "vampire" or "zombie", only "virus"; leading the novel to some very vast creative interpretations in Hollywood horror movies; in the Charlton Heston-led *The Omega Man* (1971) the monsters were played

more as zombies, in the Will Smith version (2007) they were vampires... or vampire-ish. On the flipside, Romero



never used the word "virus" directly, or really, never offered any sort of solid explanation for the zombie outbreak in his Dead films, only wild speculation from the authority figures in his worlds; which I think only added to the mystique of his zombie series, which was the first to explicitly depict the idea of cannibalism in the zombie subgenre. Author Stephen King, also a huge Romero supporter (like critic Roger Ebert),

spoke more at length about this in his non-fiction book *Dance Macabre*. King himself would later go down the road of the undead in his own zombie-but-not-zombie novel *Cell* (2006) which he dedicated to George Romero; and which contained King's own brand of potent American allegory and how

we as human beings behave with one another when we're at our best, and at our worst, and all of our flaws in between.

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## BAD CRUSH

interview by Ira Hunter and B.A. Johnston

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

**PT:** Hi, my name is Paige Thompson, most infamous for screaming publicly.

**AU: Who else is in the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles?**

**PT:** (Myself)- Friday night I'll be dressed to kill, down at Dino's Bar & Grill.

**Mandy** - I like my coffee black just like my metal.

**Mackenzie** - You got my heart like a blinking Nintendo.

**Luther** - Hello, is it me you're looking for?

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

**PT:** I (Paige) met Luther working at Cheapies Records & Tapes. We became best buds, and I expressed my desire to play and experiment with music. I was introduced to Mandy and Mackenzie who had already started a surfy punk sound project with Luther. They invited me to a practice and I brought lyrics, my love and affection for riot grrrl, and the rest was history.

**AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?**

**PT:** Strictly Rock 'n' Roll.

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

Riot grrrl, surf punk

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

**PT:** We released our first EP in 2020, and we're planning to release another in 2023. You can expect to hear a mixture of experimental/noise/hardcore punk/(dare we say shoegaze) compiled with our signature riot grrrl surfy sound. While the plague obviously delayed a new album coming out, the new songs we have been writing are coming out of us differently and we aren't concerned with sticking to a particular genre.

**AU: Does the new album explore any themes?**

**PT:** Relationships, hurt, frustration, bad habits, feeling trapped, endless cycles, freedom.

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

**PT:** *Mean Girls*, and *Runaway*. They will be coming out on the next album!

**AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?**

**PT:** We believe family time is crucial, but also have plans to work on our new EP as much as

possible.

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

**PT:** Always nice. Fuck drama!

**AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?**

**PT:** Rent money.

**AU: Give us a quick best of 2022 list; The thing that blew your mind the most.**

**Movie you saw:**

**Luther:** *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is easily the best movie of 2022, but I also want to give a huge shout out to what he calls the 2022 Death of Irony Trilogy, which includes *Marry Me*, *Ambulance*, and *Lyle Lyle Crocodile*. They're all amazing and earnest films!

**Paige:** *X*

**Band you saw live:**

**Paige:** Stereolab.

**Mack:** Sadies. RIP Dallas.

**Mandy:** AFI and Dashboard Confessional.

**Book you read:**

**Paige:** *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*.

**Mandy:** *All the Living and the Dead* by Hayley Campbell

**Album you heard:**

**Paige:** SAULT - *Air*.

**Mandy:**

Fontaines D.C. - *Skinty Fia*

**Local Band Deserving of More Recognition:**

**Paige:** Burs

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?**

**PT:** Our next show is in the Class of 2023 series by Exclaim! on January 6th in Hamilton, ON at Casbah, along with our friends Sham Family, The Beach Bats and Zuto.

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

**PT:** Dump your cheater boyfriend!!!!

**B.A. JOHNSTON BONUS QUESTIONS**

**B.A.: What's your fav submarine sandwich shop in town and what's your go to order?**

**Luther:** Pane del Sole is objectively the best

## HAM JAMMERS

sub in Hamilton, but I ultimately prefer an assorted from Anytime Convenience on Main and Wentworth, or a torpedo sub from Mike's on Ottawa street.

**Paige:** Hands down Mike's Subs Ottawa St. N, but Atlantic Sub is definitely a top contender. Assorted on white, with lettuce, olives, whatever kind of mysterious cheese they have, sub sauce, mayo, mustard, and you must never forget salt & pepper.

**B.A.: You ever wear shorts on stage. If not why not. How hot would it have to be to get you to wear them on stage.**

**Paige:** It would have to be the middle of July, playing Doors Pub in a crowded room with no water OR beer.

**Mandy:** It would need to be as hot as a crematory before I wore shorts on stage.

**B.A.: You are trapped in a hotel for 24 hours alone with a VCR. What tapes you bringing?**

**Luther:** Men in Black, for sure

**Paige:** Earth Girls are Easy, A League of their Own, Robocop, Hell Comes to Frogtown

**Mandy:** Casablanca, Clueless, The Heathers, The Mask.

**B.A.: How you goobers get to shows? Describe your band ride.**

**Paige:** Mandy's CRV. Picture a soccer mom with her three little punks in the back seat surrounded by instruments, and dog hair.

**Instagram @badcrushonyou**

**Bad Crush (Bandcamp, iTunes, Spotify)**

**PHOTO CREDITS:**

**Band Photo by Jeremy Cohen**

**Individual band member photos by Ramsey**





# HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

## Christmas Sunday Morning coming down

by Billy Hopeless

Hopeless holidays everyone through this long run on sentence, as I've been serving here in *Absolute Underground* I've not only brought legends of yore but modern demigods and goddesses as well. This column we've got a guest who's kinda somewhere in between. From his notable and quotable time in Vancouver's punk rock and roll renegades Tankhog to where we find him now preaching the Psalms of Sunday Morning. Hellves and Hellvettes, it's the Bruce Wilson.

**Billy Hopeless: So Bruce, first of all I'd like to say it's really cool having you wassail your way over to my holiday column I remember when I first became a fan it was back in the days when you were fronting the legendary Vancouver band Tankhog but you kinda dropped off the radar for a while. What was up with that?**

Bruce Wilson: After Tankhog had run its course I left Vancouver and spent time in Montreal, New York, North Africa, Japan... I was groundless and a little lost. I found that the saying, "No matter where I go, there I am," is entirely true and trying to escape myself was a futile and lonely effort. My drug and alcohol intake escalated and my life got progressively smaller and smaller until I felt as if I barely existed. It wasn't until I was clean for a



couple years that I started feeling creatively alive and inspired again.

**BH: But now we have the second coming as you've returned to us with a new group of apostles in one of my fave Vancouver bands Sunday Morning. How did this fellowship form and what inspired you to grab the mic again?**

BW: I was living at the Waldorf Hotel working on a novel and I approached my dear friend Stephen Hamm (who I played with in Tankhog) with the idea of writing a soundtrack for the novel. We got together a killer lineup of musicians for the first album and we played some very memorable shows during that period. It felt so great to be performing again after wandering aimlessly for so long.

**BH: Sorry I've taken so long to seek you out. I remember in 2016 when you gave me the self-titled album that still holds as miraculous and praised the first time, I opened my ears to it. Now 7 years later has the congregation's line up changed and how about the music?**

BW: Sunday Morning has always had a fluidity to it in terms of personnel. Hamm played on the

first album and on some of the "Consequence of Love" EP. Kevin Rose also played on both. Hamm decided to focus on his amazing Theremin Man project and I started writing songs with Felix Fung who mixed the first album. Felix introduced me to our current bassist and keyboardist Max Sample and these days it's primarily the three of us hanging out in the studio. Between us we know some extraordinary musicians who come in and lend us their talents on specific tracks. I've been demoing more songs at home and bringing those sessions into the studio where Felix and Max fill them out and make them special. It's a very collaborative and interactive studio experience.

**BH: When I listen to the collection of songs you've written in this project's collected hymn books, I always get a Lord Lou Reed's career vibe. Who are the magi you follow or inspire you to create?**

BW: God, Billy there are so many! Lou is obviously on that list along with a shitload of other musical icons like Bowie, Nick Cave. Chrissy Hynde, Patti Smith, Lucinda Williams, Elvis Costello... I go on benders where I listen to every album in an artist's catalogue and I always find something new. Recently I heard the Kinks song Waterloo Sunset and I realized that Paul Weller owes his entire career to Ray Davies. I went on to spend days listening to only The Kinks and The Jam.

**BH: Now speaking of sugar daddy Lou's Sweet Jane and Candy's Cane on your Velvet Undergroundesque song "Anna Says", who is Anna? Was she fictional or an actual person from your life travels?**

BW: Anna is based on a real person I met years ago. She lived in a place where I used to score drugs. Anna was much older than me and I was struck by her sense of hope and faith despite being haunted by the ghosts of her past—suspended in a purgatorial state waiting for release

as the constricting nature of time narrowed around her. Speaking to her I had a flash of my possible future. A vision of being forgotten and discarded while still desperately trying to hang onto the light of love. Moments of clarity are often just that—moments—and they leave as quickly as they arrive but Anna has endured. Her pure beauty remains unshakeable by time. It seemed appropriate to reference the Velvet Underground song "Candy Says" considering the subject matter. I figured Lou would get it.

**BH: Ok let them auld acquaintances be forgot and all that rot and get to the here and now. Since as I type this there is definitely a hint of snow in the air, let's talk about your take on modern Art. You recently recorded a cover of Art Bergmann's "Junkie Don't Care." I know like myself Arthur Bergmann Meister-Meister Bergmann holds your angels he has heard on high, as do I. Did you tell him you were going to do this? Has he heard it? And out of his vast library why did you choose the tome I would personally choose to cover?**

BW: I was alone in my apartment with a

synthesizer for much of the Covid period and I spent a lot of time messing around learning covers. Learning other people's songs always opens me up to new chord changes and new ways to structure compositions. Art's song "Junkie Don't Care" was a song I always loved and one afternoon I did a little demo of it in my sparse pandemic era apartment. I sent the demo to Art, a bit nervous to hear what he thought because I'd changed the song so dramatically. Thankfully he liked it! He's always been incredibly supportive of Sunday Morning and everything we do. I respect that man and his art immensely.

**BH: The other A side of your latest release is entitled Explain the World, care to explain the world for us?**

BW: *Explain the World* was a long time in the making. Something like five years ago I was sitting in a bar watching a band with my friend Jodi when she asked me to write her a song that explained the world. It was a much harder challenge than I initially thought it would be. I'm not sure why I thought explaining the world would be easy, haha—Finally after innumerable rewrites the lyrics came out as a love song on the cusp of an apocalypse. The duality felt like it worked. When I took the finished lyrics over to Felix's kitchen and he arranged it in under an hour. I love how quickly we're able to work together.

**BH: Ok Mr Sunday Morning since Christmas is on a Sunday this year where and how will you be spending Christmas Sunday morning?**

BW: Good question! I'm on the east coast right now visiting my parents. My family is spread out around the globe so the traditional family Christmas hasn't happened for a long long time. There is someone I'm very fond of however and I'll be spending Christmas day with her painting a large pentagram on the floor and ironing our

black robes in preparation for our yearly black mass.

**BH: Ok now let's get self explanatory here, when I was a tyke the leftist side of my brain often drew me to loving creative toys. What were some of young Bruce Wilson's favourite toys?**

BW: I loved loud noisy toys, especially ones I could beat on. In particular there was a drum I beat into splinters and another toy with wooden pegs I'd hammer into a board with corresponding shapes. My parents would often just give me a handful of nails, a 2x4 and a hammer to keep me occupied. When I ran out of nails I'd just beat my head on the floor for entertainment. It didn't take much to amuse me.

**BH: And finally before we go, any live shows coming up? Where can our readers find your music and what's your Xmas greeting for all the merry Morlocks here in the absolute underground?**

BW: We've always tried to make Sunday Morning shows special events so we aren't out gigging every weekend. I'm looking towards doing an immersive multimedia show in 2023. Our music can be found on all streaming platforms and through our YouTube channel

For me Christmas is a Winter Solstice celebration. I see it as a time in the darkness to rest and reflect on what will be born in the coming year. My seasonal greeting is, "Embrace the present darkness and await the coming light with open arms!"—It's a little longer than "Happy Holidays" but it's something I can get behind.

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## INTRANCED

Thundering riffs and searing solos meet anthemic melodies in INTRANCED, an LA-based metal/hard rock band featuring singer James-Paul Luna (Holy Grail, White Wizzard) guitarist Fili Bibiano (Fortress, Witherfall) and drummer Ben Richardson (Fortress, Wild Eyes). Building on their celebrated musical pasts, the trio were united by the goal of mining the deep, rich seams of classic 70's and 80's heavy metal, with a premium on songwriting and a focus on the epic themes of real life: triumph, tragedy, and heartbreak. Inspired by the sturdy roots and passionate community in the tight-knit L.A. scene, INTRANCED stands ready to spearhead the Latino Wave of British Heavy Metal – a.k.a. The LatinWOBHM!

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

This is Ben, the drummer. Arguably, I'm most famous for being extremely tall (6'8")!

### AU: Who else is in the band and what other bands have they played in?

My bandmate James-Paul Luna is known for being the singer in Holy Grail and White Wizzard before that. Guitarist Fili Bibiano was the mastermind behind Fortress before we started Intranced.

### AU: What does it say on your Tinder profiles?

Fili is in a long-term relationship, and I'm married, but I did meet my wife on Hinge, and I can confirm that I put "All I Ask Is You...know what Black Sabbath is" in response to one of the prompts. I'll have to ask what Luna has on his dating profile, if he has one – he's the only single member of the band.

### AU: What is the origin story of your newest band Intranced?

I joined Fortress in the summer of 2021, when the band had been in existence for quite some time. Fili became interested in going in a different direction with a different line-up, and we were both acquainted with Luna, whom I had met all the way back in 2008. Fili and I both knew what he was capable of as a vocalist, and we went into overdrive as a band to make a record – we were keen to accept an offer of a tour that had initially been offered to Fortress.

### AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? Or all of the above?

At the risk of sounding uncool, I think Intranced focuses all of our efforts and energy on Rock 'n' Roll. I've spent enough of my life chasing the first two to know that the third one is ultimately the best!

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

We call ourselves LatinWOBHM! I'm not Latino, but my two bandmates are, and we're inspired by the strong and passionate Latino identity in the LA metal scene – both currently and historically. We sometimes draw on Mesoamerican mythology in our art and lyrics. Beyond that pun (or really, a portmanteau), we are inspired by 70's hard rock and proto-metal, the NWOBHM, and generally "classic" or "traditional" late 70's and early 80's metal, with some power and neo-classical shred influence thrown in. If you like Judas Priest, Diamond Head, and of course the Scorpions, you'll probably be pickin' up what we're puttin' down.

down.

### AU: Have you released an album recently?

We released our debut self-titled EP on September 23rd, 2022. We're really proud of it, and we think it gives listeners a taste of what the band is capable of, and how our abilities as songwriters and musicians combine to form a coherent whole. The intro "Angeles Nocturnos" is a good showcase for the way that Fili uses his incredible technique in the service of really memorable melodies. "Upside Down" has a bit of a power metal vibe before it hits a really fun rock 'n' roll bridge. "Dream Lover" is a Scorpions love song gone punk rock – short, catchy, and to the point. "El Gran Deseo" combines a 70's-influenced shuffle with a powerful, NWOBHM gear shift. "Intranced" (by Intranced, off "Intranced") is a great showcase for Luna's vocal dexterity and the Fili's neo-classical chops in the bridge – I'm also proud of some of the tricky double bass work I did in the verses. Outro "Danza Macabra" is back to Fili – romantic-sounding nylon string seemed like the best way to close things out!

### AU: Does the album explore any themes?

One thing we were keen to do thematically is to keep the lyrics grounded in real life. Nothing against metal bands that write about fantasy and the supernatural – there are plenty of those that we love – but we decided to focus on the epic struggles and heartbreak of everyday existence.

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

We're stoked on all of them, and I think all four songs are really strong, but we've been mentioning "El Gran Deseo" as a stand-out. It was the only song on the record that we hammered out together in a jam session, and I think the lyrical themes speak powerfully to all three of us. It's also really fun to play live!

### AU: Are you a fan of the Scorpions album called In Trance? I love the title song. Uli Jon Roth and Michael Schenker rule on guitar!

100%! The band is named after that album. Naming a band can be a difficult process, but one thing that we could all agree on was how awesome and inspiring that album is. In addition to coming up with what we hope is a cool name, we wanted to pay homage to the Scorpions and hopefully give people a sense of what our band might sound like, if they're familiar with the album. We've also been known to cover some Uli Jon Roth and Michael Schenker songs at our shows!

### AU: Please give us a quick best of 2022 list;

**Book you read:** I really liked "Consider Phlebas" by Iain M. Banks. Really thought-provoking and

literary Sci-Fi that doesn't shy away from being swashbuckling, hard-boiled, and fun to read. I recently found out that Elon Musk is a big Banks fan, though, which bummed me out.

**Movie you saw:** Intranced saw Top Gun: Maverick together on a tour off-day, which was pure, dumb fun. Meanwhile, the new season of "Babylon Berlin" proves that it's still the best show on TV!

**Album you heard:** I loved "Isle of Wisdom" by Hallas, "Sacred Rites & Black Magick" by Stormruler, and "Dreamkiller" by Sumerlands. That feels like a pretty representative sample of different heavy music subgenres I'm into!

**Band you saw live:** Seeing King Diamond do "Curse of the Pharaohs" with Merciful Fate was an unforgettable experience. I also have to mention seeing Candlemass and Riot V at Hell's Heroes. Finally, a big shout-out to our tourmates Haunt, Seven Sisters, Screamer, and Hellfire, who brought absolute fire on every stage we shared.

### Best local band deserving of more recognition:

Definitely want to name-check our LA homies in Exmortus, Early Moods, Saber, and Persekutor! Luna's sister Jenny is also a super-talented singer in her own right; it's not metal, but keep an eye out for Jenny Luna & The Moondogs!

### AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

We're lying low over the holidays and making plans for 2023. We're looking forward to announcing some shows and tours before too long!

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

I released an EP in May 22 with a project called Poisoned Chalice, which is available on Bandcamp. The singer/guitarist in that band played bass for Intranced on our tour with Haunt and Seven Sisters earlier this year. I know Fili also has a power metal project called Gravesword that he works on while he's not busy with Intranced stuff.

### AU: Final words for our readers.

Thanks for taking the time to read about our band, and we hope to see you very soon out on the road! If you like what you hear, there's much more to come – it feels like this band is only just getting started!

### AU: How do people find you online?

Our Instagram page – @intrancedofficial – is probably the best place to stay current. If you're interested in music or merch, check out our Bandcamp!

[intranced.bandcamp.com](https://intranced.bandcamp.com)



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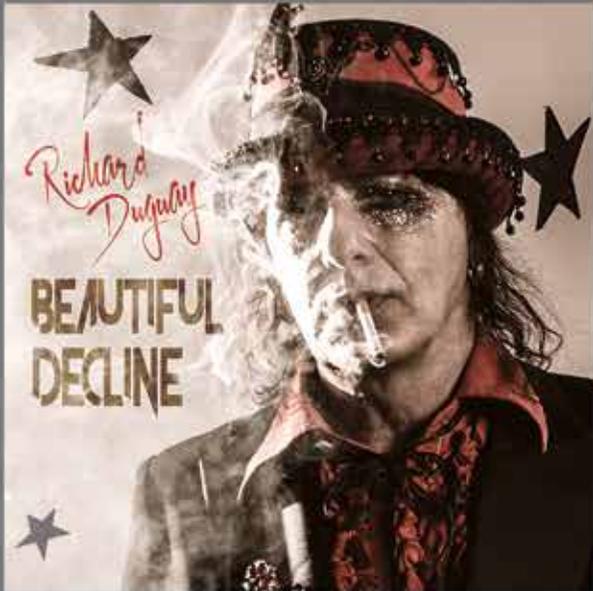
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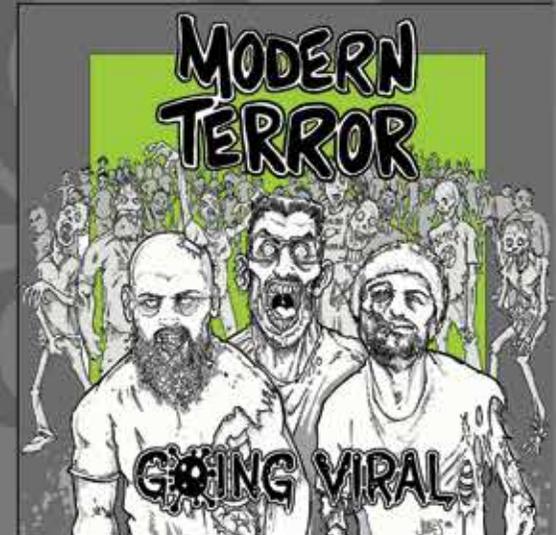
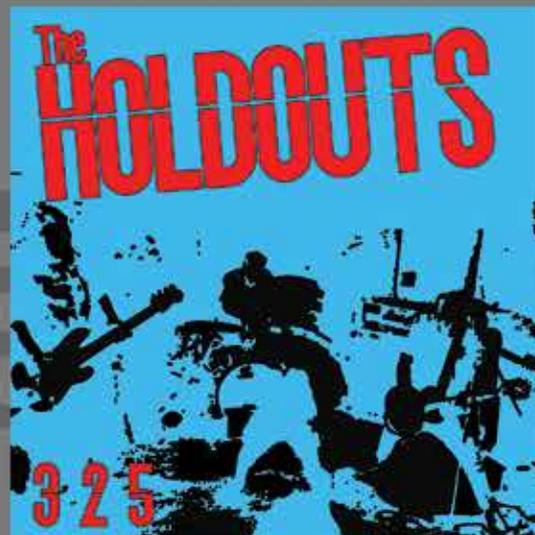
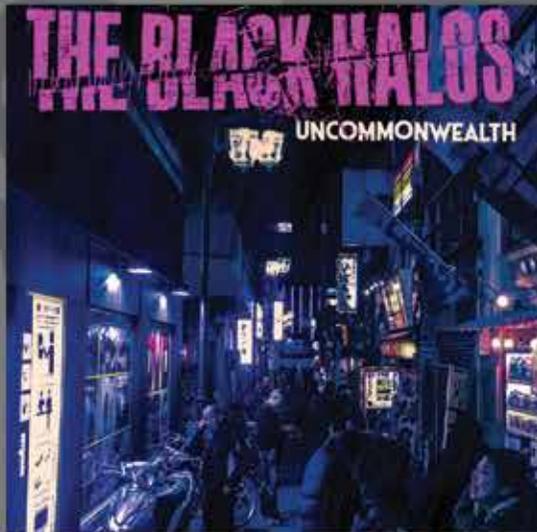


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## Skookum Rise Above It All

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

Shiny - Not going away, an independent band with absolutely zero support beyond family friends existing for over 15 years, going on 20?  
Vanman - You are talking to four unassuming extroverted introverts who have no quit in them:  
Cory 'Vanman' Van Leperen - Vocals/Guitars  
Brad 'Shiny' Wilson - Guitars/BgVocals

Mike 'Muttley' Scannell - Bass/BgVocals  
Norm 'Storm' Baker - Drums/Percussion/ BgVocals  
**AU: Give us a brief history of your band Skookum.**  
Vanman - It started out with three art school grads who wanted to play a variety of solid riff rock, be honest about our music and make the best sounds we (think) we can. We evolved a few times but Storm, Shiny and myself have been together since the first album. Muttley is our terrific addition for this album. The goal is a legacy of unique music you won't hear anywhere else... why try and sound like someone else to "make it"? That was never my jam.  
**AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.**  
Shiny - Heavy and diverse, not metal, but

# SKOOKUM

definitely not middle of the road bar band, Black Sabbath meets Roger Waters.

Vanman - Covers sounds from the 70s to current day. Musically we've absorbed everything Rock and here's what comes out: Big grooves and beats, clever lyrics and catchy riffs. We've always written what feels right to us, not conforming to any genre. One person will tell me 'I love your 70s groove!.. and another will yell "Yeah! Metal!", and then others want us around the campfire to sing 'Fugly' (our single from 2018 - look it up, you'll enjoy it).

### AU: Is there a story behind the band's name?

Vanman - there were originally a couple terrible names for the founding group.. but when uttered, 'Skookum' was the one. We are a Pacific Northwest band and in these parts it's slang for "Big n' tough," impressive and excellent, but its origin is a Chinook term for Bigfoot, Sasquatch, big, strong, powerful and swift. We felt it reflects the band's sound: Powerful guitar riffs, big grooves with a wallowing vocal punch! They sound SKOOKUM: A scrappy grooving rock band that isn't afraid to slow down once in a while.

### AU: Where are you guys from and what is the music scene like there?

Shiny - Born and raised in Coquitlam , no suburb music scene to speak of, only now is there any real exposure to other bands, but as before zero venues to play at. Almost every school dance or teen/young adult gathering was DJ'd. no secret how many bands have come out of (Greater) Vancouver, but there is not really a great scene unless you are in a defined genre, something we can't really be.

Vanman - We all come from the lower mainland or Storm who's originally from Campbell River. Storm left CR to find a great original band to create with and has been our master beater since.

### AU: Have you released an album recently? If so, what can we expect to hear?

Vanman - We are currently celebrating this year's release, *Rise Above it All*. It's Skookum's fourth offering and our most mature date while also being (I think) our best recording to date. It has the most cohesive tracklisting to make it an actual album worth owning in your collection. You will hear a great musical journey from Not All There ("We're all here, cuz we're not all there") to the wallop of Whoppertunity and the vibey close to the album, only to perfectly loop back to track one for another entire listen.

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

Shiny - This collection of 10 songs mostly written well before 2020, but in a strange twist of fate, captures the times we live in now. A musical journey perfectly encompassing the strange, challenging, and often bleak period of history we are currently experiencing, but always with an underlying current of hope and a humorous outlook.

### AU: Describe the album's artwork for *Rise Above it All*, what's going on there?

Vanman - I think to sum it up I would say, "If something can go wrong, it will" .. and in 2020... it did! We knew we wanted some sort of balloon or rocket leaving some doomed city or our planet (it's been a rough three years!) Through a series of back and forth Shiny had the idea of some ruined city and Muttley ran with a variety of ideas of the rocket and balloon and some kind of conflict. I imagine there's a version of us in the balloon trying to elegantly Rise Above the dreck of our current times... and yet another version of us in the rocket headed straight for that balloon

(either deliberately or accidentally to pop that bubble.) I wanted to be able to say us in both vehicles... but it didn't work visually and the overall feeling was to leave that open ended. I tend to try and get very literal and the guys bring me down to earth by keeping it simple.

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

Shiny - For me , "Not All There," "Broken," "Hope/ Whoppertunity."  
Vanman - I love the album as an ALBUM. It has a variety of tracks that set each other apart but make a greater whole that is the album. I get that we live in an age where music is so disposable, but the members of Skookum grew up when



you rolled down to your record store, flipped through and picked an album, brought it home, tore off the wrapping, put it on, laid down between the speakers and absorbed the packaging and the music all in one sitting. That was our aim for this one. I love *Rise Above it All* for the finger picking bump and grind. I love "Faith" for its humorous theme of trying to drink your way sober and the great harmonies we achieved and

"Whoppertunity" is a fucking monster that asks the question: if we actually do reincarnate and live multiple lives with the goal of reaching some sort of perfection.... why oh why would we choose to come back as a Hitler or a Dahmer? That song is sooo metal.. riffs and guitar, big drums, big bass... big vocals.

### AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?

Shiny - Make it through  
Vanman - Rest on our 2022 laurels and be warmed up and ready to go in January 2023

### AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

Shiny - Pleading the 5th  
Vanman - Define the difference?

### AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read. Movie you saw. Album you heard. Band you saw live. Best local band deserving of more recognition?

Shiny - Zero on almost all of it as nothing has stood out for me, although I'll give kudos to *Growing up Dead* as a young band that opened for our last gig. Great guys and hopefully they don't grow into miserable old codgers like ourselves.  
Vanman - I read a ton of Marvel comics (*X-Men* geek since childhood). My fave album of 2022 is probably Jack White's latest. Hasn't been a standout year for new releases.. or I haven't found the good ones yet.

### AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

Shiny - Working on getting into some festivals, know anyone looking? look to play more in 2023 and would love to do some shows elsewhere in BC.

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

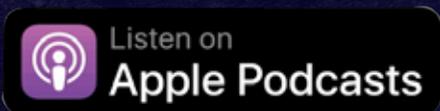
Shiny - Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life, unless you're a musician ha ha, then just try to do what you love in between your day gigs  
Vanman - Also, you can spend thousands on your paintball gear and tourneys, or your beer league hockey, we spend our extra hours on making the best music we can, recording and performing. Anything else is gravy... Never give up! Never Surrender!

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## Chûnk

Interview by Irocker

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

CT: Hi, I'm Cliff Thiessen. You might remember me from such bands as The Getmines, We Hunt Buffalo and Man The Wolf. Famous for a big beard and stage presence. Infamous for being too damn nice.

**AU: Who else is in the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles? What other bands are you guys from?**

CT: The band consists of myself, Jamie Little and Joel Loewen. Jamie plays bass and sings. He used to be in a band called Owlface. He's the only one you'll find on Tinder. I haven't looked him up, but he's a god dang stud so I imagine there are some suave pictures of him holding puppies flashing a charismatic smile. Probably doesn't even need to write anything in his description except his height.

Joel is our drummer and he used to play in Bogus Tokus, Tobeatic, Percheron, Haggatha, and Adelaide to name a couple... Dude has experience. Or he gets around, however you wanna look at it.

**AU: Give us a brief history of your new band Chûnk.**

CT: While we would be considered 'new', we've been jamming together for many years. Jamie and I used to jam down the hall from one another. Both our bands would finish practice much too early for our liking, so we'd stick around and write riffs while the others went home. That went on for a while until we found Joel. He was the perfect fit and well worth the wait. I met him when I was being a roadie for Black Wizard on a short Red Fang tour. We hit it off instantly and I invited him to come jam with Jamie and I. After a couple years of the three of us jamming for fun we realized "holy shit, we're like a real band or something."

**AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?**

AU: Between the three of us I'm sure we can check all the boxes.

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

CT: Queens of the Stone Age is our closest comparison when trying to figure out what our sound is. We get heavy and loud, but there's still harmonies and quiet moments. Some sweet melodies over heavy as fuck bass and thick guitars while the drums pound along with the riffs. It's got balls.

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

CT: We just released our first self titled album on bandcamp (thechunkband.bandcamp.com). Recorded at Little Red Sounds studios in New Westminster with Michael Kraushaar. One of the top producers in the lower mainland, dude is a wizard. The tones we got absolutely crush. 6 songs that have a decent variety of sounds with a straight up banger at the end. Jamie and I trade off on vocals which adds a bit to the variety. It's the spice of life, so they say.

**AU: Does the new album explore any particular**

**themes or topics?**

CT: Just a good ol' mix of stories, no general theme. Some real, some not. Personally, I'm a big fan of Jamie's lyrics. The more you hear them the better they get.

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

CT: "This Time" is a great track to get introduced to the band. Those thick bass and guitars with some nice harmonies to give you the warm and fuzzies while you wonder who the beast on drums is. The second track, "Fear And..." is my personal favourite. For that one I wrote about a recurring nightmare I used to have that someone was breaking into my apartment and I couldn't pull myself up out of bed. Eventually I'd pull myself out of the dream and shoot up in bed wondering if I was actually awake and where the baseball bat was. Good times.

**AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?**

CT: Probably just play around in the snow. Get fucked up on hot toddies, the usual.

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

CT: Just can't stop being nice, ya know. I want the big man to come down my chimney with a new guitar or something. Not just guitar picks like last year...

**AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?**

CT: Guitars. Pedals. Guitars. Pedals. I'm thinking this year I'll go sit on Santa's lap and compare beards.

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items; Book you read:**

CT: Who reads books?

**AU: Movie you saw:**

CT: Joel was telling me about this movie he saw recently so I'll hand this one over to him.

Joel Loewen: The movie is called *Brian and Charles...* what can I say... just a beauty of a picture! A Welsh inventor who just can't seem to win, decides to build himself a friend... a robot friend. Using bits and parts from his shop at home and the local dump, (like a washing machine for

away. Just such awesome musicians that put on one hell of a show. Costume changes, crowd interactions and a whole lot of spandex. Just straight up rock and roll and it was rad. Joel was right about them (again) when he urged me to go to the show.

**AU: Best local band deserving of more recognition:**

CT: Jamie told me to say The Getmines. Check them out if you haven't! Bort is another great band and bunch of great dudes. There's a new band called Fearbirds that's packed with talent. Elsinore is a must hear. Strong female vocals and heavy guitars are balanced so nicely. All Vancouver based.

**AU: The thing that blew your mind the most about 2022:**

CT: We finally got to play shows where people didn't have to stay in their seats and wear masks. I tell ya, those shows were weird. It's hard to tell if a crowd likes the show when they're getting pulled off the dance floor because dancing wasn't allowed.

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?**

CT: We have a show booked at Bully's Studios in New Westminster on January 28th with Bort. It's not even announced yet as I write this so you got the inside scoop! We have another show that's most likely happening in January, but I don't know the exact date yet. That one will be in Vancouver and is supposed to be with Doom Cocoon, Heron and Heavy Trip. Should be a good'r

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

CT: We have our first music video coming out soon for "This Time" so keep your eye out for that. Lots of new songs in the works that we play live and will be on the next album. Joel does tattoos! Check him out on instagram @joel.james.tattoo. I've already shamelessly advertised one of my other bands so we'll leave it at that.

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

CT: Wait, you made it this far and you're still reading? Effin eh, we appreciate you! Look us up on bandcamp by searching "Thechunkband" or follow this link: thechunkband.bandcamp.com

**IG: [instagram.com/thechunkband](https://www.instagram.com/thechunkband)**

**Facebook: [facebook.com/thechunkband](https://www.facebook.com/thechunkband)**

**Bandcamp: [thechunkband.bandcamp.com](https://thechunkband.bandcamp.com)**

**Photo Credit: Keith Clark Photography**



his torso for example). Needless to say he finally catches a break, and Charles comes to life! If ya wanna feel all nice and fuzzy inside for once in your life, go and watch this film.

**AU: Album you heard:**

CT: Joel also turned me on to a band called "Slift" and I can't go a week without listening to their album *Ummon*. It's nuts good.

**AU: Band you saw live:**

CT: The Darkness. Went to the show never listening to a full album of theirs and I was blown

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Publisher : Catacomb Publishing  
Print length : 260 pages

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## SCOTT REYNOLDS

### Chihuahua in Buffalo

Interview by Chuck Andrews and Jared Amos

Scott Reynolds is an American punk rock vocalist from Fredonia, New York, known mainly for his work with the band ALL from 1989 to 1993. He has also performed with such bands as *The Pavers* and *Goodbye Harry*.

*Chihuahua in Buffalo* is Scott Reynolds' first solo acoustic record to be released on vinyl by Thousand Islands Records. A collection of songs, new and old, recorded, mixed and mastered at The Blasting Room in Fort Collins, Colorado, produced by Scott and his friend and former ALL-bandmate, Bill Stevenson.

**AU: Who are we speaking with?**

**SR:** Scott William Reynolds

**AU: What do you consider yourself most famous for?**

**SR:** Well, I'm a pretty fast runner, and I can do quite a few push-ups. Plus, people like my chihuahua.

**AU: Where do you call home these days?**

**SR:** Fredonia, New York; about 45 minutes south of Buffalo.

**AU: How many solo albums have you put out?**

**SR:** Three, and I'm working on a fourth

**AU: Tell us all about your latest solo album *Chihuahua in Buffalo*.**

**SR:** It's just me and my nylon string acoustic guitar, playing old previously recorded songs, and some brand new stuff too. I recorded it at The Blasting Room with my pal and ex-bandmate Bill Stevenson. It's the simplest, most stripped down recording I've ever done. I think it came out nice.

**AU: Was there a theme to the album?**

**SR:** I just wanted to make a recording that sounded more like what my solo shows are like these days. I've been going out with just my guitar, and I didn't have a record that represented that side of me. So I called Bill, and asked if he could help me make a recording that reflected where I'm at these days. And he said, "Absolutely!"

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

**SR:** I like "The Truth About Tuesday," and "If I'm Alright." I don't know. I'm pretty happy with the whole thing.

**AU: Where has your solo career seen you tour?**

**SR:** I've played in Australia, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. I've had fun

everywhere, but I've been back to Argentina a couple times and have made wonderful friends there. South America is such an amazing place for so many reasons. I'd love to go back to everywhere I've ever toured.

**AU: During your tenure as the singer of the legendary ALL, what was your favourite song that was put out?**

**SR:** Tough question. Maybe "Breathe." I also like the way the "Wonder Bread song" turned out.

**AU: ALL relocated to the middle of the USA in order to be more centrally located for touring logistics correct?**

**SR:** Yeah; a town called Brookfield.

**AU: I know ALL is Chad Price's gig now, but you're done a few one-off shows as the singer. Are there any more of those planned in the foreseeable future? Or perhaps co-headlining ALL sets?**

**SR:** No. I wouldn't hold my breath for any Scott/ALL stuff. I'm pretty sure that ship has sailed.

**AU: What other bands have you been in?**

**SR:** *Goodbye Harry*, *Bonesaw Romance*, and my current band; *The Pavers*.

**AU: What are some of your favourite subjects to sing about? And why?**

**SR:** Honestly, I don't really have favorite subjects. I just kinda write down whatever comes out. It's kinda like taking a shit.

**AU: Do you have a day job, or are you a full-time artist?**

**SR:** I'm mostly a musician, but I paint and sell art, and I'm a doorman and janitor at my girlfriend's bar. I used to bartend for her too, but I suck at it so I fired myself.

**AU: Over the years, what has been your favourite format to release music in?**

**SR:** Vinyl. I love everything about albums. I miss going to the record store.



SCOTT REYNOLDS

Romance, and my current band; *The Pavers*.

**AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?**

**SR:** I don't know! Good question! I think I'll mostly just try to be merry.

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

**SR:** A bit of both. Are these my only two choices?

**AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?**

**SR:** A jet ski, but I won't get one.

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list:**

**Book:** My friend Phil Beard's book *Dear Zoe*.

**Movie:** *PeeWee's Big Adventure* (like every year)

**Album:** *Karrot Kake's Cakewalk*, or *The Gerunds' Hitsville, Pa.*

**Local Band:** I really like the *Karrot Kake* record.

**Thing That Most Blew My Mind:** How stupid and selfish people are.

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

**SR:** Nah, not really, unless you're planning to buy me a present. If you are, contact me at [scottreynolds.music.art@gmail.com](mailto:scottreynolds.music.art@gmail.com) and ask me what I'd like.

**AU: Anything else to promote?**

**SR:** Yeah! Currently working on a new record. It's called *Magic Beans and Time Machines*, and I recorded most of it at the Blasting Room with Bill Stevenson and friends! Please watch for it!! Here's a promo vid I made for it:

[youtube/Dp2BrVUSmmg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dp2BrVUSmmg)

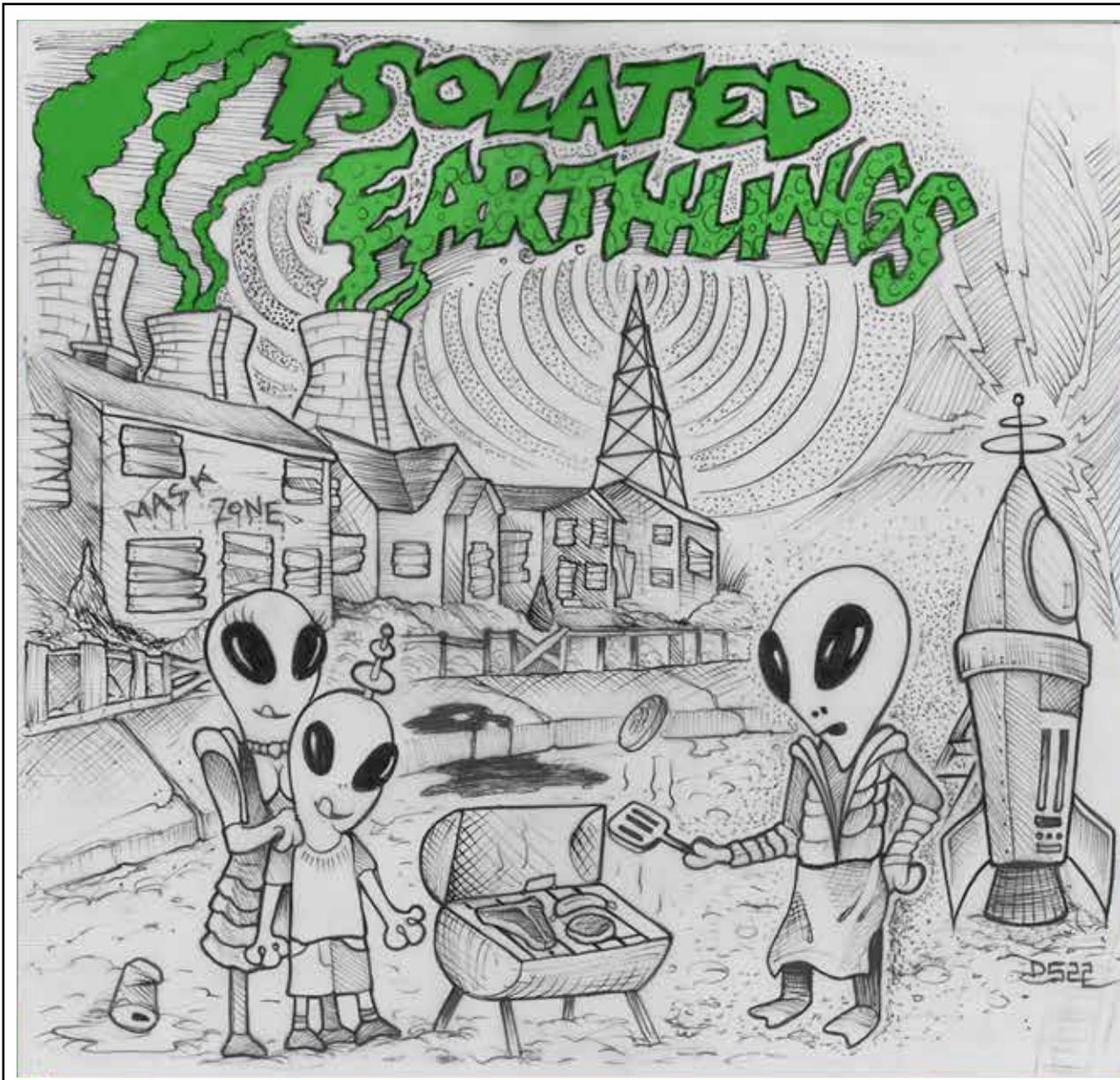
**AU: Final words of wisdom to share with Canadian fans?**

**SR:** Be kind! If it isn't hurting anyone, it's none of your fucking business!

**AU: How do people find you online?**

**SR:** [scottreynoldsmusicart.com](http://scottreynoldsmusicart.com)

*Scott is currently working on more solo music, new music with the Pavers, and is always painting and creating. He is also working on a totally new project with some old friends, and there are other cool things in the works, like the documentary being made about him, by the writer and co-director of Filmage: The Story of Descendents/ALL. Stay tuned and keep connected!*



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## A Few Minutes With Tony G

By John Carlow

Look around the back of the room at most local punk / underground shows and you'll likely see Tony Goluzza hanging about. A fixture in the local scene since forever, I remember seeing Tony for the first time at the Tavern with the ferocious AK 47. I shot some art for a couple of AK releases and have a lot of their shows in my archives. One of my favourite pics of Tony runs with this piece. Though I could fill an entire issue talking with Tony, I asked if he would just talk a wee bit about the early scene...his musical history and who he's listening to these days.

### Absolute Underground: When did you start being interested in the local punk scene?

Tony G: I first got interested in the local punk scene after seeing some bands on the local cable station, channel 10. It might have been a show hosted by Victoria legend Howie Siegel. Infamous Scientists, Twisted Minds, etc. I was fascinated by the idea that local people and bands could actually do this sort of thing without corporate media help. Also meeting downtown punks with their "I don't give a fuck" attitude was a liberating thing. Most people get involved in the punk scene very young, but I was already 19 or 20 at the time. I'm a late bloomer. A wallflower if you will.

### AU: What were some of the best early shows you saw?

Tony G: Some of my favourite early shows were at The Rat's Nest, and I will forever be indebted to Gary Brainless for opening up his home to new bands, and giving touring bands a reason to come to the island.

Seeing The Resistance was always awesome, as well as DRI in Gary's basement(!). Remember DOA in 1984 doing a benefit for the urban guerrilla group The Squamish 5, Black Flag in 1985, also I recall some house shows with NoMeansNo and The Infamous Scientists might have done some too. My memory's a little hazy. Seeing The Dayglos was always chaotic back then. I was in awe of their energy. Their early shows were legendary. It's incredible that they are still going and putting out great albums today.

### AU: How many bands have you been in?

Tony G: I'm not sure how many bands I've been in. Section 46, Lootbag, Nothing To Lose, Never Too Late, Hudson Mack, Soulcharge, Infect, the reggae project with Scott Henderson called People's War (we're not done yet!), and currently AK-47. I'm the only original member from 1997.

### AU: How did you learn to play?

Tony G: I first started playing guitar when I was 11 years old. My mom made me take lessons, and I fucking hated it! Then when I was around 16, I thought I'd try it again. I was in love with The Rolling Stones at the time. I was into Keith Richards' casual style of playing. He had a very distinct sound. I bought an electric guitar and a practice amp, and just started teaching myself by listening to records for hours and trying my best to play the songs I was listening to. I'm still trying. Ah, fuck it. I'll get Kent to do the fancy parts.

### AU: Who inspired your first band?

Tony G: My favourite band of all time is The Clash. I think Joe Strummer inspired me to attempt to make the lyrics meaningful. The Ramones taught me you don't have to be a virtuoso to be a musician. Just love what you do and let it show. I have always been inspired by the vibrant and varied local scene and continue to be. The Dayglos, NoMeansNo, Red Tide, The Neos. I could keep on listing names, but you get the idea.

### AU: How did AK 47 come about?

Tony G: I started AK-47 after I broke up Never Too Late. I wanted to go back to harder faster music. It feels more natural to me, although I do enjoy melody as well. I asked Luke from Goat Boy and Nothing To Lose to drum, Rob Nesbitt to play second guitar, and Dave Morin from Hudson Mack to play bass. That was the original lineup.

### AU: Still on AK 47, should you have a roadie just for setting up/tearing down Jamies kit?

Tony G: I think Jamie having his own roadie is a great idea! The size of his megakit was apparent at the last show we played at The Carlton Club. It was pretty crowded up there. Next time I'd like to set up on the floor. Jamie can stay up on the stage, rock and roll style.

### AU: Most interesting people you have met over the years?

Tony G: Scott Henderson is definitely one of the most interesting people I've ever met. His knowledge of every genre of music, and his involvement in both playing and recording bands has made Victoria one of the most amazing and well documented punk/alternative scenes in the entire country. I also have to give Paulina credit for making the documentary *Somewhere To Go*, which is tremendous.

### AU: Thoughts on Logans closing?

Tony G: Logan's closing is a loss we'll possibly never get over. The Phoenix is doing an admirable job of

filling the gap, but some of the most memorable shows I've played have been The Jay Brown Memorials put on by Hoon, to whom I'm forever grateful. He is completely underappreciated for all of his efforts. I still get goosebumps thinking about some of those gigs. It was a community that has endured much loss, but kept on bouncing back and getting better. You could go to any show at Logan's and feel at home.

The staff totally got it and were also 100% a part of that community vibe. I also need to thank Esther for the DOA show she got us to play there. That was incredible. I am thankful for all her hard work and for continuing to make marvelous shows happen.

### AU: What local bands do you listen to?

Tony G: Geez....okay, here's the (partial) list of local bands I'm into, in no particular order:

The Dayglos, NoMeansNo, Shovlhed, Shutdown, Disciples Of Abelard, Pressure Cooker, Goat Boy, Clusterfux, Giblet, Contessa, Red Tide, Infamous Scientists, The Mags, Lesbian Fist Magnet, Skidmarxists, Class Of 1984, The Resistance, The Gnar Gnars, Total Shit, Fully Crazed, AWT, Knife Manual, Laffing Stock, Shiner, The Bedspins, Moral Decay, Mission Of Christ, Poor Choices, No Heart... can I stop now? There too many more to mention.

Can I also say Awkward AC and Car 87, even though they're not technically "local"? Nanaimo and Vancouver are close enough.

### AU: Thoughts on the city and its support of music?

Tony G: Do you mean the city government supporting local music, or the people? City governments can fuck off. They like to "help" when they think it will pay off in terms of votes. As far as the people go, I've mentioned earlier about how supportive people in the community are. Often you'll hear people talk about how "the scene is dead," but it's got its ebbs and flows like anything, and I think with new bands, excellent promoters, and house shows and some bars picking up the slack, things are looking positive right now.

### AU: Memorable gigs?

Tony G: There have been too many memorable gigs to go into right here. Some that come to mind are an AK show in a garage in a duplex in Fernwood with Margaret Thrasher ages ago. It was at Harry Hugh Mungo's house, and his mom baked cookies. It was so cramped in that space,

but so fun and sweaty. There was a house show at a place on upper Cook St. that Lootbag played. It seemed like the entire house was singing along to our songs. Getting to play with ALL at the old OAP hall was memorable; and playing with Bad Religion opened my eyes to rockstar attitudes that had poisoned the scene. Back then, NOFX were down to earth and decent people. Who knows how they'd be now? They were fun to play with at UVic with Shutdown. I was in Section 46 at the time. And can't forget every Jay Brown Memorial Show. Thanks again Hoon!

### AU: Funniest / weirdest thing to happen at a show?

Tony G: I can't really say what the funniest or weirdest thing to happen at a show was. Isn't weird and funny shit always happening? Remember me and Joe Stromkins heckling Green Day at the Kabuki Cab warehouse was fun. Recall yelling at Bad Religion for complaining about everything....waaaaah.....There was the New Year's Eve Head St. riot after a house show in a place Jay Brown was living in. The early incarnation of Section 46 were renting a garage on Gladstone St. We decided to have a party, and hundreds of people showed up. That also turned into a riot. Bottles thrown at the police, youth getting billy clubbed, me getting arrested and charged with public mischief. Oh, the hilarity.

### AU: Are labels / genre important? There's a lot attached to the word punk.

Tony G: Labels and genre are important, as are principles. There is a lot attached to the word "punk," and Warp Tour nonsense and big-name sponsors have nothing to do with it. It's up to everyone to interpret for themselves. This is a circular argument that's gone on for too long. Like what you like, it's up to you.

### AU: Lyrics. How important? and how important to include them in releases?

Tony G: Lyrics are extremely important, at least to me. I always love having a lyric sheet included in any release, even if they are ridiculous. You can

always find something to interest you, whether it is what's being said, the style of rhyming, the lack of rhymes, offensive yet clever wordplay, etc. It's good to know what's being said.

### AU: You have children. Has your background/ life in music affected their musical leanings?

Tony G: I have two children. A 15-year-old daughter and a 12 year old son. Neither of them share the passion that I have for punk and hardcore music, although we listen to everything around the house. We've got reggae, hip hop, Croatian and Bosnian folk music, stuff from Turkey, and the list goes on and on. My daughter tends to lean towards the more interesting indie type of music, bands you won't hear on the radio. Some of it is sort of math rock, and really good. She plays some guitar and bass. My son is into the more underground electronic styles, also artists you won't hear on the radio. I am happy with the fact that they are not following trends and are making up their own minds about what they like and don't like. That's far more important than automatically liking what I do. Independent thought is a useful thing to have.

### AU: Last thoughts?

Tony G: John, I want to thank you for making this happen. I thought I'd never end up in this publication, but here we are. Thank you for all your hard work and excellent photography. I look forward to seeing you again.

I'd also like to thank Esther, Scott Fraser, Paulina, Hoon, Hung, The Phoenix, Ty Stranglehold, Scott Henderson, and everyone involved in this dysfunctional family.

### AU: Thanks for doing this, Tony. See you soon at the back of the room.

You can check out Tonys blog at <http://ak47hardcore.blogspot.com/> and AK 47 on Bandcamp at [ak-473.bandcamp.com/album/undefeated](http://ak-473.bandcamp.com/album/undefeated)

Photos: John Carlow/Finding Charlotte Photography





## Chungus

A four-piece Punk-Metal Cold Fission Flaccid Rock festival of conviviality with a pinch of talent!

**Aboslute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best know for?**

Braydan Mynott: Hi my name is Braydan Mynott, I guess I'm known mostly for being Braydan.

**AU: Who else is in the band and what other bands have you all been in?**

BM: The other members in the band are:

Darren Ungaro - guitar and played in Atrophei, Requiem of Innocence, A Massive Waste.

Dale Wyatt - bass player and played in Anger Agency and Scally Haggards.

Hayley Ward - vocals and this is her first band.

Braydan Mynott - drums and played in Sylicosis, The Naked Midgets, The Role Models, Abombanation, Scally Haggards.

**AU: What was the genesis of Chungus?**

BM: We started out drinking and playing music



and that's what we are still doing to this very day.

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

BM: A lovely mish mash of noise!

**AU: Have you released an album recently? What can we expect to hear?**

BM: We have released seven songs on Spotify and other internet music listening places. You can expect a lovely mish mash of noise!

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

BM: We are real intellectuals and what our music is about might be too much to explain to you in this interview.

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

BM: Our music basically sounds like hot trash that is dripping from the anus of Satan himself! You're gonna love it?

**AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?**

BM: Probably getting fuck up on goof ballz I assume.

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

BM: I've been real nice to all your moms!

**AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?**

BM: For Christmas I've been hoping for this bleeding from my asshole to at least slow down.

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**AU: Give us a quick Best of 2022 list; Book you read:**

BM: Reading books is for idiots.

**AU: Movie you saw:**

BM: You got male.

**AU: Album you heard:**

BM: Gnarnicals in Chronia

**AU: Best local band deserving of more recognition:**

BM: Toaster

**AU: The thing that blew your mind the most:**

BM: Not much blows my mind but I have blown a

lot of things!

**AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?**

BM: Just playing some local shows in Fernie. Hope to get on the road soon!

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

BM: I hope to see you all in Hell!

**AU: How do people find you online?**

BM: You can find us on Spotify.

**AU: Anything else to mention?**

BM: If you got this far in the interview well done and thanks.

# PUNK CANADA VOL. 1

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cover the Demics
- THE GNAR GNARS (VICTORIA)**  
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cover Subway Thugs
- THE BETA 58'S (KINGSTON)**  
cover The Fiends
- DYSRUPTIVE (QUEBEC CITY)**  
cover Lowlife
- CHERNOBYL WOLVES (WINNIPEG)**  
cover Euthanasia
- REIFER MADNESS (EDMONTON)**  
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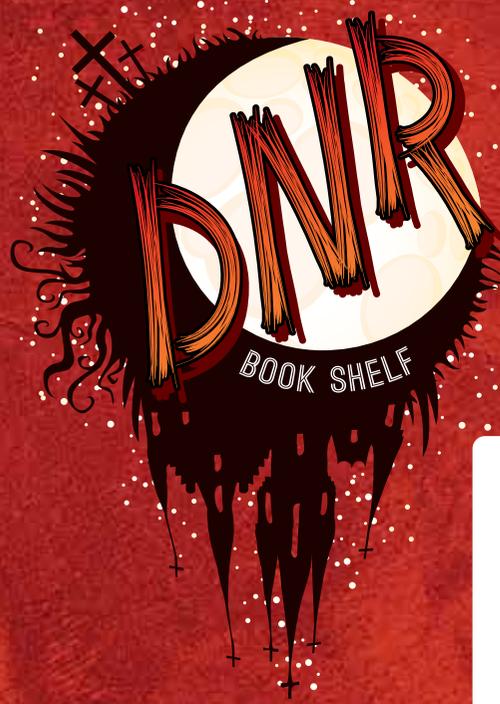
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## EXTREME MUSIC: SILENCE TO NOISE



**AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN**  
**Michael Tau**  
Feral House

August 30, 2022

Michael Taus study on what Extreme Music is may well become next year's textbook every new audio engineer must read. Not only is this

367-page publication chock-full of references for readers to listen to in its analysis of the subject, but also it's very informative. To offer a CD would not be possible due to all the licensing arrangements needed, so after reading this book, I recommend searching on YouTube or DailyMotion for auditory examples. They can be found if you're willing to search for it.

Furthermore, readers get to learn about how the genres like grindcore or speedcore developed. In regards to the former, Carcass' *Reek of Putrefaction* is considered the very first record. If that's not adequate, what I gained after reading this book expanded what I knew when I started playing with sound on the Commodore 64 years ago. Not even those past lectures from computer scientist and musician Jaron Lanier were sufficient when I studied fine arts at university. With the said computer, the SID chip gave couch audio techs the ability to adjust the attack, decay, sustain and release values of a waveform, so almost any tone can be made. As a result, what's produced may not replicate a musical instrument, but for a wood saw, it's a match. Today, when considering higher resolution sampling, musicians are often fine-tuning their song in post-production so there's more oomph. In experimental performances or live shows, what's done is different. For example, even sandpaper was used! Kirsten Reynolds and Ashley Davies of Headbutt came up with the idea in 1995, and the moniker applied was Project Dark. In regards to other groups talked about in *Extreme Music*, it barely scratches the surface.

Secondly, this essay examines the limitations of various recording mediums. For example, hiss is inevitable with

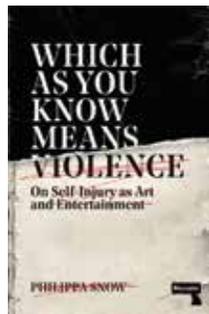
magnetic tape, and it's even more of a problem with older technologies, namely those cylinders from the Victorian age. But modern tech like floppy disks and USB have

their flaws too. Also, there are limitations on what vinyl pressings can and can not do—like offering a square shaped album, putting art on it or making it out of chocolate. Tau has not missed any detail in his discourse, and the one chapter I loved is the use of ringtones in the performing arts. Pink Floyd was not the only band who played around with the concept of everyday sounds in music, but as more musicians wanted to innovate and technology improved, so began new movements.

Listening to music or the sound design in a movie is not about that Dolby ATMOS experience. The envelope can't be pushed without knowing what was done before for the music enthusiast.

Ed Sum

## WHICH AS YOU KNOW MEANS



**VIOLENCE: ON SELF-INJURY AS ART AND ENTERTAINMENT**

**Philippa Snow**  
Repeater Books

September 13, 2022

Essayist and critic Philippa Snow presents her captivating first book as a pop culture

analysis of self-harm for public consumption. *Which as You Know Means Violence* (the title of which is hijacked from a phone message left for Johnny Knoxville by Hunter S. Thompson just three weeks before the latter's death in 2005) is a treatise on the parameters by which we define art and the cultural conditions that surround its creation.

Drawing lines from the juvenile physical humour of "Jackass" to the high-brow performance installations of Marina Abramović and beyond, a question that continues to push in on the discussion is one of suffering and art. After all, we've heard adages for ages about artists and their suffering, as though one is incapable of creating something great without experiencing something terrible. So what if that suffering is deliberately self-inflicted? Does pain truly legitimize the artist? Chris Burden thought so, citing the desire for his work to be taken seriously as a motivating factor behind his infamous 1971 performance piece "Shoot," where a friend fired a .22 caliber rifle at him from a distance of 15 feet.

Snow examines the many relationships that pain has to art, comedy, love, sex, pleasure, gender, age, race, and—invariably—death. While too short a publication for an exhaustive discourse, she touches briefly on many points which only serve to whet the appetite for a more thorough dissection. Avoiding the temptation to hammer home any strict-and-solid conclusions of her own, the author instead provides individual and societal context around a variety of 20th and 21st century performers, allowing readers to mete out their own judgements as to the value—and the

validity—of self-injury as entertainment, as well as to theorize on what, in an era of constant engagement, comes next...

Laura Phaneuf

## THREE LITTLE PIGS: THE PIG, THE HOUSE & OUIJA PIG



**Edward Lee**  
Evil Cookie

Publishing

May 27, 2022

*Three Little Pigs* is a newly released collection from Evil Cookie. "Ouija Pig," being the newest release this year to cap off one of

Lee's most extreme collections. "The Pig" was originally released in 1997, while "The House" came out in 2005 on Necropublications. It's really nice to have them all in one book for those new to the stories.

Book 1 - "The Pig" takes place in the summer of 1977 in Trenton, NJ. Our exemplar is a young filmmaker Leonard who finds himself in hot water with Paul Vinchetti, district boss for the mob. Rather than face death its quid pro quo and Leonard is made to shoot porn movies for one year instead in a remote mob safe house in the middle of nowhere New Jersey with two of the main "actresses", Sissy and Snowdrop, busted junky street whores who are semi-comatose heroin addicts and no company at all. It's worse than he expects and the films are horrible scat, rape, gang bangs, beastiality, snuff and the most extreme... Not only that, he and the girls are starved as they cannot leave while he mostly survives on dog food and the girls, heroin. He finds his dreadful rhythm and 10 months goes by. One day the men bring in a pig for a beastiality flick. Everything goes awry and the girls end up beating the pig to death for eating their heroin.

The story takes the wildest turn when we learn from the neighbor, a Epiphaneite (similar to a Hutterite) from the compound next door that the pig is an escapee from the Penitence festival. I can't give too much more away as it ruins the ending, but you would never guess it in a million years which makes it all the more satisfying. True Lee fashion this one is and the best of the three tales.

Book 2 - "The House" takes place in 2005. Rich kid Mevlin rents out the now infamous, and very haunted Vinchetti house to write a story about it for the paper he works at. His newly married father insists that his new wife, half his age, come with for company. Gwyneth is a young, eccentric artist who specializes in ossorial mosaics with a great set of tits. On the way, Melvin meets a malnourished prostitute named Squirely who turns out to be a wealth of knowledge on the house as well as (small world) is Snowdrop's sister! Very strange things start to happen. Gwyneth acts even more bizarre and seems to be unaware of it, whereas Melvin is very aware of the Cummings (pardon the pun) and goings. He

is seeing the ghosts of the girls and hearing Leonard. Gwyneth unearths bones to use in her mosaics and surprise, surprise, it's a pig skull! It becomes overwhelming and too much to handle, another wild turn of events to wrap the story up, I won't spoil it. Excellent use of the story from 77 in this one.

Book 3 - "Ouija Pig" takes place presently. The Vinchetti house is rented out yet again - they can't sell this damn thing! This time to a ghost hunting show being filmed called *The Paranormal Patrol* not to be confused with the competition - *Bikini Paranormal*. It consists of young adults Jake, Sarah, Theo and Chloe. After what happened with Melvin and Gwyneth in 2005, the house is now quite famous and obviously a perfect stop for the show. Theo is the man of the hour for this story as he steps into centre stage hearing the voice of none other than our principal exemplar, Leonard. Theo being a bit of a bumbling uncomely simp is promised if he does just what the voice says, he will have everything he has ever wanted... read : Sarah. He is forced to watch the old films as this ends up giving Leonard more and more power and it turns out even though they are atrocious, Theo is finding them quite titillating and the voice actually materializes and shares the entire tale to him AND gives him what he wants. Lots of wild transcendental occurrences for the show, far better than they have ever gotten in the past, not without severe consequences, however. On a trip to the nearest town they find one of Gwyneth's art pieces in a second hand store and absolutely must have it! What could go wrong?

I'm not really a fan of ghost stories, but because of the origin story, I was in for the long haul on this one. They all work together so fantastically and it's such a good collection. So much cringe, sex, lewd porn, demons, tasteless characters- it's the full package. Lee has a way of telling an offensive story that makes it easy to digest thanks to his sense of humor and ability to 'b movie' it up (in the best way). The story doesn't have to end! So many possibilities for part 4 and beyond. Hope Lee keeps the train going!

Demonika

## IMMORTAL AXES: GUITARS THAT ROCK



**Lisa S. Johnson**  
Princeton Architectural Press  
September 28th 2021

*Immortal Guitar Axes* is a coffee-table book that's sure to be the

talk amongst aficionados of this instrument. It not only puts a lot of these beauties in the forefront, but also has a story too! Lisa S. Johnson's love for the six-string is very clear in the prose, and I suspect she did a lot of fieldwork to find out where some of them have disappeared to. Some were lost to history for one reason or another, and others

thought destroyed.

For example, just when Peter Frampton (who played with many talents, ranging from David Bowie to Ringo Starr) thought he lost his beloved after the cargo plane crashed over Venezuela, it survived! Although not every guitar has a story like this one, what's recounted is a look back about where it was either bought or made.

Many artists' instruments are profiled here, and while we already know everything about some axes, namely Brian May's Red Special, others aren't as widely known.

This book is a perfect follow-up to Johnson's previous book, *108 Rock Star Guitars*, published in 2013. Both visually show off the patina to every rustic nut and bolt. Even though the body looks all bashed up, the whole combination somehow contributes to the sound that the guitarist is famous for. Woodworkers know every type of wood, and how it's cut and shaped contributes to its overall aesthetic, and when used on a guitar—the hardness defines the sound. They can also take the abuse. For example, Jeff Beck's 1954 Fender Esquire has a lot of chips along its body. To say it's junk is hearsay.

Also, nearly all of Elvis' guitars are profiled here, and no book can truly be complete without the profile of the acoustic instruments he's played.

After looking at this compendium, I can't help but wonder about what's hiding in a small town's local pawnshop. It'd be less about finding something affordable to play, but instead about if they have something which is music history? Every guitar has a story, and what's told here is a love letter to each instrument.

Ed Sum

**GHOST EATERS**



**Clay McLeod Chapman**

Quirk Books  
September 20th 2022  
How can you distance yourself from the past when it's—quite literally—haunting you? This is Erin Hill's dilemma. In her mid-twenties and out of college, she has been trying desperately to

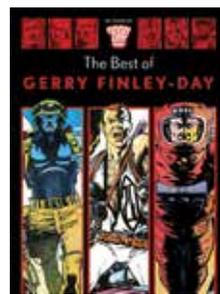
get her life on track, or at least started, but a magnetically charismatic deadbeat of an ex keeps pulling her back into his sphere. While Erin dips her toe into the dating pool and interviews for her future career, Silas is struggling in the throes of addiction—just what kind of addiction, though, Erin is fated to discover after Silas is found dead and their mutual friend Tobias manages to convince her that she needs the kind of closure only a drug-fuelled séance can provide. After all, what was Silas' dying wish? "I want you to find me, Erin..."

Clay McLeod Chapman is no stranger to the eerie, and in his latest offering the rich imagery is absolutely immersive. As you read you find yourself losing time just like Erin as she slips further into her haunting, enabled by a bizarre drug that acts like catnip for the lost spirits wandering the earth. When she finds the ghost she's looking for, however, her problems only seem to spiral.

*Ghost Eaters* is a living nightmare of grief, addiction, and the struggle to claw your way out of dark places—as well as the dangers of holding too tightly onto what (or who) is lost. Though truly a fictional tale, there are enough true words sprinkled throughout to remind us that the past is not a home, and it's not healthy to be haunted forever.

Laura Phaneuf

**45 YEARS OF 2000 AD: THE BEST OF**



**GERRY FINLEY-DAY**  
**Gerry Finley-Day,**  
**Dave Gibbons,**  
**Alan Davis,**  
**Carlos Pino, &**  
**Mick McMahon**  
2000 AD

August 30, 2022  
This fine, well-produced book, is part of celebrating

45 years of the highly influential comic *2000AD*, and *2000AD* cannot possibly be celebrated without highlighting the huge contribution writer Gerry Finley-Day made to this famous publication.

So, this book is timely, but really very late in the day with regard to Gerry's great influence and contribution to British comics, and not

just with *2000AD*, but also *Battle*, *Action* and ground-breaking girl's comics such as *Tammy*, throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Going through the book in sequence, it opens with an introduction from famous British comics writer Pat Mills, who writes of the positive relationships between writers and editors in the 1970s: "This kind of enthusiastic, in-depth engagement with writers was normal, supportive writer/editor relationships were an essential feature of comic publishing and a key reason for their huge success. Today, this is no longer the case..."

Gerry's work made a great impression on me. His fantastic *Fiends On The Eastern Front* is a case in point (not included in this collection, but it will be included in a *Fiends* book released in the near future, along with efforts of other writers with his characters, of which more later). *Fiends On The Eastern Front* is a masterful mix of vampire story and the kind of World War Two tale that was popular in *Battle* comic at the time. Drawn by the late great Carlos Ezquerro, it is one of the all-time great comic strips, and it shows all Gerry's strengths: gripping action, well-plotted, believable characters (Gerry had been a soldier, and like all good writers, brought his life experiences to his work), and above all, a great original central idea.

This collection features the entire *Harry Twenty On The High Rock* drawn by the great Alan Davis, it's basically *Escape From Alcatraz* in outer space and it grips from start to finish!

There's an amazing take on "Dan Dare" drawn by Dave Gibbons, really exciting stuff, again showcasing Gerry's skill at creating original ideas.

There's also "Rouge Trooper," also drawn by Dave Gibbons (I'd love to see Gerry and Dave collaborate again). This is a great future war story. As is 'The V.C.s', drawn by Mike McMahon, Cam Kennedy and Gary Leach. Finally, there's 'Invasion', which tells the tale of a thinly-disguised Russian Army invading and occupying England. This was written forty five years ago, yet you have only to look at Ukraine today to see how prophetic Gerry was with this story. The art by Carlos Pino and Ian Kennedy is perfect for the story. As I finish reading this book, I'm struck by what a great writer Gerry is.

So why isn't Gerry's work appearing in UK comics today? What went wrong? I feel Gerry's talent was simply not acknowledged,

appreciated, and above all, not respected and valued as it should have been (important in all walks of life, not just writing). I find it galling that while Gerry's work no longer appears in British comics, other writers over the years have taken over his stories such as 'The V.C.s', 'Fiends On The Eastern Front' and 'Rouge Trooper'.

Gerry Finley-Day is still with us, thankfully, and I'm sure has much to offer as a writer. So, if any wise publisher reads this piece, I say to them, that Gerry is a major talent deserving of a forum for his work and creativity!

Steve Earles

**I WILL CHANGE THE WORLD ... ONE**



**INTESTINE AT A TIME**

**Douglas J. Ogurek**  
Plumfukt Press  
July 23, 2022

Douglas formulates a self proclaimed "unsplatter punk subgenre" of horror explaining he uses transgressive/gory/

gross/violent subject matter to deliver a positive message, though I have to say I struggled to get to that message. I agree he is onto something with the subgenre, it also has notes of bizzaro as well. Like many a painful paragraphs is it hits us readers right over the head with so much gore and violence that it's hard to get to where we need to be - a.k.a. some kind of formed story. It seemed like Scat music but with horrific scenes instead of random sounds. The ideas are all there, great ideas... Ultraviolet steroids league's only female player pitches against the misogynistic brute responsible for her missing eye, A dolt gains intelligence and self-confidence when he discovers secret messages in his feces, and so on, but they are so hard to get through that it takes the enjoyability out of it for me. There is a warning in the beginning of the book and he means it. It has 12 short stories and I found all of them a struggle. Lots of them I had a hard time even figuring out what was going on as it was so focused on the gore instead of a plot or a point. Majorly extreme, unfortunately it missed the mark for me but those looking for pure brutal may enjoy this one.

Hatchetface

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# ARTIST PROFILE



## Hashtronaut Art Department

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?**

BT: My name is Brady Tighe, and I am the artist/writer at the Hashtronaut Art Department.

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

BT: I've been a creative type all my life. I was always drawing or writing something from my imagination, because those two things were the best way to show anyone else what I was thinking of. Also, drawing is tons of fun when you're a kid.

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

BT: Like if scientists were able to combine the DNA of a dinosaur with an old copy of *Heavy Metal* magazine. Then, you get Geoff Darrow to draw it, but after you give him a mountain of ketamine so he's not NEARLY as good anymore.

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

BT: Geoff Darrow, Moebius, and Daniel Warren Johnson. I would also include the late Kim Jong Gi, not so much for his style influence, but for the knowledge of what a person can accomplish with a brush or a pen.

**AU: What makes your artwork unique?**

BT: The obsessive level of detail, and some pretty



okay perspective work.

**AU: What are some of your favorite projects you've been involved with?**

BT: My best friend and I created a science-fiction comic called *Wild Mars*. He wrote it, and I drew it. We'd hash the ideas out over day long phone conversations that were just a gigantic mushroom cloud of nerd stuff. Then I'd plan out the panels and get drawing. It was glorious. I had also just become a full-time artist, and was petrified of failing miserably, so having my best-friend in my ear for 8 hours a day talking about *Star Wars* helped nullify that feeling.

**AU: What mediums do you work in? Is there something new you've always wanted to try?**

BT: Pencils, pens, ink, brush, pen nib, and then digital colouring. I would love to try doing some 3D printed models of some of my Hashtronaut stuff.

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

BT: I play the electric guitar. I write. I'm pretty good at video games. I have a near-useless-but-kind-of-impressive encyclopedic knowledge of hair metal.

**AU: What music do you listen to when you're working?**

BT: I'm always listening to music, but when the work needs to get done, it's going to be Motörhead on the headphones for most of that day.

**AU: Do you take commissions? What's the strangest thing you've ever been asked to create?**

BT: I do! Shoot me an email at [thehashtronautcorps.com](mailto:thehashtronautcorps.com) for any and all commissions. I've never been asked to do anything all that strange, maybe someone could email me and change that.

**AU: What's the latest thing you have been working on?**

BT: I just finished the first issue of *FUZZ* comics, which includes near one year's worth of my artwork, and the first issue of *Wild Mars* all combined into one book. It's the second official publication of the Hashtronaut Art Department!

**AU: Dream project you are still dying to do.**

BT: I want to do a comic book adaptation of a Dan Carlin podcast, and I want to do a gigantic, magnum-opus visual adaptation of James Ellroy's *L.A. Quartet* and *Underworld U.S.A. Trilogy*. Oh! And I want to make one of those massive museum dioramas of a huge battle, but with miniatures, and the battle is some made up science-fiction epic. Honestly, I have a whole wall of dream projects. I just need to invent a 36-hour day and get faster.

**AU: Any plans for**

**Christmas this year?**

BT: I plan to get comfy, surround myself with furry critters, and then catch up on all the reading I missed while working on comics.

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

BT: I've been riding that "chaotic good" line, which I hope Santa respects.

**AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?**

BT: The same thing that's always on it: that 10,000-piece LEGO Imperial Star Destroyer. I haven't got it yet, so maybe Santa doesn't respect that "chaotic good" line.

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read. Movie you saw. Album you heard.**

BT:

Book: *Ducks* by Kate Beaton

Movie: *Prey*, the Predator sequel that rocked so hard I forgot that the last two *Predator* movies made me want to put chopsticks in my eyes.

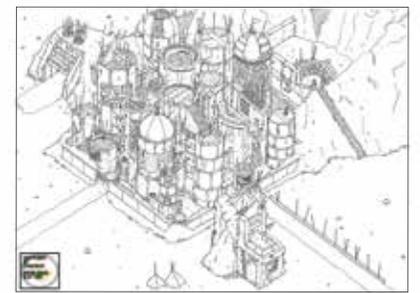
Album: Apparently the Mastodon album I was going to pick came out last year, so I'll have to pick the *Motör-ween* EP by Motörhead. Sure, it's just five old Motörhead tunes, but those five tunes are absolute bomb-proof diamonds. It's not Motörhead's fault modern music can't keep up with their lofty sonic peaks.

**AU: Any words of wisdom for our readers or aspiring artists?**

BT: Practice more. Also, learn how to do everything yourself. Because there's nothing worse than a great idea that you can't make because you don't know how to.

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

BT: *FUZZ* Issue 1 is available now in digital format on my website. It's both project and exhibit. It



does both.

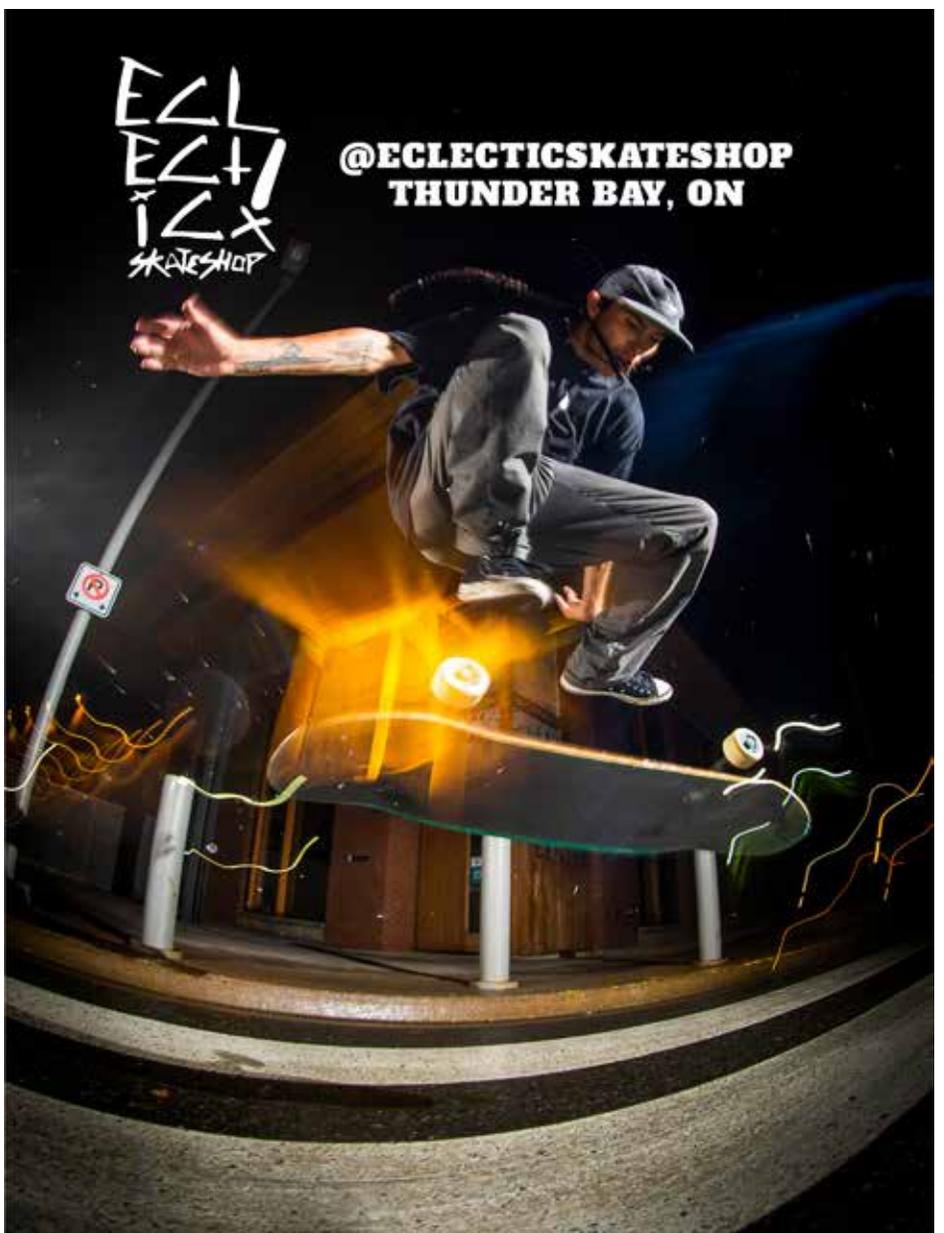
**AU: Anything else we should know about you that might surprise our readers?**

BT: I have a cat named Peaches, and this is the only question where I could state that.

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HAPPY HOLIDAZE!!



your misbehaving ass with a birch branch and then take you home in a sack and torture and eat you. Yeah, that sucks. I'll take the coal in my stocking over that. I assume Krampus only goes for the really, really bad kids (crying on airplanes, running up their parents' credit cards on mobile games, etc).

In recent years, European authorities have had some trouble with Krampus actors taking the role too literally. In Carinthia, Austria, a Krampus was charged with beating a child with a birch stick and cutting their leg. Another incident saw two firefighters beaten by a group of Krampus, and another group arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct in the city center. Not surprising! I have a wizard costume I always dress up as for Halloween and I always end up looking deep into a crystal ball.

Supposedly, in the 1800s, Krampus was initially more of a sidekick to St. Nick, and so in turn he was a bit more restrained

## Krampus

### Santa's Hairier, more Evil and Ancient Cousin

By Liam Crocker

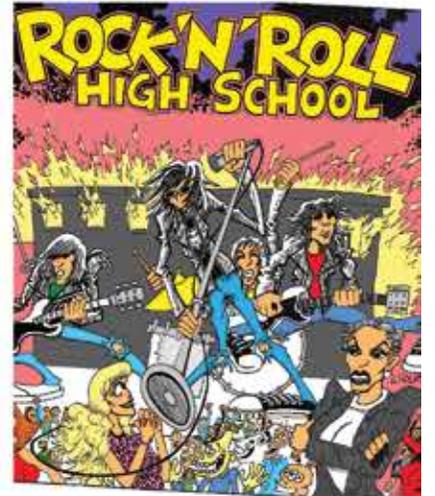
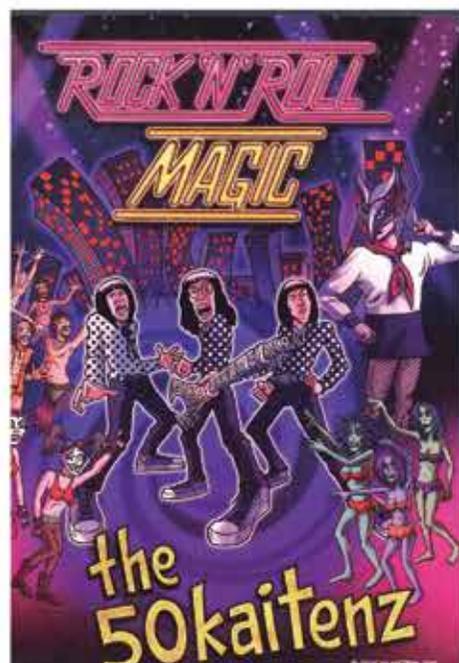
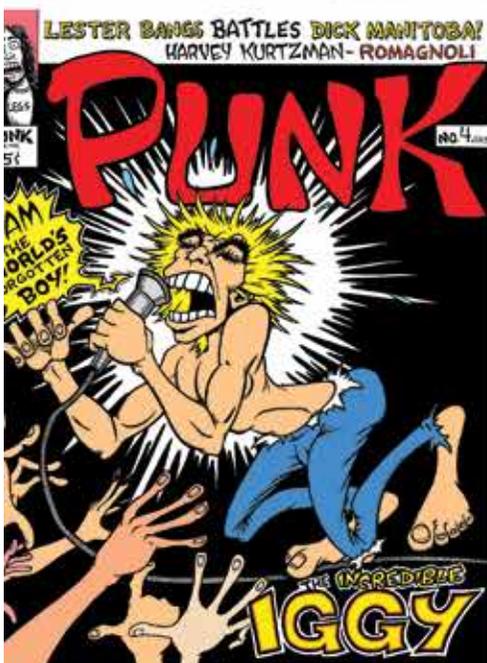
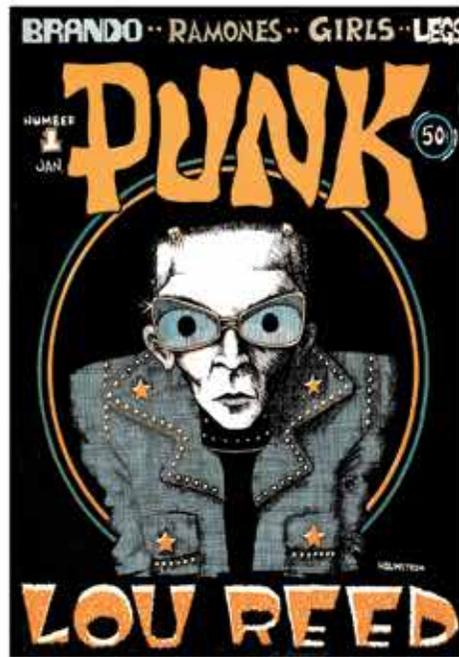
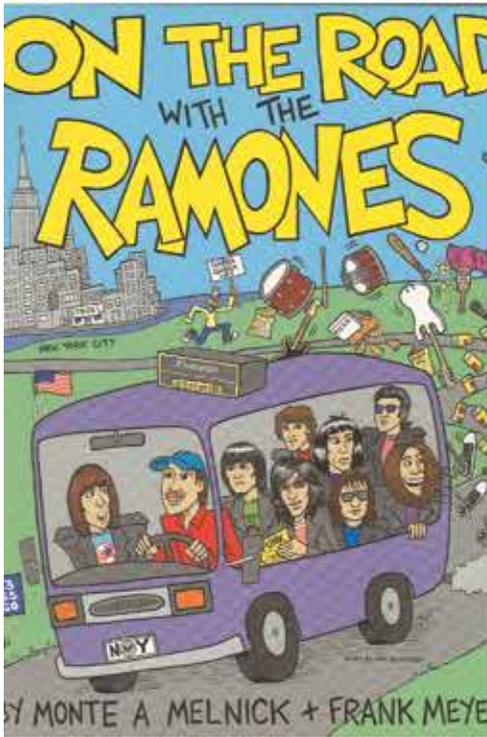
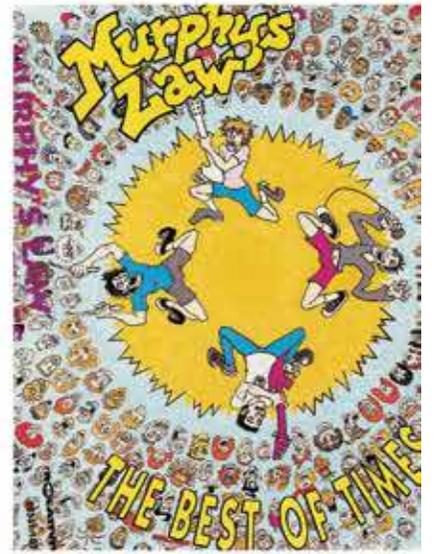
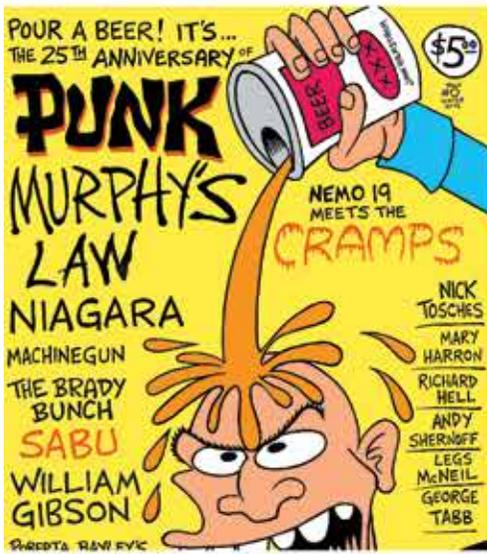
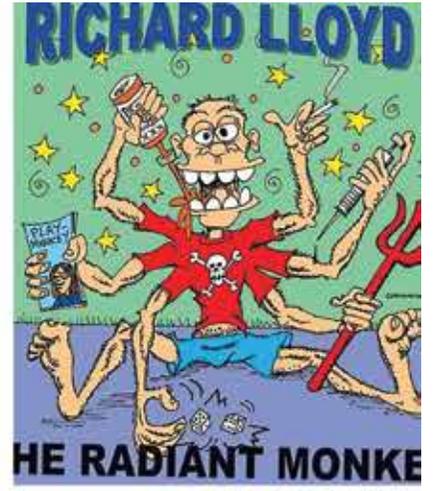
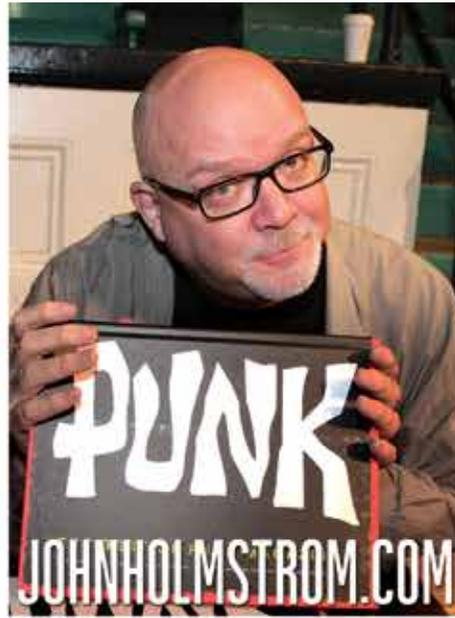
In recent years, the limelight of Christmas' favourite big man, Santa Claus, has begun to wane a little. We know Santa. He's old, big white beard, works part time in the mall in a seasonal position and then personally delivers you socks and Terry's chocolate oranges on the morning of the 25th. We're all very familiar. Perhaps sensing that we're getting used to it, a new sort of character has entered the collective consciousness in the form of Krampus. He's a little different than his counterpart. He's tall, hairy, has the face of a beast man from Warhammer and boy, he does not bring you presents nor does he eat milk and cookies you left out for him. He brings you whippings from a birch rod and I'm pretty sure he actually prefers to eat human flesh instead of milk and cookies. He's like the thermodynamic opposite of our wholesome Christmas hero.

As a 1500-year-old eastern and central European tradition older than Christmas itself, Krampus takes glee in donning himself in cow bells, armed with birch rod, and chases children through the streets of European cities and towns, scaring them with his terrifying half goat, half man, half demon visage. The young men in villages like Lienz, Austria, take part in a festival every year called Perchtenlauf. Then, during the Krampuslauf, or Krampus Run, children are gleefully chased through the streets by the Krampus. Legend has it that Krampus' night is December 5th, and very much unlike his holly jolly buddy Santa, instead of presents, Krampus searches out the bad kids. He'll beat

by the big man - they worked together to ensure everyone got what they deserved on Christmas, for better or for worse. But now that the spirit of Krampus is let loose on its own, things seem to have gotten a little out of control. Now, many Krampus festivals in Austria will place barriers between the Krampus men and festival-goers, and drinking of alcohol is not permitted until after the event is over. Kids can even escape to a Krampus free zone if they feel threatened.

So, it seems that Krampus escaped from under the yolk of his first boss, St. Nick, had some fun and debauchery, maybe a bit too much, and now he's back under the yolk of Austrian governmental bureaucracy. I guess that's the way she goes. Merry Christmas!







## JOHN HOLMSTROM

### Once A Punk, Always A Punk Interview by Absolute Underground

The founding editor of Punk Magazine, John Holmstrom is an American writer and underground cartoonist. Best known for illustrating the covers of the *Ramones'* albums *Road to Ruin* and *Rocket to Russia*. He is also the creator of the comic-book characters Bosko and Joe.

#### Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your claim to fame?

**John Holmstrom:** This is John Holmstrom, the founding Editor of PUNK Magazine.

#### AU: How did you become a cartoonist and writer?

**JH:** It's just something I always did. As a little one growing up in the 1950s, we kids would have physical fights over who got to read the Sunday newspaper comics first. I collected MAD magazine starting in 1961, collected Marvel comics from 1963 on, collected underground comics in the late 1960s etc.

When I attended the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in 1972, there were no "How To Draw Comic Strips" classes, so a bunch of us petitioned the school president to start some. Soon SVA hired a couple of teachers for comic strip and cartoon classes: Will Eisner and Harvey Kurtzman, the two GOATs (Greatest Of All Time). After I had to leave SVA (too broke) they both found work for me, I was an apprentice for Will, and Harvey got me a gig at Scholastic, where I worked with R.L. Stine for ten years doing the JOE comic strip. The money from JOE enabled me to spend most of my time working on PUNK mag.

#### AU: Tell us the origin of Punk Magazine?

**JH:** That is a very long story, really. It takes several chapters in "The Best of PUNK Magazine" book. I'm going to tell the whole story in my SubStack newsletter in a few weeks. Anyway, in the summer of 1975, Ged Dunn, Jr. was running a house painting business from a small apartment in the center of Cheshire, Connecticut (where the three of us grew up), and Eddie McNeil was making a short comedy film with us. Ged got bored after returning to college, and we decided to work together. Ged always said: "decades always define themselves in the middle," and there was a vacuum in the culture. Hippie culture had reigned supreme for years, and we all figured it was time to replace it.

I was the only one of the three with any publishing experience: I had been working for Will Eisner (who loaned us some furniture for the PUNK office), I had the lawyer and the printer lined up, and found a large, cheap office space in Manhattan.

I was also a rabid punk rock fan back then, so I came up with most of the ideas. Like, when Eddie suggested: "Why don't you just call it 'punk'?" He was responding to my question: "What should we call a magazine about punk rock?" He didn't invent the name, in fact he thought starting a magazine was a stupid idea.

We were serious about starting a real business: Ged and I incorporated the company, found

newsstand distribution, sold advertising, printed 4,000 copies of the first issue, and worked hard to create a success. The magazine and the music were too weird for the 1970s, though. No serious investor wanted to put up the kind of money we needed, and of course, record companies wanted nothing to do with punk rock.

#### AU: What was the scene like in New York back then?

**JH:** It was very small: a few thousand people at the most. The first time I visited New York City was in 1969 to see Jimi Hendrix at the Fillmore East. The music scene was thriving: Hundreds of young people were hanging out in the East Village, and there were dozens of hippie clothing boutiques, underground bookstores, and record stores. By the time I moved to New York City in 1972, the hippie scene had mostly disappeared. The glam rock scene was thriving, but the *New York Dolls* were still playing small clubs.

The music scene was becoming corporate: the most popular bands played Madison Square Garden. There were a few places, like The Bottom Line, Max's and The Academy of Music, where up-and-coming bands could perform. But it was similar to the scene today: most college kids were hanging out at the singles bar scene on the Upper East Side. The downtown music scene was struggling.

To me, everything changed after *Television* opened for the *New York Dolls* at The Little Hippodrome show in March 1975. *The Dolls* broke up soon after, Richard Hell left *Television*, and suddenly there was a cultural vacuum for the first time in decades. There was no defined music scene: glam was dead, the hippie scene was gone, and disco hadn't exploded yet. That summer CBGB held the first "Summer Rock Festival" and



suddenly bands like the *Talking Heads*, *Ramones*, *Blondie*, the *Heartbreakers*, the *Tuff Darts* and dozens of new bands had an opportunity to create a new scene. So, Ged Dunn Jr. was right after all.

#### AU: What drew you to self-publishing your own music magazine?

**JH:** Well, PUNK magazine was not self-published: Punk Publications, Inc. printed it. Ged had around \$5,000 (that's around \$28,000 in today's economy). Eddie McNeil and I paid for the first month's rent and security, after that the corporation paid the rent (but no salaries, just free rent for working there).

I knew about self-publishing from my father, who published a book, *Kriegie Life*, about his experiences in World War Two as a P.O.W.

When I was taking Harvey Kurtzman's class at the School of Visual Arts, guest artist Bill "Zippy the Pinhead" Griffith tried to get people involved in The Cartoonist Co-op, which involved several underground comic book publishers networking to get lower print prices. Harvey also had the class self-publish a comics publication.

What really got me started on the idea of publishing outside the mainstream was working for CHARAS as a paid intern from 1972-75. I made an educational comic book for them in 1973 called *DomeLand*, and it did well enough that I created a second issue (which was never printed). That's when I met Freddie Perez, who printed PUNK Magazine a couple of years later.

#### AU: Craziest thing you ever saw go down at CBGB?

**JH:** Several shows come to mind:

*The Damned* and the *Dead Boys* played a double bill together over four nights in early 1977. *The Damned* were the first English punk rock band to release records and tour the USA, so it was a big deal. The two bands formed an instant rivalry: They would heckle each other and throw stuff at whoever was on stage. It got pretty crazy, but it was all in good fun. That is, until the *Dead Boys* broke down the door to the *Damned's* hotel room and started shit with them again.

When Jonathan Richman played CBGB, he played an acoustic guitar at the bar instead of onstage. That was a crazy thing, believe it or not. But it worked.

I missed Kongress, a weird band that performed

rituals onstage, when they started a fire on stage. That would have been wild. I also missed Screaming Jay Hawkins and Devo.

*The Runaways* were the craziest, though. So many guys were standing around gaping at Cherie Currie, dressed in sexy lingerie, that you couldn't see a thing. People were standing on tables and chairs, crowded around them like I never saw anywhere, before or after. It was August 2, 1976, so the club was still using the original, small stage. The larger, taller stage and backstage area wasn't built until early 1977. I wish I could say I saw the *The Runaways*, but it was crowded like that from beginning to end. I did get to hear them, though.

#### AU: What do you remember about first meeting the Ramones?

**JH:** The first time I saw them onstage in the summer of 1975, I thought they were amazing.

When they exited the stage, they walked all the way through the bar to the front door, since Joey and Dee Dee lived at Arturo Vega's loft which was right around the corner. I'd never seen that before, bands always go backstage. But CBGB didn't have a backstage area yet. They looked kind of scary, really. Dee Dee and Johnny looked like they probably carried switchblade knives and would stab you in a minute. They glared at people as they left the club.

I met them a few months later in November 1975 when we interviewed them for the first issue, but I didn't exactly "meet" the band, to be honest. Asking questions to Johnny and Tommy for 20 minutes didn't feel like a meeting of the minds. They were guarded and careful in their words. Joey and Dee Dee didn't say anything. Once I did get to hang out with them after the first issue was distributed, they were (almost) always good guys. Except for Tommy they were definitely weird people. I should write a book, right?

#### AU: What albums have you done the artwork for?

**JH:** Not many, really. Front cover: *Ramones' Road to Ruin*. Back cover: *Ramones' Rocket to Russia*. The *Ramones* also used a photo comic from PUNK #3 and my lettering for their first single, "Blitzkrieg Bop", and several of the *Rocket to Russia* drawings I did for the interior sleeve ended up on single covers, t-shirts, posters etc. etc. etc.

I hand-lettered the labels for several albums for Chris Stein's Animal Records in the early 1980s: Iggy Pop's single ("Angry Hills"), and the *Zombie Birdhouse* LP label. I think I did the lettering for a *Gun Club* album and another band or two. Bruce Carleton and I also designed the record company logo.

In 1984, Mikel Board's band *Artless* used a drawing by me for their record *How Much Punk Rock Do You Hear in Russia*. Instead of printing it on the cover they had it etched into the vinyl. I did a drawing for a single by the NYC hardcore band *Adrenalin O.D.*: "Theme From an Imaginary Midget Western." But once again, it appears on the label, I don't think they had the money for an actual record sleeve.

The next time I did a drawing for an LP cover was *Murphy's Law: The Best of Times*. It ended up on the CD, cassette and promotional poster, but I never saw a vinyl record with my artwork. In the 2000s until recently, I did artwork for a lot of CD covers: Richard Lloyd, *The Kowalskis*, *The Boogers*, *Meat Depressed*... I did three record covers for a great Japanese punk band: *The 50 Kaitenz*.

#### AU: Who was your favorite band from back in the day?

**JH:** *Ramones*.

#### AU: I met you when you were a guest at San Diego Comic-Con. How was that experience? What comic books have you published?

**JH:** The San Diego Comic-Con was great! They



paid for my airfare and hotel, and gave me a free table. It was exhausting, though, that event is huge!

The only comic books I have published with my artwork are *DomeLand* and a full-color Bosko comic book in 2006. *DomeLand* was used mostly as a promotional tool, so it wasn't really sold anywhere, and Bosko bombed. Outside of a few stores, I couldn't get any distro. I could barely give them away!

I published a few comic books when I was the publisher and president of High Times magazine. I ran a NORML fundraiser called NORMLthon '89 on the Pot 100 cartoon chart, and published a comic book with some of the money. I drew a two-

page comic strip for it, and published artwork by many of the High Times cartoonists. I also tried to launch a regular comic book called High Life in the 1990s, but the company cancelled it after one issue.

Most of the cartoons and comic strips I have created over the years have been in magazines, because they paid better page rates than comic books. More importantly, I owned the copyrights and original artwork. Comic book companies were screwing creators every which way when I broke into the business in the 1970s.

#### AU: What was it about Lou Reed that made you feature him on the cover of your first issue?

**JH:** He was in the audience to see *The Ramones*, and had recently released *Metal Machine Music*, a double album of feedback and distortion noise. To me that was the ultimate punk rock record in a way: A giant "FUCK YOU" to his managers so he could get out of his contract and an amazing artistic statement.

I was a fan of Lou's music, from the *Velvets* to the *Rock 'N' Roll Animal* live albums. He gave me a great interview (unlike *The Ramones*), and he was a big name. I never considered Lou's music to be punk rock, but I knew he would sell more magazines than *The Ramones*, who didn't have a record out yet and drew small crowds at their shows.

#### AU: Did everyone, yourself included, have a crush on Deborah Harry from Blondie?

**JH:** I didn't really have a crush on Debbie. It was clear that she and Chris were together. They were really in love! I was busy chasing women in the CBGB scene who were available.

Of course I thought she was beautiful. She is also a very nice person: unassuming, smart, witty, and very cooperative during photo shoots.

A lot of the people who hung out at CBGBs hated *Blondie*: "They can't play their instruments!" The same bullshit I heard about *The Stooges*, *Alice Cooper*, *The New York Dolls*, the *Ramones*, etc. my whole life. The first time I saw *Blondie* in early 1976 I thought they were really good musicians who wrote good pop music. And those "great musicians" always played boring music.

Did you know she was the first PUNK magazine t-shirt model? Chris was intent on getting *Blondie* into PUNK magazine and that did the trick. Later he offered me some "naked photos" of Debbie (you couldn't see anything, she was covered with a guitar) for PUNK #4, but I thought the photo of

her in the Vulture t-shirt was sexier. Chris became a Contributing Editor at PUNK magazine, giving us amazing photos and story ideas until we stopped publishing in 1979. (Debbie even hand-lettered the Ronnie Toast interview he did!)

**AU: Did you get along with Hilly Kristal the owner of CBGB?**

**JH:** Most of the time we got on great. I didn't see him a lot, he usually worked during the day. Merv was the boss of the bar when the shows were on, and he took great care of everyone. He would break up fights before they started, get drunk people out of the bar and into a cab, stuff like that. Hilly would often be asleep on the couch near the front entrance when shows were happening.

Hilly took good care of PUNK magazine. When we needed to put together a benefit concert at CBGB in 1977 he gave us two nights, and paid us a bonus because we drew a large crowd. Without that help, we would have gone out of business. In January 2001 he gave me the run of the place for a night: We had the main club, a gallery exhibition at the CBGB Gallery and even the basement space. We got to be friends when I would drop by to see him in the early 2000s, when I tried to re-launch the magazine, and during the "Save CBGB" movement around 2006-8.

**AU: Did you enjoy the CBGB movie? Was it a good representation?**

**JH:** Yeah, I did. People hated that movie when it first came out. I think a lot was jealousy: If you weren't in the movie, it sucked! Also I think people were not expecting a light comedy. They wanted something dark and depressing, I guess. Film snobs always look down at comedy films. And not many people knew Hilly, and the film is all about him, and people like Merv, Terry Ork, his daughter

Lisa, and people wanted a different kind of film.

I thought the filmmakers did a great job. Nowadays, I hear this from people: "It's my favorite movie!" Incredible! I think that, like punk rock itself, it took many years for it to become popular.

**AU: What are your thoughts on the gentrification of the Bowery and that CBGB is now a clothing store?**

**JH:** Well, somebody had to move into "The Space Formerly Known as CBGB." I think what pisses people off is that the building leaseholder, The Bowery Residents Committee (BRC), gave the Varvatos clothing brand the same price that Hilly was paying! That was like salt in the wound, since Hilly offered to pay much more to keep his club going. A lot of people tried to save the club, and you thought at the time it was all about the money when CBGBs wasn't offered a new lease. But no, it was just personal animosity between the CBGB owner and the guy who ran the BRC at the time. It's not John Varvatos's fault that he got a great deal, though.

As far as gentrification goes, that happened when Rudy Giuliani was the mayor, and even Ed Koch before him. They cleaned up Times Square and replaced the sex shows with Disney musicals. Having lived through the crime, drugs and prostitution all over New York City in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, and now watching crime return? I'm okay with it.

Ironically, in my opinion the CBGB scene created the first tidal wave of gentrification in the East Village. It was easy to find a cheap apartment here until 1979, when the music and art scenes blew up. All these high school kids who liked punk rock graduated and moved to New York to start a band and/or create artwork. So I guess some of this

gentrification is partly my fault, right?

**AU: Is there a punk story you can share with us that no one else has heard yet?**

**JH:** I got a million of them, but have no idea which ones I told and which never appeared. The stories I keep to myself are mostly too personal. You know what? I never had sex in the bathrooms or in the phone booth, but apparently a lot of other people did!

Okay, here's one I don't think has appeared: On the last night it was open, Danny Fields showed up. So did Elijah Wood, who was reportedly going to play Iggy Pop in an upcoming film. (Like many movies, it never came together.) Anyhow, I heard that the movie star's bodyguards pushed Danny around, because he was in The Great Star's way! Imagine that, the guy who was going to be Iggy in a movie dissing the guy who actually discovered Iggy.

**AU: Do you still enjoy punk rock? Any new bands turning your head?**

**JH:** I still like punk rock but not many bands play 1970s-style punk. Most of what is called modern punk rock is either pop-punk or just garbage. Like, is Emo or Screamo or whatever really punk rock? Not to me. What rock critics call "proto punk" sounds like authentic punk rock to me.

A band called *Bad Vacation* performed at a pop-up gallery that the Great Frog people put together over the summer. They're the closest thing to real punk rock to me.

I like Mickey Leigh's *Mutated Music*. He's one of the last 1970s musicians who's still making good new music. I always enjoyed his earlier bands: *The Rattlers* (who started out as *Lester Bangs' Birdland*),

and *STOP*.

**AU: Future endeavours? Any you want to promote?**

**JH:** I just finished putting together a new issue of PUNK magazine, dedicated to Iggy Pop and his new album *Every Loser*. It's only available packaged with a CD or vinyl record at Iggy Pop's Website. I think it came out great, and compares with the very best of the 1970s magazines we produced. Working on it was a labor of love for everyone: Iggy Pop is the greatest. He's the original punk. And his new record is amazing! I

honestly think it's his best solo album (and that is saying a lot!). The record producer, Andrew Watt, came up with the idea to create a new magazine for the album, and took great care of us. It's available the first week in January.

My main output is my SubStack newsletter:

**JohnHolmstrom.substack.com**

I'm posting a lot of my comics and illustrations from the 1970s and '80s, and telling stories about what was going on at the time. And it's free! So

please sign up today.

**AU: Where can people get the book compiling The Best of Punk Magazine?**

I always send people to alibris.com, a Website that is all about books and offers cheap prices. Best of all, it's not Amazon.

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

**JH:** The first Canadian punk rock band I saw was the *Viletones* at Max's Kansas City. The word was out that the lead singer was going to kill himself onstage. They were OK. Definitely punk rock.

**JohnHolmstrom.com**

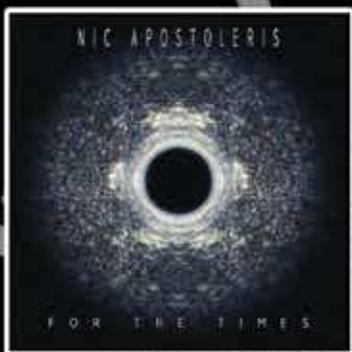
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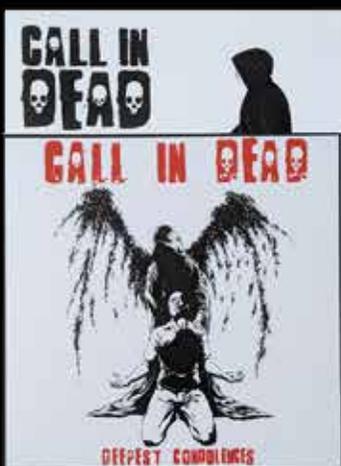
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# JUST KUSH!

## Just Kush

Interview by Iree-I

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?**

R: Ryan from JustKush - a small Licensed Producer located in beautiful South Okanagan, BC. We produce small batches, with a fresh crop ready every two weeks! This gives our customers the freshest product on the market without compromising quality. All our batches are hand trimmed, slow dried, and cold cured for a minimum of two weeks. Our focus is on giving a customer the best experience possible at the best price, like at Evergreen Cannabis you can grab a quarter of our flower for under \$50 bucks!

**AU: When did you first start growing cannabis?**

R: Been a part of this industry and growing (for real, not just a couple plants in the closet) since



1991 and have extensive experience with all forms of production, from outdoor to aeroponics and everything in

between.

**AU: What drew you to the cannabis industry?**

R: A love for cannabis was the main draw! But to be honest a big part, in the beginning, was that it was illegal. I was young and found it exciting breaking a dumb law to do what was right!

**AU: As a consumer, why would I want to buy small batch craft cannabis instead of the big brand name stuff?**

R: Big brands are led by suits! They care more about the bottom line than quality. As a craft producer we care about every customer and their experience with us (that's why I put my personal cell number on each package!) Our customers get products that are fresh and produced with care and love by our JustKush family. When you buy Just Kush it was often packaged the day before you get it!

**AU: What strains do you currently produce and what makes them unique?**

R: VIP (Vancouver Island Pink) Kush full room - Fresh crop once a month, OG Sunset and Northern Hash Plant share a room 50/50 - fresh



once a month, but we are switching these out for Peanut Butter Rockstar and Tuna Rockstar starting Jan 1. We have over 40 strains in-house! Most of these popular are old school strains, some bred right here in BC (VIP Kush).

**AU: Which one are you enjoying the most right now?**

R: VIP Kush is still my fav, but I'm starting to lean towards the Peanut Butter Rockstar for taste and its heavy stone!

**AU: What makes an expert grower in your opinion?**

R: Attention to details and experience are key for an expert grower. Overlooked details, no matter how small, can escalate quickly into major problems indoors! And you can't replace experience when it

comes to recognizing the varying needs of strains. The ability to adjust the environmental and nutritional needs of a strain takes an experienced eye.

**AU: What should I be looking for when choosing which strain is right for me?**

R: Definitely don't let THC be the deciding factor! I look for high or unique terp profiles which give a full sensory experience. Terps give the bud its taste and aroma.

# CANNABIS CORNER



**AU: Where are your products available?**

R: Soon our products will be available in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Currently we deliver directly to multiple retail stores in BC, and are happy to announce that our friends at Evergreen always carry all our strains and can deliver anywhere in the province of BC.

**AU: How can people find you online?**

Check us out at [JustKush.ca](http://JustKush.ca) - Happy Toking!  
[www.ecsvan.ca](http://www.ecsvan.ca)



## Goatsblood

Interview with Matt (drums) & Adam (guitar)

Goatsblood (1999-2006) was an abhorrent whirlwind of sludge/doom metal that was composed of members of Bison, Ceremonial Bloodbath, Pride Tiger, Radioactive Vomit, Haggatha, Cambodia and countless more. The six piece band was an intimidating presence live; their bark and their bite were on par. Intense shattering riffs in the style of EYEHATEGOD or NOOTHGRUSH crashed against the mayhem genre blurring of MAN IS THE BASTARD.

Bent Window is proud to present their final two recorded tracks on cassette/digital for the die-hards and new fans alike. Cassette will come in an edition of 100, with download available via the Bent Window bandcamp site. *Detriment* will be out December 16th, 2022 (bentwindowrecords.bandcamp.com)

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

Matt Wood. Playing drums in Goatsblood

Adam: Guitar in Goatsblood

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

Matt: I think the band formed in fall '98? The original lineup was: Blair Fitzpatrick/Vocals, Kurt Dernisky/Guitar, Mike Moffatt/Bass, Matt Wood/Drums. Adam Sorry/Guitar and Masa Anzai/Noise joined in the following years.

Adam: I joined around 2003 on second guitar. I doubt I'm infamous for anything. One time Goatsblood played a Halloween show in Vancouver, I think with 3 Inches of Blood and some other bands. It was Halloween and I brought a full bottle of fake blood onstage about the size of a stubby beer bottle. During our set I broke it over my face and it went absolutely everywhere. A bunch of people up front were real pissed, and flipped out thinking I'd sprayed my blood all over them. Afterwards I found out that I'd actually cut my nose up pretty good and that some of it was indeed real.

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

## BENT WINDOW RECORDS

Matt: It was meant to be extreme and kinda anti-music. Sludgecore played by mentally ill people.

Adam: Tortured, suicidal doom/sludge. Drull is awesome, but that first album blew my fucking mind and is still one of my all time favorites. The production, the performance, the songs, the art, everything.

**AU: Describe the process of how you came across the two final tracks on *Detriment*?**

Matt: I was visiting with Nick Hart, who did a repress of our first record and

came across the two tracks on his iTunes. I didn't even have a copy of the session, but for whatever reason he did. I told the guys. We all decided that we should release it cuz why the fuck not?

Adam: We recorded those tracks in 2005 I think? Around that time the band was kind of falling apart; everyone was busy with other projects, and there was definitely some bad blood.

**AU: What were some highlights of being in Goatsblood from over the years?**

Matt: Working with Steve Austin, James Plotkin, Willowtip Records. A 6 week North American tour playing with bands like Yob, Today is the Day and Weedeater along the way. Partying with Vinny Paul at his strip club in Dallas. I don't even know where to start.

Adam: Honestly I felt like I learned a lot about

music and noise from Mike and the others. How to abuse equipment, how to disregard traditional playing. The shows were often very chaotic. Masa used to bring this door-sized piece of metal with contact mics on it, and would straight throw it at people during the set, into tables full of beer glasses and shit. One time playing at the Cobalt a hammered guy reached up and grabbed Kurt's balls, and Kurt kicked him in the face hard as fuck and bummed everyone out. Some normal people I knew were there and were totally shocked. Playing Victoria and seeing our friends over there was also always a highlight.



**AU: How has your relationship to the material changed several years after writing/recording it?**

Matt: Not much. I look back on it fondly but I never really listen to it.

Adam: To be honest I haven't listened to it in a while. I remember we recorded it in a hidden studio off Main in Vancouver, smoking a shitload of weed with the engineer.

**AU: *Drull* remains one of the heaviest releases from Vancouver, BC, where can folks go to hear that and earlier Goatsblood material?**

Matt: Thank you. It's up on most streaming sites believe it or

not. I don't know who put it up there.

**AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? What are your current projects?**

Matt: Good As Gone and Worse.

Adam: I play in Ceremonial Bloodbath and Deathwinds.

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

Thx for the support!

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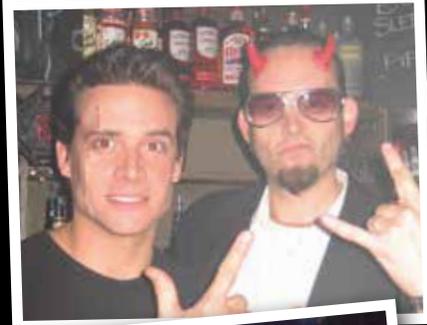
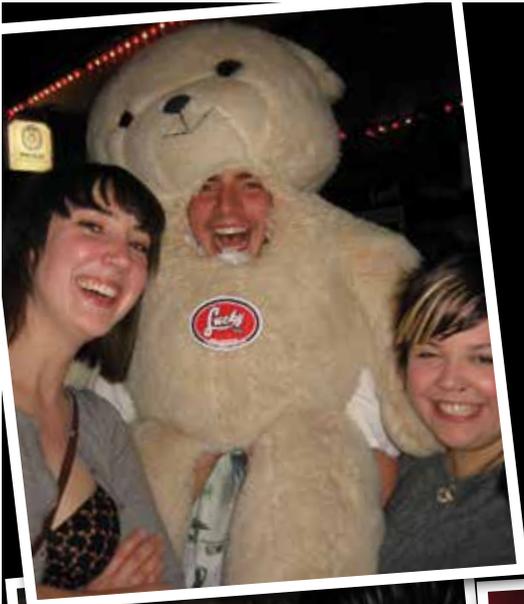
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## Rebellion Festival 2022

By Chuck Andrews

I have been saying that I am going to go to Rebellion Festival in Blackpool England for years now, and I never do. Hell, I have been saying that I am going to leave the continent for years and never have. I guess this was the year though, despite some last minute reservations about how traveling that far was going to make for much of a relaxing vacation, I got on a plane and went to the UK. Two planes actually, plus a ferry, a few buses, and a scenic train ride through the British countryside.

For those of you that don't know Rebellion Festival, it has been around since 1996, though it was originally called Holidays in the Sun, then Wasted. It is a primarily

punk festival though there's definitely overlap to other musical genres, which isn't a bad thing. I arrived in Blackpool a couple of days early so I could get settled in, wander the beach and see the city. I also stayed in England an extra day in order to check out the sights in Manchester. I settled right into the Glen Allan Hotel, Kerry and Mark, the proprietors were the most wonderful hosts and I immediately made a friend in Vito who was up from London for the festival.

As with any big festival there are bands playing different stages at the same time, so you have to pick and choose who you are going to see. I took this into consideration and made a list of set times, stages and bands in my phone, weeks in advance. What I didn't consider was how tired my legs were going to get standing on concrete floors watching bands on and off for 10 hours a day for four days straight (plus a pre-gig on the Wednesday night).



Or maybe I forgot, as this was definitely not my first music festival. In the end I saw a lot of bands, had a ton of fun, and definitely took breaks.

But you are probably wondering who my favourite musical acts were aren't you?

For best entertainment and enthusiasm the UK's own Dirt Box Disco takes the cake. These anthemic rockers delivered



a hilarious set with the audience singing along. They weren't a band I was overly familiar with going in, but one I have definitely been listening to ever

since!

Though there were a ton of classic acts at the festival, I really wanted to check out a few newer ones.



The first up on my personal agenda of younger bands was Knock Off a trio from the UK formed in 2013. They played one of the larger stages and had no problem capturing the crowd's attention. Next I checked out Crown Court from London, also formed in 2013. These guys sounded fantastic and

the singer had a menacing stage presence. He grabbed hold of the crowd with a ferocious intensity, one of the strongest acts of the weekend.

The third newer group I was excited about was Ultra Sect, friends of mine from the SF Bay Area, who I just hadn't gotten a chance to see yet. They were worth the wait, delivering a blistering, angry and perfect set.



Not everything at Rebellion Festival is strictly centered around watching bands. There was a showing of visual art and a literary room. I caught three excellent acts in the latter. World



famous author Irvine Welsh spoke about a new book he is involved in, *Seal Club*, Don Letts told tales from his life/newest book, ranging from his music video production days to his extensive involvement with the Clash. Last but not least Jeff Turner of Cockney



Rejects fame told dark, dangerous and powerful tales about his band. Turner's talk was especially moving, he broke down crying tears of joy that so many people came to hear his talk and love his band.

Speaking of Cockney Rejects, they, Cock Sparrer and The Last Resort delivered three of the best sing along sets of the weekend.



There is something incredibly unifying about being in a room with thousands of people who are all singing along to classic songs from the genre such as "Chip On My Shoulder" or "Chaos."

Other fantastic acts that I saw over the course of five days of music included, but was not limited to, Avengers, Subhumans, Beans on Toast, Suede Razors, Sham 69, Resistance 77, The Boys, Sub Alternos, Suzi Moon, Gimp Fist, Circle Jerks, Bouncing Souls, The Professionals and The Drowners.

I can't really say that I adjusted to the eight hour time difference, and didn't sleep much, despite trying to. But I certainly had a fun time and it was nice to get out of Victoria and travel to the homeland. Even if it meant getting Covid!

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## Vulture Industries

Progressive Metal band from Bergen, Norway.

Interview by Matt Norris

Bjørnar Erevik Nilsen – vocals and keys  
 Eivind Huse – guitars and vocals  
 Øyvind Madsen – guitars  
 Kyrre Teigen – bass and vocals  
 Tor Helge Gjengedal – drums

**Absolute Underground: Since starting out in 2004 what is the best city you've ever played in?**

We have a relationship with Romania, I would say that Bucharest is the city we enjoy the most. We also had a great time playing Moscow years ago, but unless heads start rolling from the top instead of from the bottom in that country, that is not going to happen anytime soon.

**AU: If you were abducted by aliens and held hostages what song would you play live to represent Vulture Industries?**

That would depend on whether we got along with the aliens or not. The abduction part suggests that they are not, in which case I would go for something ugly and aggressive from the first demos, in hope of getting kicked of the flying saucer. On the other hand, if I was afraid

they would kill me, or I wanted them to like me I would go for one of my favourites like "Lost among liars," "As the world burns," or get them to sing along on "Deeper." On the other hand, should we need to buy time, I would go for a long one like "The Hound."

**AU: Experimental intentional art rock, progressive groove doom goth and twisted alternative enlightened metal is what I call your musical styles. What do you have to add to that?**

You got us covered. I find envisioning a Frankenstein made from bits of Nick Cave, Tom Waits, Alice Cooper, David Bowie, Faith no more, The Cult and Peter Steele dancing to a score by Ennio Morricone with Cult of Luna hanging over the horizon helps. Then you kick it in the knee, so it starts limping.

**AU: Explain the planet.**

I would have to quote Douglas Adams: "This planet has - or rather had - a problem, which was this: most of the people living on it were unhappy for pretty much of the time. Many solutions were suggested for this problem, but most of these were largely concerned with the movement of small green pieces of paper, which was odd because on the whole it wasn't the small green pieces of paper that were unhappy."

**AU: Craziest experience you've witnessed while on tour?**

After our show at Metal Days in Slovenia years ago, we were driving over the Julian Alps heading for a show in Germany. Stopping for a short toilet break in nature, our drummer was harassed by some local wasps. Believing he had finally chased them off, he pulled down his pants again to conclude his business. As he did, he realised he had actually caught one of the culprits underneath his foreskin. The bugger instinctively stung him where it hurts and flew off.

**AU: You only get to listen to two bands for the rest of time, who would it be and why?**

Difficult and impossible one as I would probably end up hating both in the end. I could go for someone really prolific, to dodge repetition and boredom. Then I could go with say Frank Zappa

or King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard, but I don't listen that much to either, so it would probably be better to go with something I really like. Might be a good idea to go for something my wife also likes, and who's are still alive and active so we could go to gigs and get some new music from time to time. Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds made the best shows I saw in the last 10 years, and then I'd include someone really young which are really fine songwriters, First Aid Kit.

**AU: What is the best local cuisine in Bergen Norway? Any great recipes for us Canadians?**

We are approaching Christmas, so I would go for the west coast traditional Christmas eve dish, Pinnekjøtt or stick meat. Salted dried sheep ribs which are then watered down for 30 hours before you steam it for 3 hours. Serve it with potatoes and kohlrabi stew. It is best complemented by a shot of aquavit.

**AU: What can the frenzied fans expect from Vulture Industries in the near future, any exciting tours or news?**

Happy to say that we just finalized recording our fifth album. It's been an intense period, but we are happy and eager to show the world what we have done. The release can be expected next year. We are currently waiting for Tony Lindgren to finalize the mastering at Fascination Street in Sweden. We will tour next year, and hope to finally make our way across the Atlantic.

**AU: After a perfect concert, describe the best scenario for your evening after the show? Party like a madman or sip tea?**

I would have to alternate between the two.

**AU: Get a hotel full of groupies or call the wife?**

The majority of our fanbase is male, so I'll play it safe and go with the wife.

**AU: Consume mass drugs and stay awake all night or drink spring water and meditate?**

I'd go for option number 3.

**AU: Dance to the wee hours of the morning at a classy bar or go straight to bed after a healthy meal?**

Dance to the wee hours of the morning at a dingy bar. If its too classy I'd feel like the odd one out.

**AU: Who is the greatest person in the world?**

For each child it's mother. On the other end of the list I reserved spots for multiple world leaders.

**AU: Any quirks or unique character traits of each band member?**

Tor Helge (drums) is always late because he hates waiting for people. Øyvind (guitar) is into inventing life hacks, like using spoons to butter bread. Kyrre (bass) always want to perform the songs from our discography the least people are interested in hearing. I (Bjørnar/vocals)'m a notorious procrastinator when it comes to answering interviews. Eivind (guitar) prefers mountains over people.

**AU: If by chance I went into a hallucinatory dream state while smoking DMT and listening to your music what hallucinations do you think I would see?**

A Frankenstein hanging over the horizon.

**AU: What's the music scene like in your home town and are there any other bands you'd like to give a shout out too?**

The music scene in Bergen is good, lots of talent. Among my personal favourites are the jazzy-progressive band Seven Impale which I would recommend.

**AU: Anything you'd like to tell us about? Any cool stories you'd like to share?**

A smart guy once said, "life is a state of mind."

**AU: For the first time listener, what do you recommend as a good first song or two to check out?**

I would go with one or two of the ones we performed for the aliens. "As The World Burns" or maybe "Deeper."

**AU: We appreciate your art and musical commitment.**

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

[facebook.com/vultureindustries](https://facebook.com/vultureindustries)

[youtube.com/@VultureIndustries](https://youtube.com/@VultureIndustries)

Photo Credits: Maja Markegaard & Jarle H Moe



**Keithmas and Slow Hand Beer Company announce the release of "Keefs" A Keithmas Beer!**

13 must be Slow Hand Beer Company's lucky number because they are back and coming in hot with the Thirteenth Annual edition of the world's longest running (and possibly only) Keith Richards themed Christmas party, Keithmas, and with over \$130,000 and counting raised to date for the Greater Vancouver Foodbank, this year is going to be another rocker!

In addition, this years event is preceded by an extra special announcement to appetites until the big day. Keithmas and Slow Hand Beer Company have joined together to produce Keefs, a Keithmas Beer!

Kurtis Sheldan, one half of the Slow Hand Beer Company explains the origin: "We'd been toying with the idea of making a classic American lager for some time, so when I saw the Keithmas boys post that iconic pic to their socials of Keef standing at his amp with a bottle of Jack and a few tins of Coors Banquet sitting atop it, I knew we'd found our inspiration.

He continues, "We got together at Keithmas HQ and after a chat over a few pints, history was made and Keefs - the now Official Keithmas Beer - came to life! Sourcing ultra-premium malt from Skagit Valley Malting in Washington and hops from the Yakima Valley to craft an American-style lager, we turned quality and balance up to 11. The Keefs label draws heavily from those Coors tins from 1972, and the beer is nice and simple, just the best version



of the style ever."

So it appears Vancouver will get a taste of history on Thursday, December 1st, with a little 'Country Honk' at the Heatley, at the Keefs launch party! Long time Keithmas performer Elliot C. Way (and special guest) will be spinning a Rolling Stones-heavy DJ set and treating guests to a few live tunes.

You'll also find Keefs available at Keithmas on Saturday, December 17th, and in limited quantities at finer liquor stores in the Lower Mainland. Keefs is also available through BeerVan

In addition, a portion of proceeds from every can of Keef's will benefit the Greater Vancouver Food Bank

**Event details follow:**

**Keithmas XIII Tickets \$25.00 @**

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On March 20, 2020, Skookum was ready to play a show at the Roxy nightclub in Vancouver Canada to kick off one last gig before taking 15 new songs into the studio the very next month. But then the world shut down... What came next was months of uncertainty and the band wasn't sure when or if they could go in and record what they now present as "Rise Above it All".

This collection of 10 songs mostly written well before 2020, but in a strange twist of fate, captures the times we live now. "Rise Above it All" is a musical journey perfectly encompassing the strange, challenging, and often bleak period of history we are currently experiencing, but always with an underlying current of hope.

The songs allowed us to flex our musicality while also displaying a more dynamic range of styles, from 70's ballads to mid-00s heavy riff rock, and little flourishes in between, culminating in our most mature and emotional album to date, but always with the patented Skookum tongue in cheek humour our fans have come to expect.

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# FUCK

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## Rainbow Room Port Alberni, BC

### Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself.

RR: Dave Rutherford... Owner of Island Entertainment Inc / The Rainbow Room Port Alberni B.C. I purchased The Rainbow Room and Rainbow Lanes in 2006. I started a DJ company in 1981 (Tempo DJ Services), was hired as a DJ at the Rainbow Room by previous owners in 1988 for 4 months... Always liked the venue and had plans to one day lease it, but luckily was able to purchase the building August 1st, 2006.

### AU: Tell us about the start/ early days of the venue/ history of building.

RR: Bowling Alley was built in 1960. 16 lanes of 5 pin downstairs and 8 lanes of 10 pin upstairs. Rainbow Room was born in 1976 when 8 lanes of 10 pin bowling were converted into a lounge.

### AU: Where did the name come from?

RR: Rainbow Room is above Rainbow Lanes. The original plan for the bowling alley in 1960 was to have 16 lanes of 5 pin downstairs and 16 lanes of 10 pin upstairs. 1976 there were more people / baby boomers drinking beer than bowling 10 pin so they covered the approach area and concourse into a lounge.

### AU: When did the first live bands play at the RR?

RR: I would say late 70s... I have early pictures

### AU: What does the room offer for a touring band?

RR: Professional PA and Lighting. Multi track and Multi Cam recording. Back line and sound tech. 115 capacity

### AU: Contact for the Rainbow Room? Where can people find out more information on booking etc...?

RR: Dave Rutherford [rainbowroom@shaw.ca](mailto:rainbowroom@shaw.ca) No Website only Facebook. YouTube channel Rainbow Room Loungee with two e's.

### AU: Do you have regulars for live touring bands?

RR: Every band is different, but we do have people that show up for certain styles of music. We bring in all genres of music.

### AU: What other kind of shows are put on in this space?

## BACKSTAGE PASS - VENUE PROFILE

that show couches and coffee tables, so I don't think at the beginning they had bands. Maybe started with canned music.

RR: Birthday Parties, Staff Parties, Weddings, Anniversaries, Pool table, darts.. Anything entertainment.

### AU: Memorable nights?

RR: All the shows are memorable. Some of the less well-attended shows are the best.

### AU: Is the area / city supportive of live music?

RR: If they know about it, yes. They seem to support the bigger concerts better than the bar scene, but I think that may be because they get more newspaper and radio advertisements.

### AU: Future plans for the venue?

RR: Outdoor patio and food service. Reservation only dining. Live recording studio for touring bands to help them market themselves and help them become successful.

### AU: Parting thoughts?

RR: We've had a great 16 years setting the stage at the Rainbow Room and we are looking forward to the next 16 years.

**The Rainbow Room is located at 3752 4th Ave, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4H8**

**John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography**



# BUSINESS PROFILE

## Coven Body Arts

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

DM: My name is Deanna Mae, most people know me as Dee. I am most infamous for being the go-to-girl in Calgary if you want to get stabbed, particularly infants and children. Of course I mean pierced, I don't actually "stab" people. I do cut people, though.

### AU: Give us a brief history of your business, who are you and what are you all about?

DM: My business, Coven Body Arts is new to Calgary and the body modification scene but I myself am not. I have been piercing in the city for 20 years now, working and managing some of the most well-known piercing studios in Calgary. I spent that time expanding my skill set and building an amazing clientele.

I have experience in all types of body piercing and specialize in infant and children's ear piercing as well as below-the-belt piercings and scarification. I also recently started offering SmileGems at the studio as well.

My new space is dedicated exclusively to giving people the most comfortable and positive piercing experience possible. I have created a studio that makes people feel at home and welcome which is particularly ideal for the parents who bring their children into the studio to see me.

**AU: You are in a very unique building and in**



**a very unique neighborhood, What can you tell us about the history of it and any significance to Inglewood?**

DM: Aah yes the little pink house. Just so happens I used to work in this very house 16 years ago with the first tattoo and piercing shop I apprenticed at called Bee-Cool. The house was all one unit back then and

and since then has gone through a few different tenants and a few facelifts. The community of Inglewood was first established in 1875, the little pink house was built on 9th Ave, which is considered the first "main drag" in Calgary, in 1898. I couldn't find too much history on the house itself but I'm sure its got some stories and I definitely have some memories here and am making new ones now.

**AU: How has the piercing community changed over the years and what do you do to keep on top of it?**

DM: I could write paragraphs about how the piercing industry has changed in the 20 years I've been involved with it. Along with advancements in our sterilization methods and



the equipment we use, having disposable options being one of the latest, the biggest change we have seen is in the jewelry we work with. When I started piercing your choices were a ring or a barbell or stud with a plain ball, you were lucky if the bead had a gem in it! In today's world, you can literally get anything, you want a white gold dagger barbell for your nipple with a genuine blood red ruby hanging off the blade, you got it!

Jewelry options are literally endless and this opened the idea of body piercing to a whole new demographic, the endless dainty or big bling gold options allow clients of all ages to get pierced with pieces they are proud of and love to show off! Body piercing has become a fairly accepted practice and is no longer seen as something taboo.

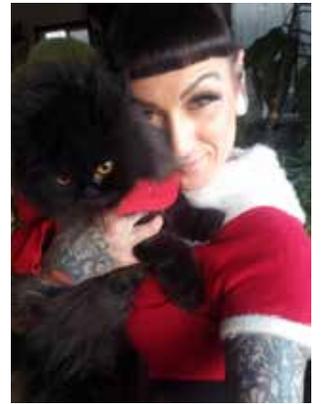
I keep myself on top of new ideas by attending the APP (Association of Professional Piercers) conference in Vegas as often as I can, I am a member of many Facebook forums that discuss new

techniques, advancements and body piercing education. I also take as many online courses and I can from some of the best in the industry and keep my Bloodborne Pathogens Training up to date and completed every year.

**AU: Why is it important to go to a specialized shop like yourself?**

DM: When deciding to have a new piercing or even a new piece of jewelry inserted, it is

imperative you go to someone who has your best interest in mind. That means the practitioner has educated themselves and kept themselves up to date on any new techniques or advancements made in the industry as well as providing you with implant quality jewelry manufactured from respected and well-known companies. Your body is a temple, treat it as such as and give it only the best!



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

DM: Everyone should know that I always wanted to be a singer so no matter what we are playing in the studio during your visit that I am probably going to be singing in your ear during your procedure. - I also have a jungle in my house and love to propagate my plants and

give them away at the studio

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

DM: I am so unbelievably happy in my new studio and can't thank all of my clients enough for making it so successful already! I live and breathe my work, it is my passion and my life.

<https://covenbodyarts.com/>



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## Conan

**Sounds from the foggy of northwest of England**

Words with John Davis on guitar and vox  
Interview by Erik Lindholm

**Absolute Underground: Good day sire, where are you now and tell us about the area you're in?**

JD: Well, I live in a small part of a place called the Wirral peninsula, which is just below Liverpool. And the area I live is called Tranmere. It's kind of an interesting area because there was a lot of Viking activity here. And so a lot of the towns sort of West Kirby and Thingby and West Irby and things like that had the "by" at the end of those words, which indicates some type of beach or bay. So yeah, there was once a lot of Viking activity here. So it's kind of a cool area. Where I live is just a normal, regular, boring, big, terraced house, nothing of excitement, really. But I'm sat in my office because I'm working from home today. Well I should be, but I'm doing this interview, which is much, much

better than my day job.

**AU: Who are we talking to? What are you best known for?**

JD: Okay, so my name is John. I am the vocalist and guitarist in heavy metal band Conan we're based over in the UK, but our drummer's from Ireland, and definitely not in the UK, with them being from the Republic.

**AU: Tell us about your latest album.**

JD: Well, we've got an album out called *Evidence of Immortality*. It's just been released on Napalm Records. And it's just come out

August 19th. Everything seems to be going well with it so far. The reviews have been good. We've had some good press. The labels seem happy with everything. And the songs themselves seem to be winning over some new fans and obviously, keeping our existing fan base happy. So yeah, we're delighted. Everything's been great with that so far, and we're just excited now to get out on the road and playing it more often.

**AU: How influential was the Conan the Barbarian movie on you growing up? Has there ever been a better movie made? Where you were fond of the Conan comic books as well? Do you worship Crom?**

JD: Well, no, I don't, I'm not religious at all. I know that was a joke question! But yeah, growing up, the movie itself had a lasting impression on me because it made me realize that it would be a cool name for a band. I didn't really read the *Conan* comic books though too much. Although, I do have a lot of the *Conan* books, the paperback books, and I've got the hardcopy version of the *Conan Chronicles* as well. Conan has definitely been an influence on me as much as that it's, made me give this band the name Conan. Yeah, wasn't really obsessed with it, to be honest.

**AU: Doom metal is a deceptive genre, lots of**

**great topics to explore, seemingly simple to write riffs for. What advice do you have for young doom players coming up to find their original sound?**

JD: Don't call yourself a doom player! That's my advice. If you call yourself a doom player, you'll be buying a Black Sabbath hat, playing through the same pedals that everyone else seems to play through, using the same amps that everyone else seems to want to play through, and before you know it, you'll sound just like everyone else. So just play what you want to play. Don't try and copy too much. And use yourself as a reference point, not other bands. That's my advice.

**AU: I enjoyed the music video for "Righteous Alliance," greatly so. A clear Ironbird at the start of the adventure! Did you play with it live? Who owned it previously? Where were you playing live in the video? I have so many questions.**

JD: Yeah, that guitar's mine, it was made by Tide Guitars. He's from Luxembourg when I first met him, a guy called David makes those guitars. I play with that live all the time. No one owned it before me. The live footage on the video is actually live clips that we had sent in from friends of ours. And they made it into a video. We're really happy with how it came out, the live footage from various different places.

**AU: "A Cleaved Head No Longer Plots," truer words perhaps not ever spoken. Can you share your inspiration for writing this song?**

JD: Well, yeah, the song the song lyrics themselves, you know, classic "triumph over adversity" style Conan lyrics. The riffs came from an idea that I was jamming during lock down. I was playing hooked up to my drum software on my computer, and I just came up with this idea and before you know it turned into a song. It's the opening track on the album. The song title itself I think was from a Viking story but I thought it sounded really cool so we used it.

**AU: Plans to bring the doom to Canada? What are your next goals with touring?**

JD: We're actually heading to Canada in two

## ABSOLUTE METAL

weeks. We start off in Montreal on the 26th, all the way through to Kelowna that we play on the on the sixth of November so yeah, we've got we've got a lot of shows coming up. We're excited to get over to Canada not had not been over there for a little while. Our shows there have always been good so we just we can't wait now to get to get on that plane and and to see everyone it's gonna be brilliant.

**AU: Your vid for "Volt Thrower" is one B on the keyboard away from being a death metal smash. Curious if you ever heard from members from Bolt Thrower on the release of this epic track! Or perhaps if this a name for a new electrician company in your local area.**

JD: It would be a cool name for an electrician actually! But and I am friends with Karl on Facebook and we've said hello a few times but no we've we've not spoken about the song "Volt Thrower" or the band Bolt Thrower at all. I think he's focused on his current project now, Memoriam. Of course Bolt Thrower, huge inspiration. One of the best bands ever to come from the UK in my opinion. And from that cool era in the 90s, where you know - Napalm Death, Fudge Tunnel, Both Throter, some really awesome bands that came through on Earache Records. So yeah, massive fan of Bolt Thrower - the actual song title came from the name of a Rat distortion pedal that I had made for me, and it was called "The Volt Thrower" so just copy that and use it. It's a cool song, I like it, and seems cool down well live as well.

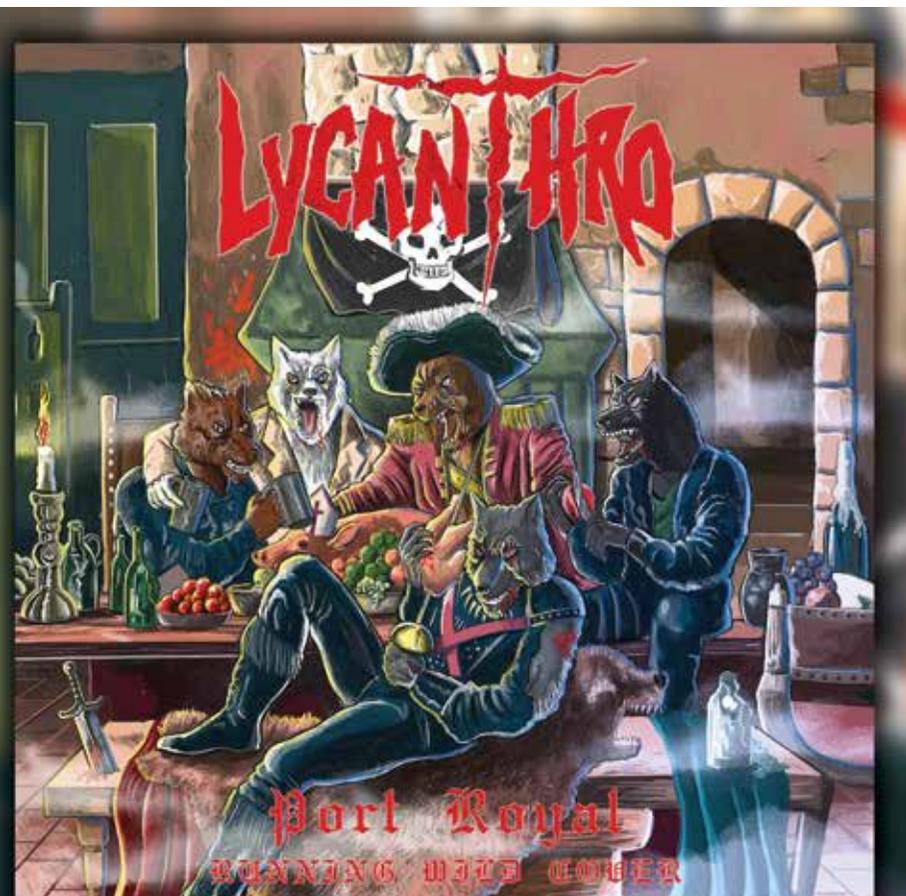
**AU: Appreciate your time today. Your final shoutouts to readers in northern Canada preparing for the cold to arrive:**

JD: Well, if my advice to you is a wrap up warm, and get your snow tires on!

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## New Year's Winterfest

**Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?**

CH: I'm Colton Hession, I've been a promoter with Journeyman Productions since 2018 and have been playing in bands since 2014. The current bands I play in are Thousand Arrows, Nameless King, Param-Nesia, and Death Preacher, and I've also done some fill in/guest work for bands from time to time! I'd like to think I'm best known for the bands I play in, but in reality I'm probably best known as "that guy at shows with Pokemon tattoos all over his arms."

**AU: Tell us about the genesis of the idea to start Winterfest?**

CH: The idea for Winterfest was to be like a celebration of the anniversary of the very first show I ever put on as a promoter. It was a stacked bill that packed out the Astoria in late January and while it wasn't billed as "New Year's Winterfest", it's what I consider to be the first edition of the festival. I always found that mid to late January is usually pretty dry as far as local metal shows go, so I've been trying to build up New Year's Winterfest as something significant to kick off the year of shows.

**AU: How long has the festival been running? What are some bands who have played previous years?**

CH: The precursor for what would become Winterfest took place January 20th, 2018, but the first official New Year's Winterfest was January 19th, 2019 at The Astoria. That year we had the mighty Apollyon (now known as Omnia Nihil)

headlining alongside some of Vancouver's finest. Other bands that have played over the years include Ancients, Pound, Gross Misconduct, The Hallowed Catharsis, and Scimitar, among many others.

**AU: Who are some of the bands playing this year's festival? Who are you most stoked to check out?**

CH: This year's headliners are the returning Pound from Seattle. They're without a doubt one of the

hardest working bands in the world right now, the list of shows and tours they did this past year would make bands of even the highest level cry. We like to consider Vancouver to be their second home and every time they come up here to play is better than the last.

Greylotus is another one we're incredibly stoked to have onboard, I wouldn't have even considered it a possibility logistically, but Ryan from Pound pulled some strings and got them onboard.

The rest of the bill is an all star lineup consisting of some of Vancouver's finest, spanning many different metal genres. This year we've got No Light Escapes, Hyperia, KOSM, Param-Nesia, and Crown of Madness, as well as a pre-party January 14th at Bully's featuring Death Machine, Svnear, Kayas, and Plaguedoctor!

**AU: What are some of the changes or improvements one can expect if attending this year's New Year's Winterfest?**

CH: This year I was really aiming towards having a great variety of styles on the lineup, but still relatively under the same umbrella where if someone was a fan of one of the bands playing, the rest of them would still appeal to them. And I feel I've accomplished that. We've got some mathcore, sludge, tech, melodic thrash, metalcore, prog, melodeath, dissonant death, you name it. When building a lineup of this many bands, I feel it's super important that the bands stand out from each other stylistically.

**AU: When and where does the event take place, what makes the location unique?**

CH: This year we're returning to the Rickshaw Theatre! It needs no introduction to anyone involved in the local scene, it's without a doubt one of the best venues in the city. The atmosphere and energy at every show there is unparalleled, it's gained an unbeatable reputation as the favourite venue both for fans to see shows at and for bands to play at. Every show there has a big show feel to it, we're so incredibly blessed to have a venue like this that supports the local music community as much as the Rickshaw does.

**AU: What's the atmosphere like at Winterfest?**

CH: In past years, the atmosphere at Winterfest has been at a whole nother level than just another local show. The bands have always pulled out all the stops to put on special sets for the festival. We've seen bands debut brand new songs, do special covers, play albums front to back, and many bands have brought in special guests onstage with them.

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

CH: From a fan's perspective, I'd love for the festival to one day be as big as festivals like AMF and Loud As Hell. But I'm just one guy, and organizing something of that scale on my own is simply beyond my abilities. But I want to build the Winterfest brand to be something that people are excited for each year. I want it to build a reputation where people get stoked leading up to lineup reveals. I want it to be something bands are clamoring to play, something bands

will book tours around. Something that becomes a yearly staple for the local scene and something that people will even come in from out of town for. And most importantly, I want it to be a festival that the bands who play it will look back on and say that it was one of their favourite shows they've played.

**AU: Words of wisdom for people planning to attend?**

CH: Do NOT sleep on Crown of Madness' opening set. They may have only just made their debut this past year, but even at their first show they performed as if they've been a band for years. You will not regret showing up early to catch their set.

**AU: What else do you want people to know about Winterfest?**

CH: There'll be a fundraiser show on December 10th at Bully's in New West featuring Of Modern Architecture, Jisei, Anarcheon, and Blood of the Phoenix. Tickets for Winterfest will be given out throughout the night so not only do you get to see an insanely sick lineup of bands, you get a chance to see Winterfest for free!

**AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?**

CH: Hopefully finally manage to finish playing Elden Ring.

**AU: Have you been naughty or nice?**

CH: My lawyers have advised me to not answer this question.

**AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?**

CH: A new wireless guitar system and socks. Lots of socks.

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read:**

CH: I haven't read any to tell the truth, so instead I pick a video game: *Elden Ring*

**AU: Movie you saw.**

CH: *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*

**AU: Album you heard.**

CH: *Through the Vale of Earthly Torment* by Truent

**AU: Band you saw live.**

CH: Bodysnatcher at Modified Ghost Fest

**AU: Best local band deserving of more recognition?**

CH: Thirteen Goats

**AU: The thing that blew your mind the most in 2022.**

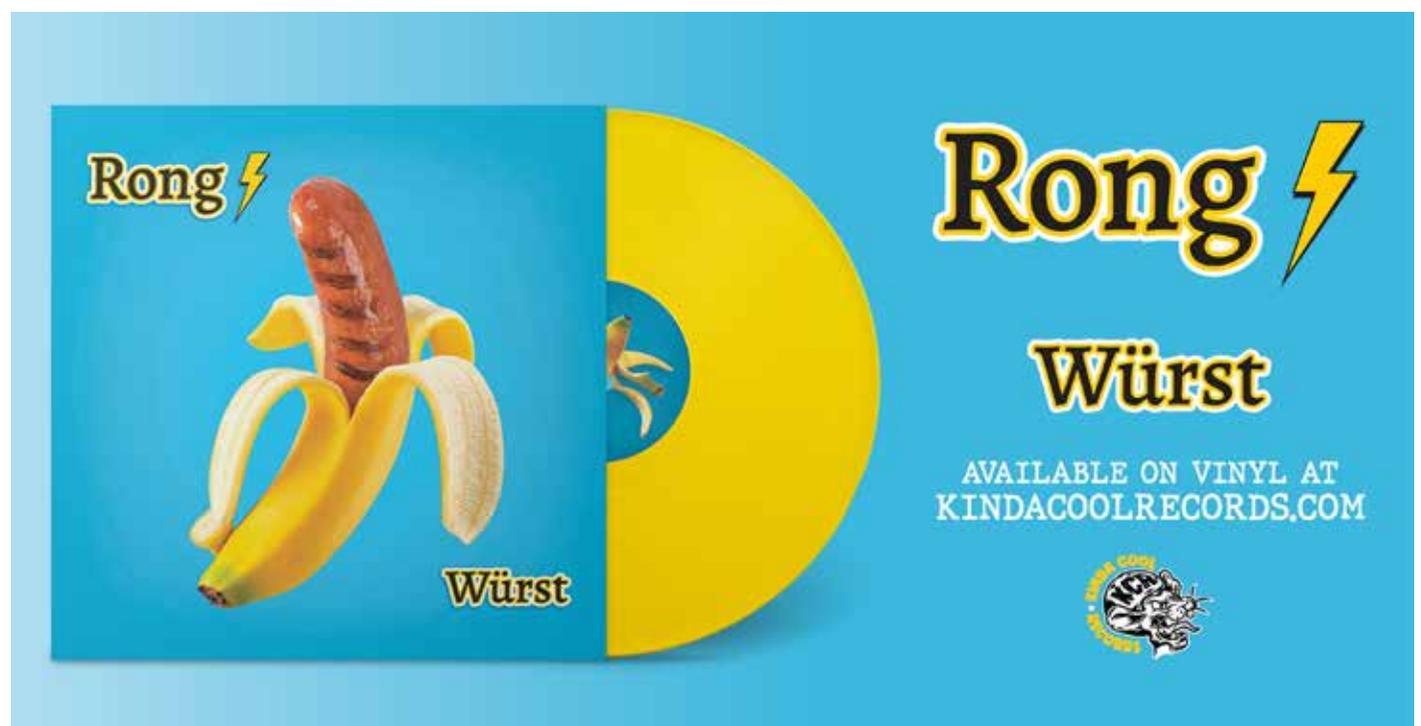
CH: Getting to play on tour for the first time this past summer. Truly an unforgettable experience and I met some of my new favourite people while on the road.

**AU: Where can people learn more info about Winterfest online?**

CH: Official Facebook: [facebook.com/NewYearsWinterfest](https://facebook.com/NewYearsWinterfest)

Tickets: [eventbrite.ca/e/new-years-winterfest-2023-tickets-468216436967](https://eventbrite.ca/e/new-years-winterfest-2023-tickets-468216436967)

Event page: [facebook.com/events/443129787941180](https://facebook.com/events/443129787941180)





## Michael Goldberg - Wicked Game

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

MG: Well, my name is Michael Goldberg. I've been writing about rock & roll since I was a teenager in the Sixties, and began writing about punk rock as soon as there was punk rock. I was into the sixties garage bands like the 13th Floor Elevators and the bands on Lenny Kaye's Nuggets album like The Standells and the Shadows of Knight and the Vagrants. I dug the Stooges from their first album and the New York Dolls.

I founded the first Internet rock magazine, *Addicted To Noise*, in late 1994 and that was a big deal. We covered the Ramones and did retrospective pieces on the MC5. We covered Patti Smith and Lou Reed and Spoon and lots of underground bands as well as popular musicians like R.E.M. and Neil Young. I was included in Newsweek's 1995 "Net 50" list of "the 50 People Who Matter Most on the Internet."

Before that I was a senior writer/West Coast music editor at *Rolling Stone* for a decade. This

year I had two books published, *Wicked Game: The True Story of Guitarist James Calvin Wilsey* (HoZac) and *Addicted To Noise: The Music Writings of Michael Goldberg* (Backbeat Books), which is a collection of my best features, profiles, interviews and essays of the past 47 years. Some of the artists covered: Ramones, Sex Pistols, Crime, the Clash, Sleater-Kinney, Flipper, Flamin' Groovies, Sly Stone, George Clinton, James Brown, Patti Smith, Lou Reed and others. The editor of Americana Highways online magazine wrote that my Wilsey book was "the rock & roll book to read this year."

From when I was 12 or 13 I dug everything about rock music. How it was written, how it was recorded, how it was played, who the musicians were and what their lives were like, the music business and how it worked. I've always loved hanging out in the recording studio while musicians were recording. As a teenager I got my way into studios to

watch the country-rock band Clover record in San Francisco and Stoneground record in Hollywood. I was in the studio when Joe Strummer and Mick Jones recorded their vocals for "Safe European Home" at the Automatt in San Francisco. That song, in the studio, played at max volume, sounded like the best song I'd ever heard. It was incredibly exciting to be there.

**AU: What were your early exposures and experiences with punk rock?**

MG: I think the Stooges and the MC5 were as punk as anything that came later and I was listening to them when their first albums came out. Even earlier I was into the 13th Floor Elevators and their brilliant "You're Gonna Miss Me," Love's "Message To Pretty," the Velvet's "Heroin," Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band's album *Safe As Milk*, the Mothers of Invention's album *Freak Out*. Punk before punk.

I saw the New York Dolls play a club in San Francisco called The Stone in 1973. They were tremendous. In 1976 the Ramones played in the small back room of the Savoy Tivoli in North Beach. I'd been digging their first album from when it was released and my wife and I saw them at the



Savoy Tivoli and I interviewed them poolside at a South of Market Street motel where they were staying. I interviewed Patti Smith in 1975 before *Horses* was released and before she came out here with her band to play a club called the Boarding House. My wife and I hung out

with her backstage after one of her shows. I saw Television at a small club when they first came here and dug Richard Hell and the Voidoids.

The Mabuhay Gardens were the first punk club in San Francisco—the first punk show there was in late 1976. I got to know Dirk Dirksen who booked the club and I could get in anytime I wanted. I saw Crime there in 1977 and the Avengers and the Mutants and the Dils and Jim Carroll and many others. When the Sex Pistols first single, "Anarchy in the UK," got here as an import I was into it and the same for the first Clash album, which you had to buy as an import. The San Francisco punk scene was a small community of musicians and fans. Fans became musicians and musicians were also fans. Until drugs got out of control it was a cool scene. I wrote about it in my Jimmy Wilsey book. I've always dug a wide range of music. I've always been interested in "experimental" music

and underground music. People talk about the punks hating the hippies, but in the '50s the Beats were the underground scene and in the '60s in San Francisco there was the counterculture and then by the mid-'70s the punk scene and later post-punk and indie and grunge. On a certain level it's all the same. It's young people rebelling against the status quo and music is a potent tool for doing that.

**AU: What started you on your path to being a writer?**

MG: I was a good writer starting in elementary school. And I loved to read. I read Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* when I was in junior high school, maybe even earlier. I read tons of books. I was always reading. From a young age I read rock reviews in the San Francisco Chronicle and there was a March 1966

cover story on Bob Dylan in *Ramparts* magazine by Ralph J. Gleason that I read. And I started digging rock music when I was 12 years old. My dad hated rock music so that was probably a factor—if he didn't like it, it had to be good. In 1967 the first issue of *Rolling Stone* was published. A friend and I used to go to Sausalito every week because the man we called the "poster guy" would come around every Tuesday afternoon with the new psychedelic poster for

rock shows at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco, where the psychedelic bands like Big Brother and the Holding Company and the Quicksilver Messenger Service played. And he would go to all these stores and get them to put a poster in the window and we could put our names on the back of the posters so that when they took them down the next week they would give them to us.

So we went into Tides Bookstore one week and there was this new rock newspaper, *Rolling Stone*. We stood in the store and read pretty much the entire first issue. After that I bought every issue and soon I subscribed. At that point there were a couple of other rock magazines. *Crawdaddy* and *Mojo Navigator* and at some point there was *Bomp!* and *Creem*. But *Rolling Stone* as soon as it appeared was the one everyone read 'cause it had the latest music news and great interviews and features on all these musicians and bands I cared about like the Rolling Stones and Michael Bloomfield and the Beatles and the Who and Captain Beefheart and the MC5 and, well you name it. So given my love of writing and rock music, I decided early on I wanted to be one of the *Rolling Stone* writers covering the bands I dug. That became a goal when I was 14 or 15 and starting to think about what I might want to do with my life.

**AU: Tell us how you came to work for *Rolling Stone* and what your duties were.**

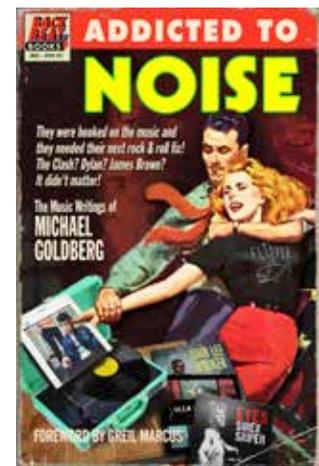
MG: I was a senior writer and west coast music editor at *Rolling Stone* for nearly ten years. How did I get the job? Well I wrote for any place that would print my writing for nine years. Weekly newspapers, daily papers, country music magazines, general interest magazines, rock magazines. As time went on I was getting into *Esquire* and *Downbeat* and *Musician*, *New Musical Express* and *Rolling Stone*. The editor, Jim Henke, that I wrote for at *Rolling Stone* liked my reporting and writing and when they needed to hire a music writer, I'm the guy he hired. But it took nine years to get the job from when I started writing professionally about music and musicians and the music

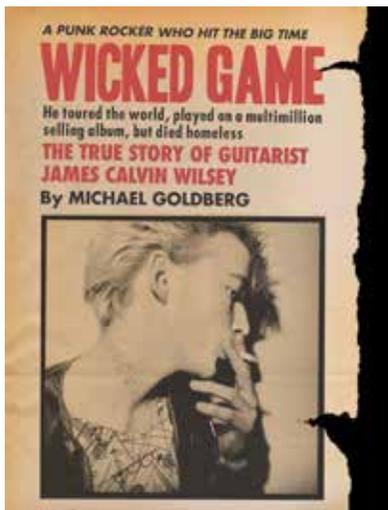
business in 1975. My job was to profile musicians, write news stories and features and trend pieces and investigative stories about various aspects of the music business—ticket scalping, for instance. I did a piece on the rise of independent record companies like Slash and 415—I reported that piece in 1983, as I recall. I reported music news and did the occasional extended Q/A interview. I did a Q/A interview with the San Francisco concert entrepreneur (as he liked

to refer to himself, rather than "promoter") Bill Graham and another with Motown Records founder Berry Gordy Jr. I also did stories about the mob infiltrating the record business. I wrote cover stories on Live Aid, Stevie Wonder, James Brown and others. I was really happy to get my editor to go for a story about what I called "post-punk" about Black Flag and the Replacements and Husker Du and Flipper and the Minutemen.

**AU: What can you tell us about the online magazine you founded called *Addicted To Noise*?**

MG: I left *Rolling Stone* around the summer of 1993 and began developing what would be the first web music magazine, which launched Dec. 1, 1994 with the poster artist Frank Kozak on our virtual cover. For our second issue I went to Australia to interview R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe and I put together a R.E.M. cover package that included my Stipe interview, an excerpt from Denise Sullivan's oral history of R.E.M., a long Q/A interview I did with the group's producer Scott Litt about the making of the album *Monster*, and a story I wrote about seeing R.E.M. in Sydney, Australia, hanging out with them and how their music had evolved into what Stipe called "waves of pulsating noise." That was one way you could utilize the unlimited space of an online magazine. I'd never seen a print magazine run so many words on one group. That issue also had an interview with Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, a five-story MC5 package, an interview with Mike Watt (who had been in the Minutemen) and a brilliant piece by rock critic Bill Wyman about the unwritten rules of reviewing a new Rolling Stones album subtitled: *Thoughts on the American Rock & Roll Hype Machine*. Plus columns by Dave Marsh, Greil Marcus, Bill Wyman, David Was and Michael Goodwin, 10 album reviews with sound samples, a live review by Dave Marsh, a book review section and a guide to cool music sites on the Web. *Addicted To Noise* and *Hotwired* were the first two web magazines. *Hotwired*





launched a few weeks before *Addicted To Noise*. No one had ever done anything like what we were doing. You could listen to 45-second samples of three or four songs on an album that was reviewed. We included song excerpts in feature stories. We were the first online magazine to stream an entire album in advance of release (Neil Young's *Broken Arrow*). It was a very exciting time. Joey Ramone wrote road reports for us.

**AU: Please tell us all about the latest book you wrote called *Wicked Game: The True Story of Guitarist James Calvin Wilsey*.**

MG: Jimmy Wilsey was the bass player for the Avengers, the great San Francisco punk band. He was also a songwriter and co-wrote the group's best known song, "We Are the One." He wrote most of the music; Penelope Houston wrote most of the words. The other guys also contributed. Soon after the Avengers broke up in 1979, in late 1980 Jimmy and Chris Isaak co-founded the second version of Silverstone, with Jimmy playing lead guitar. He was responsible for creating the group's distinctive sound, which leaned heavily on his guitar work, which favored reverb, tremolo and extensive use of the whammy bar. Jimmy also wrote and played the guitar intro and all the other guitar parts in the song "Wicked Game," which became a top ten hit in ten countries including the US. Jimmy was a key reason the song became a major success. Sadly, Jimmy became a heroin addict and, in 2018, after being homeless for about three months, died of organ failure. I had become friends with Jimmy back in the early '90s. After he got heavy into drugs I lost touch with him. But when he died and there were no obituaries written about him, I wrote a lengthy piece for *Rolling Stone* about him and then decided to write a book about him. His story is tragic, but it's also very interesting and the book, in addition to being a biography of Jimmy, is the story of the San Francisco punk scene, of the Avengers, of Silverstone/Chris Isaak, of how "Wicked Game" became a hit, and, really, the dark side of the music business.

I spent over three years researching and writing the book. I spoke family members, friends, lovers, music business folks he worked with, musicians

he worked with—over 60 people. Plus I had over 4 hours of interviews I did with Jimmy and another 3 hours from a writer who did the last interview with him before he died. And I had 10 hours of interviews I'd done with Chris Isaak over the years. Additionally I'd been in the SF scene in the late '70s and covered Silverstone/Chris Isaak during the '80s and early '90s. I met Jimmy in 1982 and got to know him; we became friends and hung out in '91 and '92. So I was the right person to write a book about him. I'm donating 25% of my book royalties to Jimmy's son Waylon, who is a teenager in college.

**AU: What made you choose this particular musician to research? What made Jimmy Wilsey so unique in your opinion.**

MG: Jimmy was an incredible guitar player. Not a speed demon guitar player. Actually, just the opposite. Jimmy called himself "the king of slow." His sound was exquisite. He drew on such great guitarists as Scotty Moore, Duane Eddy, Link Wray, Hank B. Marvin of the Shadows, Don Rich of Buck Owen's Buckaroos, James Burton, Keith Richards and George Harrison to create a guitar sound all his own. It was often dark and haunted, as if the emotional pain he struggled to overcome was expressed through his playing. I didn't want him to just vanish. Most people are familiar with the song "Wicked Game." It's instantly identifiable due to the opening two guitar notes that Jimmy plays and the way he plays them. But most people don't know who plays those notes. I wanted to make it possible for people to know who played them.

**AU: Avengers are one of my favorite punk bands. What was it about them that was extra special when they were first starting out?**

MG: They were a real band. Greg Ingraham and Danny Furious were high school friends and played in bands together. Jimmy was a real team player and he and Danny were a terrific rhythm section. Penelope has a tremendous voice and was a great lyricist from the moment she started writing lyrics. She was a natural. She's always had a very powerful stage presence. They wrote great songs. "We Are the One," first played live in 1977, has stood the test of time. Here we were talking about it 45 years later. It's a classic. And there are a bunch of other songs that kill. Live they were a hurricane wiping out a town. As I wrote in the Wilsey book, "Ingraham, on guitar, leveled everything in his path. Johnny Ramone meets Johnny Thunders as the world burns to black dust. Anselm Kiefer as punk guitarist."

**AU: What was the San Francisco scene like back**

**then?**  
MG: The punk scene in 1977 was small community of outcasts who were after something different from both the '60s counterculture and the mainstream straight man-in-the-grey-flannel-suit husband/wife/two kids in the suburb deal. There were a lot of art students who joined or formed punk bands and made punk their art form of choice. That was the case for Jimmy and Penelope and Danny Furious and members of a bunch of other San Francisco punk bands. It was cheap to live in SF in 1977 and 1978. You could rent a three bedroom apartment for around \$200 and if five people shared it, that was \$40 a month for rent. At first there was just one club for punk bands to play in the SF: the Mabuhay Gardens on Broadway. There would always be musicians in the audience as well as on the stage. A small group of rock critics and photographers would hang out at the club. The musicians all knew each other. At first you could fit the entire punk scene inside the Mabuhay. And Vale started *Search & Destroy* magazine which covered the scene in detail. Soon there was also *Damage* magazine and *Punk Globe*. So the scene had it's own media, and those magazines were totally sympathetic to the scene. Within a month or so of the Avengers starting, *Search & Destroy* ran huge features on the Avengers. It was a really cool scene at first. Of course before too long hard drugs entered the picture and that pretty much destroyed it. Not to say that all the musicians were using hard drugs – they weren't. But enough were and it just fucked things up, as hard drugs always do.

**AU: How popular were the Avengers at their height of fame?**

MG: They could pack the Mabuhay with maybe 400 people. Within the SF scene, they were stars. They had 100s of fans who loved them – they're more popular today than they were back in the late '70s. Now they can tour the US and Europe. During their initial two years together, they only played on the West Coast, mostly SF and LA. But after they broke up in mid-'79, an EP with "The American in Me" was released and sold 10,000 copies, according to one of the owners of White Noise, the label that released it. So they were pretty popular.

**AU: What is the legend about the Avengers absolutely crushing the Sex Pistols live?**

MG: It's not a legend, it's what a bunch of people who were in the audience and saw the Avengers and saw the Pistols thought, and still think. The Pistols were great. I was right up near the stage and they killed it. But so did the Avengers and unlike the Pistols, who were fed up with touring and playing and with each other, the Avengers were probably at the peak of their powers. And they had everything to prove, and if you watch/listen to the fury of "We Are the One" and

then watch/listen to the Sex Pistols set, I think the Avengers just blow away the Pistols. Steve Jones can't match Ingraham's guitar. And while Sid Vicious' amp was turned down (I believe) 'cause he was so fucked up, Jimmy was synched with Danny Furious, Greg's playing killed and Penelope was riveting.

**AU: What were you most surprised to learn about your subject when researching the book?**

MG: I just didn't realize how fucked up Jimmy was due to the drugs. And I didn't know he'd been using heroin since 1985. I also don't think I'd realized how important he was to the Silverstone/Chris Isaak sound. I just hadn't thought about that. I didn't know he wrote the music to "We Are the One," always my favorite Avengers' song. I always dug his guitar playing in Silverstone, and



around for over 15 years. Todd is a great guy and I've had the best time working with him on it. He sells most of his records and b books directly from the HoZac Records website and subsequently musicians and writers make more money 'cause the money doesn't have to be split with a bookstore or record store. You can order the Wilsey book at the HoZac Records website.

**AU: What other books have you published?**

MG: My newest book is *Addicted To Noise: The Music Writings of Michael Goldberg* (Backbeat Books). It's a collection of profiles, features, essays and interviews I've done over the past 47 years. Artists included: Patti Smith, the Ramones, Lou Reed, Laurie Anderson, Sleater-Kinney, the Clash, the Sex Pistols, Frank Zappa, Tom Waits, the Flamin' Groovies, Van Morrison, Rick James, George

Clinton, Sly Stone, James Brown, Crime, Devo, Flipper, Neil Young and many, many more. Those stories appeared in publications including *New York Rocker*, *Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, *New Musical Express*, *Esquire*, *Addicted To Noise*,

*Neumu*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Berkeley Barb*, *Downbeat* and many other publications. The great rock critic Greil Marcus wrote the foreword and I'm so pleased about that. This book really sums up my entire career as a music journalist. I'm really proud of it. The cover is very cool. It's based on the original 1953 cover of William Burroughs' "Junkie," and was designed by the killer designer, Todd Alcott.

I've also written three novels, *True Love Scars*, *The Flowers Lied* and *Untitled*. They're rock & roll novels. Each stands on its own, but they form a trilogy. They deal with the end of the '60s and the lead up to the advent of punk. A lot of *The Flowers Lied* is about the narrator's observations of two rock critics. At one point the first New York Dolls album is released and he listens to it at the apartment the two rock critics share in Sausalito, CA and he's just blown away by it. The books are written in a slang style true to the times, and there's a lot of sex, drugs and rock & roll.

**AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items?**

**Book you read:**  
MG: Some books I really dug are *Memphis Rent Party: The Blues, Rock & Soul in Music's Hometown* by Robert Gordon, *Freak Out! My Life with Frank Zappa* by Pauline Butcher, *Folk Music: A Bob Dylan Biography In Seven Wicked-game!* Total DIY company run by Todd Novak, who is a major punk and rock music fan. The company is going strong and has been

**AU: Movie you saw.**  
MG: *20,000 Days On Earth*, directed by Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard, which is about Nick Cave. *The Bureau*, a French political thriller series created by Eric Rochant.

**AU: Album you heard.**  
MG: *Dust*, The Rubs – totally amazing album.

**AU: Band you saw live.**  
MG: Oumou Sangare  
**AU: Best local band deserving of more recognition?**

MG: The Rubs – The new album is so good.  
Flying Circus -- they were an amazing rock & roll band that played in the Bay Area in the late '60s and early '70s. Recently I got ahold of an album's worth of demos they recorded in the '60s and they're just great. I've been listening to them for the past few months. Flying Circus should have released albums – they were really good.

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

I'm also a photographer and I photographed many musicians over the years, from Frank Zappa to Oumou Sangare. Thirty or so of my photos are in the *Addicted To Noise* book. I'm also an animal rights activist and I don't eat dead animals or their secretions. We have right to raise and kill animals for food. We do not need to eat dead animals to survive.

**AU: What other projects are on the horizon for you?**

MG: I'm working on a book that will be published next year but I can't say anything about it right now. I'm hoping some of your readers will check out my Wilsey book and my *Addicted To Noise* collection. And my novels. Those books should keep them busy for a while. I contribute to a music magazine called *Rhythms* that is published in Australia and has online and print versions. I just reviewed the new Bob Dylan *Philosophy of Modern Song* book for them. And the Tom Waits interview from my *Addicted To Noise* book was recently excerpted at the *Pop Matters* website.

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

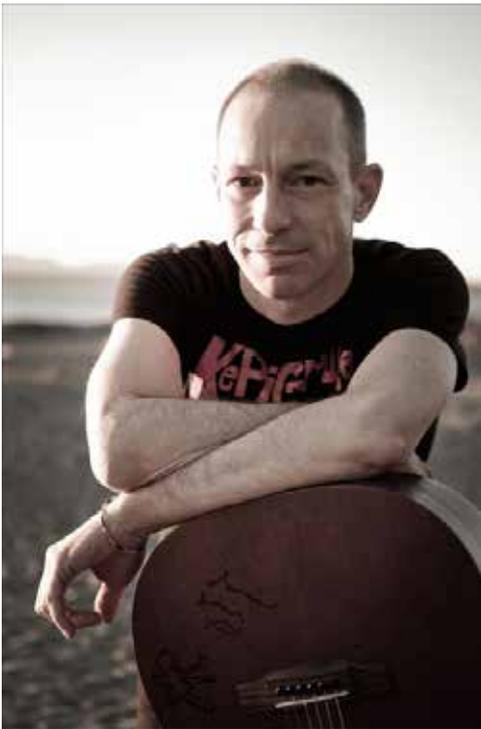
MG: Thanks for reading this interview. I appreciate your interest and I hope you'll check out my books. I think you'll find them of interest. If you are into punk, you will definitely want to read the Wilsey book. And there are a lot of stories in the *Addicted To Noise* book you'll likely dig.

**AU: How do people find you online?**

MG: I have a blog, [www.daysofthecrazy-wild.com](http://www.daysofthecrazy-wild.com) where I have been posting about my books. An old site of mine, <http://www.neumu.net>, is still alive. It was a mostly underground/indie rock site and there's a lot of good stuff there. I'm on Facebook here: [www.facebook.com/michael.goldberg.792303](http://www.facebook.com/michael.goldberg.792303)

**Photo Credit: Michael Goldberg**

# PIRATES PRESS RECORDS



## Kepi Ghoulie Full Moon Forever With The Grooviest Ghoulie

Interview by Chuck Andrews

### Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you best known for?

KG: "Who are you?" reminds me of when Narduar asked Alice Cooper, "Hey Stoopid, who are you?" I am Kepi Ghoulie, a singer/songwriter who started with and started the band Groovie Ghoules, then did some solo stuff, the Haints (an Americana spinoff of the Groovie Ghoules) and also played bass in Chixdiggitt for a spell.... I have put out over 22 records, played all 50 states, and a whole bunch of countries! I also like art, cats, goats, bats, and coffee!

### AU: Where are you from?

KG: I live in a place called kepiland, a self created nation of one... all are welcome, especially cats! My human vessel was hatched in Cape Cod, Mass, and I have dwelled the majority of this round in Northern California, with some Berlin, LA, and AZ thrown in for flavor...

### AU: What's the music scene like there?

KG: The music scene in kepiland consists mostly of me doing a live stream on my phone/facebook friend page, every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. Pacific time.... I have done 138 weeks in a row without missing a single date... I also posted a one minute "audio pick me up" on social media every single day of the pandemic... at least 7-800 in a row! I live in the woods above San Francisco, so my closest music scenes are the thriving and friendly communities of Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area... we just played the *Fun In The Dark* album in its entirety six times in a row on a small west coast tour! It was fun!

### AU: What's your association with the infamous Lookout! Records?

KG: My association with the infamous Lookout Records was being the first band signed after Larry left, and is much akin to being a passenger on the Titanic.... luckily I am Rose, I floated off on a door, and survived...

### AU: Did being on Lookout! really boost your career?

KG: Being on Lookout definitely helped at the start, and it was fun at the start... sometimes multiple bad decisions are made in life... here we are! Yay!

### AU: Favourite Lookout! band?

KG: Since this is in Canada, I will say the Smugglers! Actually I really love the Smugglers, one of the greatest live bands of all time, still a fave, great songs, great people! I thank the Queens for giving us our first US tour, and Mr T Experience for taking us to Europe for the first time and giving us four tours! I am very grateful for much of the Lookout experience...

### AU: Favourite Lookout! tour?

KG: Favorite tour while on Lookout HAS to be Muffs/Chixdiggitt/Groovie Ghoules .... it was ridiculously fun beyond explanation, can never be repeated, and I think it was so magic because we all WERE and REMAIN friends.... that is the best thing about rock n roll.... 2nd place would be AN ACTUAL LOOKOUT tour which consisted of Mr T Experience, CUB (Ooh, another favorite, doh!) and the Ghoules touring from Green Bay to NYC for a festival! In NYC we played with even MORE Lookout bands (Smugglers, Hi Fives, Pansy Division) ... It was my first time to NYC and I saw Joey Ramone three days in a row.... and Dee Dee, and Lemmy, and we played in a supermarket with Elliot Smith! Thanks for jogging my memory, life is good, CUB is GREAT!

### AU: You are re-releasing all of the Groovie Ghoules and Kepi Ghoulie solo albums through Pirates Press Records correct?

KG: YES! Pirates Press is doing EVERYTHING and I am stoked! We will start with *World Contact Day* and *Born In The Basement*, TWO new Kepi things, and then the long out of print Groovie Ghoules *Travels With My Amp*, the last record we did for Lookout!

### AU: What is your favourite album or albums out of all of those?

KG: The records I listen to the most these days are *Kepi Goes Country*, *Lost and Loving It*, and *I Bleed Rock n Roll*, because I love the productions.... The records are my children, I love them all... I have never made a record during a trend or anything, so I love them all... The Ramones and The Rolling Stones and Chess records have inspired me to TRY and make music that exceeds trends or time.... keyword "try."

### AU: Will the re-releases be different from the originals at all?

KG: The re-releases will definitely have new artwork, because so much of the old is lost or on zip drives and obsolete tech, etc... some e.p.s might get expanded into full length... the thing to know is that this is ART NOT COMMERCE... everything will be done with passion and I will not put out a thing that I would not buy myself.

### AU: Are you going to be doing a tour to specifically promote these re-releases?

KG: Tour wise there are NO RULES... we just did a *Fun In The Dark* tour... If we go to a town and the promoter wants a Kepi Show, done! *Fun In The Dark* the next day? sure! acoustic Saturday? Ok! Kepi for kids matinee Sunday? Let's do it! I want 200 date tours, I want a residency in YOUR town, not Vegas.

### AU: Do you remember when Groovie Ghoules toured with Chixdiggitt! in the 90s?

KG: I remember touring with Chixdiggitt yes! I had so much fun that I joined them on bass for about 7 years!!! Whee!! I remain an honorary member and third on the bass player bench.

### AU: When you guys both played in Nanaimo, BC I seem to remember that Chixdiggitt! made you do push-ups while they played "Henry Rollins is No Fun". Does this ring a bell?

KG: Nanaimo? Did somebody set off a smoke bomb or a tear gas bomb? I can't keep track of push ups, because like Henry Rollins, I often think about physical fitness.

### AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?

KG: Christmas this year? Acoustic shows on the 22 and 23rd in the above mentioned thriving markets! (see I don't lie) ... Christmas I might do a live stream if you ask nice, and I will spend Christmas with Georgia the Cat (See I love cats too, he is a person of his word).

### AU: Have you been

### naughty or nice?

KG: I am more nice than naughty, the world is naughty, I like nice.... If a woman asks me to be naughty, well that is my business.

### AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?

KG: Christmas wish list is hella tours, hella hangs with my honey, and people care about each other... I will make that my ongoing Christmas wish.

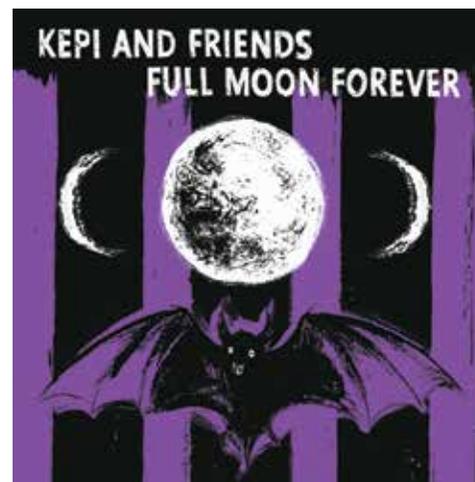
### AU: Give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read. Movie you saw. Album you heard. Band you saw live most in 2022.

KG: Best Book: The best book I read was a discourse on magic... (stay on the nice list people)  
Best Movie: Best movie I saw *Moonage Daydream*,  
Best Album: Schizophonics blew my mind musically.

Best local band deserving of more recognition: Hutch Harris of the Thermals deserves more recognition... He is one of my favorite songwriters, so original... Also please check out Gardening Not Architecture from Nashville.... so hard working and so deserving of EVERYTHING!

### AU: Thanks for taking the time to answer these! Final words for Canadian fans.

KG: Thank you for taking the time to ask me these questions. To Canada: Please know that I love you and that I would tour you every year if possible, can we make this happen please? do you know anybody? Also if I could handle the cold better I would have a vegan hot dog cart in Toronto with 32 toppings and we would look at art and go to the cinema everyday and we would go to the park and try to spot the albino squirrel and YOUR side of Niagara Falls is WAY better than our side and thanks for being nice to me! Cheers!





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## MX-80 Sound Unmarketable, Unclassifiable, and Too Loud

By Rich Stim

Jeff Armour: Drums  
Bruce Anderson: Guitar  
Rich Stim: Vocals, saxophone  
Dale Sophia: Bass  
Dave Mahoney: Drums

Unmarketable, unclassifiable, and too loud. MX-80 Sound was all three things when we walked into Gilfoy Sound Studio in 1976 to record *Big Hits*. The exciting and inspiring thing was that we didn't know it. Well, we knew we were too loud, but – isolated in southern Indiana – we naively thought what we were doing was going to end up in record store windows.

Keep in mind, this was 1976 when Peter Frampton, the Carpenters, and the Bee Gees ruled the airwaves, and the U.S. president hung out with the Allman Brothers. But we were cargo cultists with an “if we build it, they will come” mentality and refused to acknowledge our lack of commercial appeal. (That realization was soon to come.)

MX-80 originated as a trio and morphed into

various configurations (once presenting three drummers) and settling finally in 1976 on a five-person lineup. Bruce Anderson, the band's founder, and the only Hoosier in the mix, had

been the guitarist for several southern Indiana groups. When he formed MX-80 Sound, he had the option of cherry-picking gifted musicians from the Indiana University School of Music. Instead, he chose people like me and drummer Dave Mahoney with little experience and primitive chops. Bruce believed that if you gave somebody a guitar or drums and made them practice three hours a day for seven days a week, they would become what they aspired to be. What we didn't know was that we were victims of a musical form of Stockholm

syndrome, hostages to Bruce's musical vision of rock and roll, discordant harmonics, free jazz, and breakneck rhythms. So, we arrived at the studio enthusiastically clueless, and the owner greeted us with the mixing board already tweaked and ready for recording.

“These are the settings that the Beatles used,” said the studio owner, figuring if it was good enough for the four mop-tops, it was good enough for an obscure, abnormal-core Hoosier quintet. I remember thinking, “What are the settings that Blue Oyster Cult uses?” Bruce probably wanted Sonny Sharrock's settings; Dale might have liked John Cage's settings, Dave, Charlie Watts, and Jeff, Tony Williams. Fortunately, we brought a producer who shared our vision, Mark Bingham, a bandleader, songwriter, and an artist unafraid to take art to the extreme (he once appeared in a loincloth in a cage labeled Homo Sapien on the sidewalk in downtown Bloomington). Mark had recorded a few LPs at the same studio, along with the engineer, Mark Hood. The two

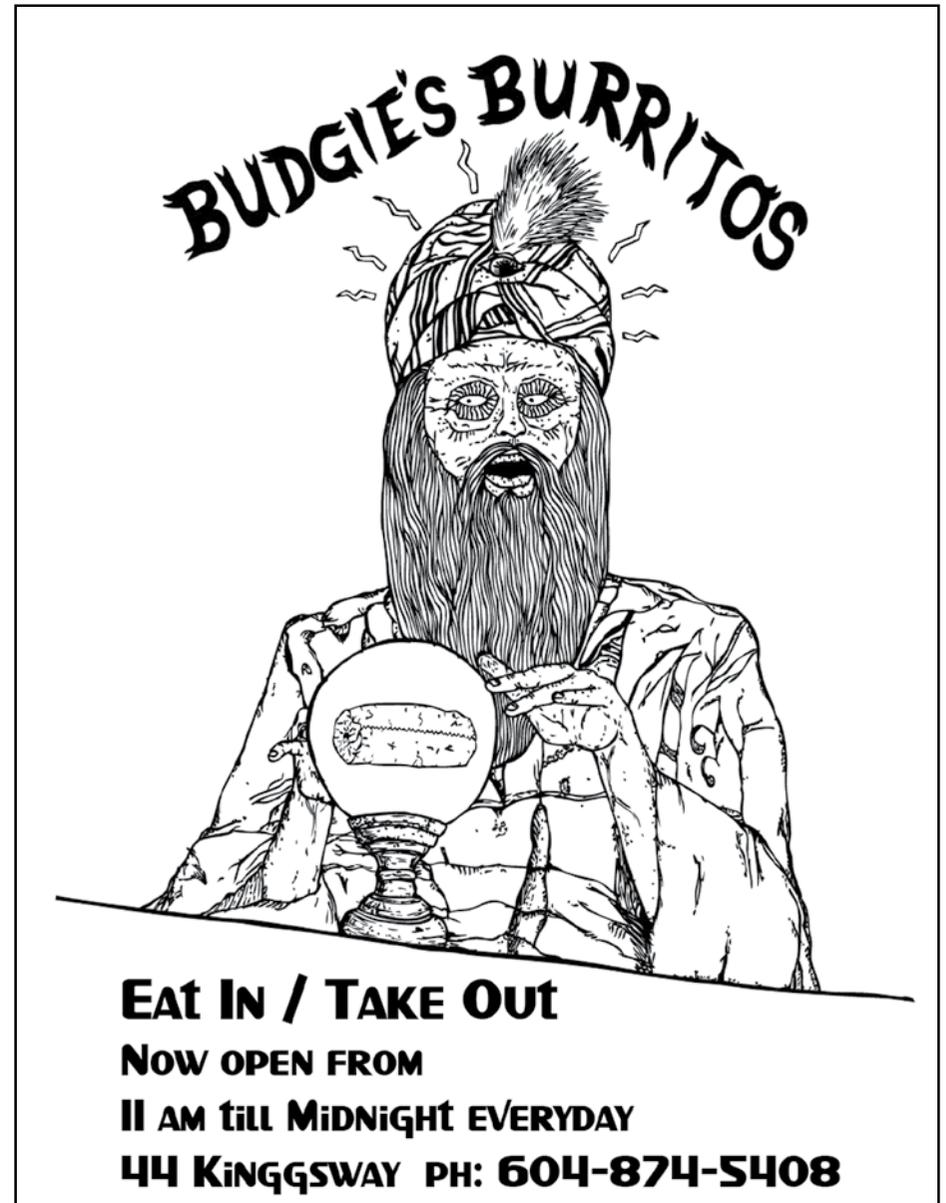
Marks steered the recording so that it captured MX-80's careening, reckless, structured-free-form non-euphonious melodies.

We set up, drank two pots of crank (Indonesian coffee), and raced through the tunes with little overdubbing. One oddity for me was that I could hear my voice. When we practiced in Dale's living room, my voice – piped through a small guitar

amp – was no match for Bruce's Reverse Firebird and Magnatone, Dale's Rickenbacker bass, and Acoustic amp, and the two pounding drummers.



I preferred not hearing my singing (and I think that was the preference of some of the people who later listened to the finished product). After a day of recording and mixing, we walked out of the studio early enough to beat the dinner crowd at Ladyman's, Bloomington's masters of Hoosier cuisine. We pressed up a batch of EPs and began a rogue marketing campaign with a series of fliers and a songbook meant to accompany the recording with original art from local artists, including former drummer Kevin Teare. I was working at the local newspaper, the Bloomington Herald Telephone, and had access to reams of generic clip art. That became the centerpiece of our nonironic whimsical graphic style. One of our packages made its way to music-influencer and Sounds writer Caroline Coon who gave *Big Hits* a positive review. Island Records A&R man Howard Thompson read the review and offered us a one-off LP deal (allegedly sneaking us past any corporate scrutiny by signing the contract while his boss, Chris Blackwell, was on vacation). The rest is history. Actually, the rest is obscurity. But it's a cozy obscurity in which we remain together and united in our unclassifiability. The remarkable thing about *Big Hits* is that it didn't sound like anything that was available when it was created in 1976 and doesn't sound like anything that's available forty-five years later. You can like the music or not, but you can't deny that *Big Hits* is a remarkable hat trick.



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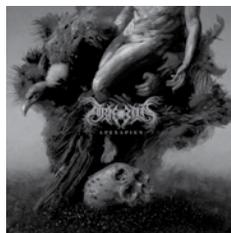
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## Atræ Bilis

Interview with guitarist David  
Stepanavicius  
By Ryan Dyer



Vancouver's ATRÆ BILIS are riding a wave of blackened bile-like momentum since releasing the acclaimed albums, 2021's *Apexapien*, and 2020's "Divinihility" EP. The band, an amalgamation of styles comparable to a Suffocation sandwich with Gorguts instead of your usual SPAM, is gearing up for a new release, though the road always beckons... I caught up with guitarist David Stepanavicius after their tour with WAKE to unravel more of the ingredients of Atræ Bilis.

**AU: For anyone who hasn't heard you before, how would you describe your sound and who are some of your main influences?**

AB: We play death metal. Most people consider it to be on the 'technical' spectrum of the genre. We try not to label what we do, but 'spiritually dissonant death' paints a pretty accurate picture. Sonically, you could imagine a soup of Suffocation, Morbid Angel and Gorguts. Lyrically, we're inspired by psychedelics and metaphysics.

**AU: Atræ Bilis is Latin for "black bile." On your metal encyclopedia page, it says the name is derived from the book *The Anatomy of Melancholy* by Robert Burton. Have any more literary influences made it into your work?**

AB: Too many to mention. All of our releases are conceptual, meaning that each song tells a small chapter of the album's full story. "Divinihility" is about being reborn as sentient maggot inside

your own corpse. The spark came from reading *Bardo Thodol* (also known as The Tibetan Book of the Dead). *Apexapien* is about a seer opening up their third eye to 'see' cancer, before absorbing it, transforming into a walking, wheezing malignant mass. The spark came from reading *The Third Eye* from Lobsang Rampa. We're also interested in the philosophy of altered states, spiritual pursuit and anything that's nauseating, anatomically. A short-list of stimulating writers, to us anyways, include Terence and Dennis McKenna, Douglas Hofstadter, The Three Initiates, Michael Pollan, James Gleick, Michael Talbot, H.P. Lovecraft etc.

**AU: You hail from Australia. I think like your music, having people from different backgrounds adds some spice to the mix. Are there any Australian bands or points of view that come out in the song writing?**

AB: Luka is from Belgrade in Serbia as well. His musical ideas are definitely spicy. It's an interesting question, I can't speak on Luka's behalf, but I'm positive our sound inherently has some 'Melbourne', or 'Australian' flavors, in the same way Finnish and Swedish bands have theirs too. During my teenage-hood, I felt like I was raised by Damaged's *Token Remedies Research*, Abramelin's *Abramelin*, Blood Duster's *Yeast* and demos from The Wolves. So in some capacity, my musical foundations were probably some bastardized under their influence. I'm no psychoanalyst so it's hard to be sure. What I am sure of though, is that there are too many bands from Australia that never reached the success they deserved. If internet streaming was as strong as it is now, back in the '90s and '00s, I'm sure the soundscape of extreme music would have a lot owing to Australia. It's just the sickest scene in the world as far as I'm concerned!

**AU: You recently did a few dates with WAKE including their hometown of Calgary where I saw you guys. How was this stint?**

AB: The shows with WAKE were incredible. We're very grateful that they invited us out to play their home release shows for *Thought Form Descent*, as it was the first time we got to Edmonton and Calgary crowds. The turnouts were rad and

actually Calgary felt more like a home show to us than a Vancouver show - we felt connected. The Palomino Smokehouse venue that we played there also sorted us out with a great meal. Thanks Palomino! We can't wait to head back.

**AU: You played the Modified Ghost Festival opening for Deicide. Tell us about that experience. Did you get to hang out with Glen?**

AB: The fest was awesome and Deicide was heavier than we could have imagined - It was actually scary how sick they were. There were no chats or hangs with Glen because we simply aren't worthy. We're a pack of chuds, man. Our set felt strong and the response to it was overwhelmingly positive. High vibes all around.

**AU: You are currently on 20 Buck Spin, who seem to be taking care of you guys well, recently releasing *Apexapien* with them. What is next on the horizon with them?**

AB: 20 Buck Spin has been fantastic to us. Please support all of the bands on the label because there isn't a single band at the label that doesn't rip. By the time this interview comes out we'll be in the middle of pre-production demos for the next album. Once we've finished those demos, we'll share them with 20 Buck Spin and then book studio time for the actual recording. They're total pros so we're not too worried about anything there. We're just excited to still be working with them.

**AU: Slam Worldwide has been useful for me in discovering some new brutal bands. I'd like to know, since your music video for "Open the Effigy" is on the page and has no doubt introduced many new fans to you, how does a band get on Slam Worldwide?**

AB: What's that famous Canadian quote? I think it was Gretzky who said "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Well, you just have to think about life like that. We do. We just emailed them and they gave us the rundown. If you want to know more about anything, a lot of the time you just



gotta ask.

**AU: I noticed you have a big list of new bands he is checking out. Has anyone influenced you recently which may impact the sound for your next album?**

AB: Not recently per se, as the album has been written. But we've been listening to a lot of Astronoid's new album *Radiant Bloom*, especially on the long drives between shows. I do hope that some of that sound rubs off on our next album because it's heavy as hell.

**AU: What is next on your "to-do" list for the band?**

AB: We have a couple of shows to play before the end of the year is out, and we're organizing more for early next year. You can expect us to be playing further from home on those runs which will be great. The sophomore album will be wrapped up, and who knows what then. We hope for a promotion cycle that'll make more friends and cool stories.

**AU: Last words and anything else you'd like to plug:**

AB: Thanks for the interview. Be kind. Be compassionate. Death metal is mankind's greatest monument.

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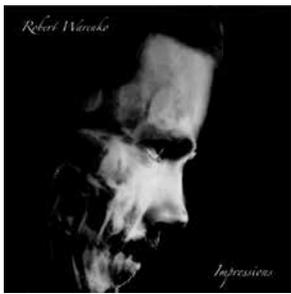
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# Absolute Album Reviews

## Impressions - Rob Warenko



I've been listening to so much new music today and *Impressions* by Rob Warenko sticks out as a masterpiece. Warenko is able to fuse his metal roots into every genre that he samples and makes it work. Melodic by nature, Warenko delivers impressive soul matched with beautiful guitars, atmospheric sounds and deep lyrics that are in the wake of bands like Opeth and The Devon Townsend Project.

His ability to portray blues comes forth in the title track with a country/western vibe that feels like it should have been recorded on a dusty porch in Louisiana.

Then there is "Autumn," a track that is heavily driven by a delicate piano delivery and once again paired with soft vocal patterns that pull it all together. His use of mix media, samples and eerie backing tracks gives this album a somber feeling, yet still very powerful and epic at times.

Rob Warenko's previous releases have been in different forms of metal, from epic to thrash to death, but *Impressions* has him exploring a totally new aspect of his creative genius.

Definitely check this out and if you are ready to expand your mind with some fusion in it's melodic bluesy form.

- Phill Metuzals

## Live On Ciut - Pick Your Side

A tape I snagged from Death By Digital (label from Ontario) is *Live On Ciut* by Pick Your Side. I had never heard of these guys but on the first listen I knew this was something that was worth a few plays at the very least.

The tape is a plain unlabelled standard black cassette, the case is clear and the insert is a well-cut black and white thick matte paper. Pretty standard, but the tracks themselves are what make this golden.

This is an offering of really "old-school" sounding grindcore with vocals and riffs that give off strong punk-influenced vibes. The sound is not exact but I am reminded of bands in the Vein of Siege. The recording quality is "raw but well done" and the percussion, strings and vocals can all be heard with clarity. Fans of late 80s and early 90s grind are sure to enjoy this. It was fun and I plan to give it a few more plays very soon. I don't have much else to say except that it was worth the few dollars I paid for the cassette and I will most likely snag more from these guys if it is available in the future!

-Devin J. Meaney

## Brainstem / Hoarder

After a night of tea and insomnia I felt the urge to work some energy out of my system. I loaded up YouTube looking for grindcore bands based out of Nova Scotia. After some brief searching I came to a two way split between two one man bands based out of Halifax. Hoarder is a one man grind band and Brainstem is a one



man death/grind project.

Clocking in at just over 10 minutes this split was short but it sure did help me crank out the excess gump-tion that I had stored in my brain and body.

Hoarder throws up five tracks featuring "Exalt the Macabre," "Shit's Fucked," "Green Necks," "Bulkhead," and "Nothing of Interest." Brainstem also has five tracks on this gnarly piece of chaos titled *Substance*, *Brainstem*, *Unbalanced*, *Braindamage* and *Delusion*.

Brought to a frenzy of head-banging I sat at my desk and consumed this pile of carnage as if it was a hearty meal after a day of intense labour. I will without question check out anything I hear from these guys in the future...and I would suggest this split to all fans of grind. Nova Scotia is my home...and it is always a pleasant find when I stumble upon some heaviness from the N.S. scene. Grind is not for everyone--but for those of us that enjoy indulging in such craziness this one is an instant win. In conclusion--you all should check these guys out. What are you, square?

-Devin J. Meaney

## Demo 2021 - Inopexia



Once again while on my journey through the wasteland that is the underbelly of YouTube I happened

to find something pretty cool. "Demo 2021" by Inopexia shrouds the listener in a barrage of short goregrind blasts absolutely filled with pitched watery vocalizations, tight guitars and percussion that absolutely destroys the cranium...and I'd honestly have it no other way. Hailing from Russia I can honestly say this isn't just standard goregrind. The production is top quality and although the demo is so short it still manages to make itself known as something that is deserving of a listen (or three). Although the instruments are done well I'd say the high point of this demo would be the vocals. I always love a watery vocal sound with my goregrind and gore-noise...and the vocals presented here by Inopexia are more than just passable...they are great!

Clocking in at under four minutes you might need to listen to this a few times before everything really sinks in. But without any doubt in my mind I can state that I'd happily check out anything from Inopexia in the future. The toilet bowl vocals really snag me...so I'd absolutely love to hear more!

-Devin J. Meaney

## The Black Halos - How the Darkness Doubled - Stomp Records 2022



Formed in the mid 1990s glam punks The Black Halos put out two stellar albums with the original lineup, went through a few changes and put out two more. Then they called it quits in 2009. *How the Darkness Doubled* sees the band putting out not only a new album, returning to live performing, but also three of the original guys getting back together again. One of which has been and is still performing with Michael Monroe of Hanoi Rocks fame (who of is featured on a track here).

*HTDD* starts off with a punk rock banger on "A History of Violence" slows in pace for tracks like the vocal driven "Forget Me Knot" and the powerful "Frankie Come Home" the latter of which I can only assume is dedicated to Frankie Venom of the legendary Teenage Head who passed far too soon. Don't you rockers worry, the album picks back up in pace on most of the other songs. This is a return to classic form for the Black Halos.

-Chuck Andrews

## Sawbelly - Insulted



While browsing YouTube I stumbled across an account called "Atlantic Canada Punk." As I love punk-rock this came as a welcome discovery and as I live in Atlantic Canada the find was all the more pleasing. After browsing a few different bands I came to a group called Sawbelly. There was an upload of their 1994 demo "Insulted"... and I can say without a doubt this is some seriously gnarly punk-rock!

I don't know if these guys are still around but they hailed from Annapolis Valley. Featuring 13 tracks this demo provides the listener with a blast of underground awesome-

ness that manages to bring on feelings of times long past. Fans of punk-rock and other forms of lo-fi abrasiveness are sure to dig the offerings provided by Sawbelly--or at the very least I did.

I will also continue to check up on the Atlantic Canada Punk account. There are some seriously driving uploads available here and it will be fun to immerse myself in the history of Atlantic Canada's punk scene!

-Devin J. Meaney

## Vaino - Metsänpeitto



Vaino - *Metsänpeitto* is an album my friend Lorne (the mastermind behind Cernunnos) sent me in a text. Hailing from Finland, Vaino provides a blast of eerie coldness that somehow also comes across as upbeat and I have no problem stating that every minute of this album is highly enjoyable and filled with positive energy. Premiered on January 12th 2022 *Metsänpeitto* is one of the better albums I have heard so far this year and I plan to return to it time and time again. With elegantly played guitars, formidable percussion and tight and rasping vocal work I can see this one in the collection of black metal fans worldwide. You can snag a copy in various formats at Wolfspell Records, or if you just want to check it out you can do so on Facebook, YouTube and Bandcamp. Featuring seven tracks in just over half an hour this is the perfect length for a casual listen. Not as short as a demo but not as long as a lot of black metal full lengths, *Metsänpeitto* spits forth just enough head banging and musical excellence to make Vaino known as a prime contender in the black metal scenes globally--so without further rambling I will just suggest giving this audio masterpiece a listen. It just might brighten your day...it for sure brightened mine!

-Devin J. Meaney

## Lipoma - Horrors of Pathology



After a bit of searching I stumbled upon *Horrors of Pathology* by Lipoma. When I first found this album I wasn't expecting anything like this. Lipoma mixes melody with pitch shifted vocals and that is not something that is common within the goregrind underground. The majority of the riffage is reminiscent of melodic death metal and black metal from the early years of those sub-genres...yet the vocals are deep gurgles that could be likened to bands like Rompeprop. I guess the best way I could explain this album is "fresh". It's a new take on the goregrind genre...miles away from the ping snares and blur riffs from bands like Last Days of Humanity. Unique is a word I would use to describe what is offered here and overall I am very glad I found this. This is tagged as pathological goregrind but it even states in the YouTube bio that it has death and blackened elements...so it is understood that this is not "standard". A one-man band by Dr.

Max Lipoma, Lipoma hails from New York. This is the first full-length from the project and I can only hope to hear a lot more of this. A great project with great vibes--so load up this stream on YouTube (or buy the album?) and dig in deep for an onslaught of blackened death gore!

-Devin J. Meaney

## Vicious Rumors - The Atlantic Years



Now this is an inspired idea (the mysterious Metal Guru strikes again!), though I would add that Vicious Rumor's pre and post-Atlantic Records music is well worth putting in a collection too!

Formed back in 1979 in the Bay Area of San Francisco, Vicious Rumours were part of a movement that included the legendary Cliff Burton, Legacy/Testament, Exodus, Forbidden Evil/Forbidden, the quirky and awesome Blind Illusion and more. They weren't thrash metal per se, but then, none of them were at the beginning, for sure there were elements of thrash in Vicious Rumours music, but also of more traditional elements inspired by Dio-era Rainbow, Saxon, Diamond Head and Iron Maiden, which are fine things to my experienced ears!

Following well-received independent releases like *Digital Dictator*, Vicious Rumors signed to Atlantic, releasing their self-titled major label debut in 1990. Oh, this is superb, 'Don't Wait For Me' is the best metal anthem you've never heard (but now can!). 'World Church' is pure power metal, and 'Down To The Temple' is epic. But really, all the tracks are classics. An all-time great album that all metal fans should own and cherish!

The following year Vicious Rumors released *Welcome To The Ball*, another stone classic, which had it been released in the '80s would have really put Vicious Rumors on the map. But the world had changed and grunge now ruled the roost.

The final disc in these well put together 3CD set is a live album recorded in Tokyo, which showcases what an awesome live band Vicious Rumors are. An important element of this set is it also showcases what a truly awesome singer the late lamented Carl Albert was. He's up there with the Dios of this world. R.I.P Vicious Rumors are rightly still going to this day, and this excellent collection explains why!

- Steve Earles

## Conditions Apply - Rage & Ignorance



Montreal's Conditions Apply take a fairly standard approach to punk rock on their first full length record, *Rage & Ignorance*. Featuring fourteen tracks of blistering guitars and drums that draw upon the influences of skate punk and melodic hardcore as well as traditional hard-

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core punk and even rock and roll, this record provides the listener with an interesting mixture of different punk styles that feels real and from the heart. The band utilizes customary punk song structures and chord progressions that feel familiar to those who have a storied listening history, but the band incorporates lots of melodic guitar leads and the occasional solo that genuinely remind me of rock and roll bands from the 60s and 70s, a la Thin Lizzy, or perhaps even Kvelertak for a more modern point of reference. Make no bones about it, this is meat and potatoes punk rock, but Conditions Apply throw in a few things here and there that make these songs stand out a bit against the backdrop of carbon copy punk bands that they could have easily fallen into. This is an album of fairly catchy songs that barely clock in at two minutes each. Even if it sounds overly familiar, you could do much worse than *Rage & Ignorance*.

- Greg Ravengrave

**Exciter - Kill After Kill**  
Cherry Red Records

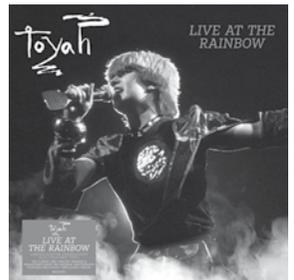


Exciter (obviously named after the Judas Priest song!) were speed metal before there was a speed metal genre. Setting off on their journey in 1978 and hailing from the mighty metal fortress that is Canada, they were an important part of the metal underground in the 1980s. Albums like *Heavy Metal Maniac* and *Violence And Force* are all rightly regarded as classics now. Looking at the photos on this excellent re-release of *Kill After Kill*, you see the band with the likes of legendary and much-missed bassists like Cliff Burton and Lemmy (and we see Motorhead drummer Philthy Phil too!), so we see what an important part of the metal underground Exciter were.

*Kill After Kill* was originally released in 1992, a hard time for the band, Grunge was ascendant, and thrash metal most certainly wasn't. It would be impressive enough writing, recording and releasing an album under those circumstances, but more impressively, *Kill After Kill* is very good. It was a surprising freshness and intensity, and I have to say I'm impressed, and I feel any self-respecting metal fan will be too!

-Steve Earles

**Toyah - Live At The Rainbow**  
Cherry Red Records



The Rainbow was an iconic venue in London in the 70s and 80s, and Toyah's performance here can certainly be described as iconic.

It's interesting to listen to this fine concert performance from 1981. In the 80s, Toyah had a very high profile as a pop star, she was on popular programmes like *TISWAS* and *Top Of The Pops*, and the maniacal *Kenny Everett Videoshow* (which featured the legendary Cleo Roccos and Hot Gossip!), and she starred in such films as *Quadrophenia*, yet

the originality and depth of Toyah's music is outstanding.

I played this concert to my mum, who has great taste in music, her verdict was, 'this is great, don't you get a similar atmosphere to Kate Bush?', and in a way, yes! This is prog punk! I'm still astonished listening to the concert just how intricate and clever it all is. I love it! It's very English and very eccentric. There's also an elements of what we could now call Occult Rock, which is, of course, pleasing to me!

Toyah the band, are excellent, and there is a great interaction with the crowd. It's amazing to think of Toyah, as an artist, who had mainstream popularity, yet her songs are a million miles away from the tripe churned out by the likes of Katy Perry! Also as a very welcome part of this package is the *Live At The Rainbow* DVD, it will make you wish you were there, visually very exciting!

I can't wait to see and hear the next Cherry Red Toyah reissue.

-Steve Earles

**The Residents- Triple Trouble**  
Original Soundtrack  
Cherry Red Records



This, as you may have guessed, is the original soundtrack to The Resident's long-gestating feature film *Triple Trouble*. I have to emphasise the important of the word original here, for the soundtrack to *Triple Trouble* sounds like nothing we have heard before. But it is wonderful, weird and wonderful, and I have been playing it constantly since I received it.

*Triple Trouble* tells the tale of an emotionally isolated man (and there are so many, and not just men, in our post-internet, post-Covid world), who, in the wake of his mother's death, replaces his faith in God with his faith in a fungus. And why not, looking at the world around us today, a fungus probably would care more about us, I also can't see any Jihads, terrorism and Crusades and witch-burning, and homophobia ect in the name of a fungus! Maybe the fungus will look out for the isolated and forgotten more! It certainly couldn't care any less than God (whichever God, it all amounts to the same thing). The music? I look at my notes, I read that I have written 'John Carpenter meets Nick Cave', 'Goblin meets Sun-Ra', and 'Zombi jams with Steve Von Till'. That, in all honesty has been how I interpreted this strange and beautiful soundtrack.

Moreover, the evocative spoken word segments from the film enabled me to conjure up a vision of the story in my own imagination. I can't wait to see how accurate my conjectures are, if the film is half as good as the music, the Fungus willing, of course, praise be!

-Steve Earles

**Hawkwind - We Are Looking In On You**  
Cherry Red Records



In a world threatened by war, climate change, hate, over-population and plethora of other man-made ills, we need the optimistic forward looking space rock force that is the mighty Hawkwind more than ever!

More of an institution than a band at this stage, Hawkwind have become their very own musical Eternal Champions like a creation from the pages of Michael Moorcock, striding the multiverse, constantly reincarnating and renewing themselves. The Once And Future band!

Recorded on their recent UK tour, 'We Are Looking In On You' mixes classics like 'The Watcher' (written by Lemmy!), 'Levitation', 'Magnu', 'Uncle Sam's On Mars', 'Hurry On Sundown' and more with newer songs like 'Un-somnia', 'Cave Of Phantom Dreams' and 'It's Only A Dream'.

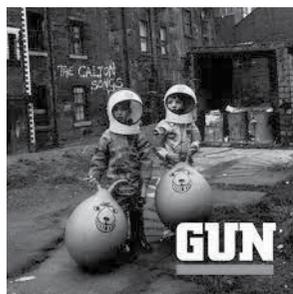
The fact that all and new songs flow seamlessly is a tribute to the timeless sincerity of Hawkwind's music.

This is a great line-up of Hawkwind too, once musicians join the Mothership, they seem to fit in flawlessly.

There is something very special about Hawkwind, they are uplifting, thought-provoking and I feel they are a positive musical and spiritual force, certainly writing this review was one of the happiest writing experiences I've had. Long may Hawkwind reign!

-Steve Earles

**Gun - The Calton Songs**  
Cherry Red Records



The Calton District is in the serious vibrant and lively city of Glasgow in Scotland, and this excellent album captures all that energy. Jools and Dante from Gun hail from there and it really is part of their musical DNA, they grew up near Glasgow's famous Barrowlands Ballroom, home of many an iconic band over the years... if those walls could talk, the tales they'd tell!

This album initially began life in Dante's spare bedroom during the pandemic, being completed by the full band when the lockdown happily ended. Except for their iconic cover of 'Word Up', which the band have really made their own anyway, all the semi-acoustic tracks on this album appeared as original full volume electric rock songs on previous Gun releases. I was surprised how much I enjoyed 'The Calton Songs', it really has caught the energy of the city that birthed it. Moreover, it is one of the most uplifting albums I've heard in a long time. The terrific backing singing from Beverly Skeete and the Sisterhood gives the songs an added gospel dimension. From start to finish, just the most life-affirming record!

-Steve Earles



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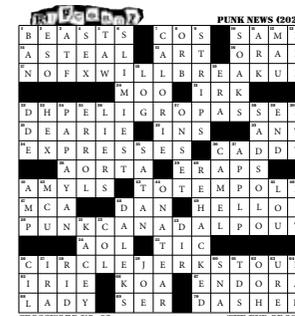
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# Absolute Live Reviews

## The Blue Stones

BRKN LOVE

Low Hum

November 20, The Commonwealth, Calgary AB

This Blue Stones concert was another one of the casualties during the dark year of 2020 when shows were either rescheduled or canceled outright. Luckily for Blue Stones fans, the show eventually came to be in the dead of November on a Sunday night - though cold nor work the next day would keep this concert from being another completely sold out concert in Calgary.

Starting off the night were Low Hum, a three-piece electronic rock act with members from varying parts of the US including Hawaii. The band set the tone for the evening - funky jams with somewhat vulnerable vocal stylings. The crowd was asked if they had heard of the band before - no one said yes, but a few will surely be looking up the band for shower jams the next day.

BRKN LOVE are a band who took their middle slot of the night seriously, cramming in their best songs, along with drum and guitar solos, which would have taken up a full 90 minutes at a Greta Van Fleet concert. Toronto native Justin Benlolo led the band through big, loud rock anthems which brought to mind a touch of Soundgarden and a dabble of Zeppelin. The highlight was "Flies in the Honey," a song about addiction that while not getting as dark as Alice in Chains "Jar of Flies," still stuck with the audience.

The Blue Stones, I was surprised to hear, were many concert attendees' favorite band. That sentiment meant they had a lot to live up to. The band are another two-piece who somehow sound like there are five or more people on stage due in fact to backing electronic tracks and differing distortion pedals. Guitarist/vocalist Tarek Jafar had his guitar changed for just about every song - though even the best-laid plans of two Windsor musicians can go awry and a technical issue left the band on mute after the third song.

To ease the tension, someone threw a bra onto the stage, which Jafar put on his mic stand. A few minutes later and the Stones were unveiling song after song from their magical bag - hard rocking tracks like "Rolling with the Punches" and progressive sweets like "Oceans." The wait, for this sold out crowd - was worth it and "the most underrated city in Canada," according to drummer Justin Tessier became home for the hottest and most explosive crowd on the tour.

-Ryan Dyer

## Cannibal Corpse

Dark Funeral

Immolation

Black Anvil

November 15, The Palace Theatre, Calgary AB

Cannibal Corpse are a group who need no introduction - just seeing that iconic logo on a poster promises a night getting your ass kicked via some death metal from the band who are synonymous with the genre. Touring in support of their 2021 album *Violence Unimagined* and now being in the official Erik Rutan as an official member era, the band on this tour set out to show, besides the new songs added to their repertoire, that although the members are in their 50s, there is no slowing down, no mercy and no half-assed headbanging when it comes to the Corpse.

Cannibal enlisted some friends from New York for the immediate openers - Black Anvil and Immolation. Black Anvil were a mixture of heavy styles, not being chained to sounding like a typical black metal band - they played furiously enough to please the audience who were there that

early as well, with the pit opening up from the first note onward. Drummer Raeph Glicken was noteworthy due to his heavily tattooed frame and infectious enthusiasm. Immolation, out of all the bands, seemed the most pleased to be there, judging by their communication to the crowd in between songs - then bludgeoning them a minute later with songs like the classic "Dawn of Possession." Immolation had the same slot for the *Decibel Magazine* 2013 tour, also with Cannibal. The amount of songs played this time was similar - enough for satisfy an interest in the band, but for hardcore fans, more songs would be welcomed.

Playing directly under Cannibal Corpse is nothing to scoff at - from Napalm Death to Black Dahlia Murder, the band has to bring it. Luckily, Dark Funeral had absolutely no problem with this undertaking, having the crowd chanting "Hail Satan" in no-time. I watched *Jesus Christ Superstar's* 50th anniversary production just a few weeks ago, so Christ getting tortured and stuck on a cross was still fresh in my mind. Dark Funeral brought the feeling back with songs like "Nail Them to the Cross." The empowering "My Funeral" was another highlight in a carefully selected set full of bangers.

Breathing heavily like Kane Hodder in *Friday the 13th Part VII*, George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher, with his back to the audience, prepared to unleash the bloodthirsty as the crowd anticipated the first note to this 2022 Cannibal Corpse concert. The first note was the start of a flurry of an intro, which settled into the crushing riff of "Scourge of Iron" and from then on, all bets were off. A Cannibal Corpse mosh pit is a few steps down from being as dangerous as a prison riot, but it still is and I saw a few things in it, let's just leave it at that.

The good thing about having so many albums out now is that Corpse can really tailor their set-list to go through dynamics - slower numbers like "Evisceration Plague" are placed between faster numbers, so when a song like "Devoured by Vermin" is played, it has maximum impact. Like the huge logo, Corpsegrinder's jokes and classics like "Hammer Smashed Face," there is a comfort in what Corpse offers - you know what you're going to get - albeit with a select few tracks from the new album. Overall, the band is still at the top of their game, so here's hoping for at least another decade of torment from them.

-Ryan Dyer

## Conan

Wilt

Mares of Thrace

Nov 4, The Palomino, Calgary AB

It's getting fucking cold in Canada. As the snow comes down outside the Palomino and day turns to frigid night, winter-clothed metal fans are piling into the downstairs live venue area for a band with a namesake who would most likely wear a fur loincloth in this snowy weather, Conan.

Opening this show were Calgary's Mares of Thrace and Wilt, the latter accompanying Conan on their arctic trek through Canada. Mares of Thrace just finished their short tour with KEN mode, and nothing much has changed since that review - though this second time seeing them in a short period made me notice just how tight the band is. Perhaps just having two people onstage is better in that respect - they have become not just a well oiled machine, but symbiotic.

The Mayhem, Burzum and Gorgoroth shirts were in attendance for Winnipeg's black metal/doom gang-of-five, Wilt. They brought an overwhelming and almost suffocating

sound where often the only discernible sound coming out of the darkness was the drums. That isn't entirely true - their songs build up to that, like an ocean slowly becoming completely covered in black oil. The audience swam in this muck, transfixed.

It was time to get carnal and let the chest pounding commence. Conan have come a long way to play Calgary, their second last show of this tour (Kelowna being the final one) and the apostles came out in droves, resulting in a sold out demonstration of bludgeoning doom. As Wilt vocalist Jordan Dorge said, "Conan is going to come out and turn this place into lava." The lads' latest release, *Evidence of Immortality* was touched upon, as well as older tracks, though we all know that like the film *Conan: The Barbarian*, Conan is timeless and it doesn't matter if the songs were written in 1018. They all kill. With songs bringing out the inner barbarian in people such as "Total Conquest" and "Righteous Alliance," it was hard to not join the battle in the mosh pit and hope to get out alive. For the band, it was just another notch on their sword.

-Ryan Dyer

## Steel Panther

Black Stone Cherry

The Congregation

October 28, The Grey Eagle, Calgary, AB

The Res-Erections tour - the Halloween Howler - or is it the Heaps and Loads tour? This show had a few names, and when put together, you get a hard-as-a-10-year-old-Snickers-bar Halloween party hosted by the one and only Steel Panther.

The Grey Eagle casino was the perfect place to host L.A.'s finest - I haven't been to Vegas, but I have been to Macau and can confidently say that this casino and event center is good enough to at least sit at the table with those found in the little city next to Hong Kong. For this Halloween Howler, Pinhead, Michael Myers, a huge dick, a shocker and a group of guys dressed like they were Motley Crue showed up. Oh, and of course Steel Panther.

The two opening acts: The Congregation and Black Stone Cherry, resembled each other in that they both played a rather southern style of hard rock. The Congregation felt much like a visit to the church of rock - Clayton Bellamy's preacherman gimmick is one for the big stages and won over a Freddy or Chucky or two in the audience, especially with their cover of Clutch's "Electric Worry" - when thinking about it now, perhaps they should have played last because of the amount of sinning that went on during Steel Panther. Black Stone Cherry overstayed their welcome by a good half hour or so - by the time they played, it felt like Steel Panther should have been on and then some. Still, their set was a worthy one, with a highlight being their cover of Tracy Chapman's "Give Me a Reason."

FUBAR's Terry took the stage to draw the lucky name for a \$1000 giveaway, and then Steel Panther were ready to give 'er. You know, I have to hand to these guys - they have created a highly exaggerated persona that glorifies a lifestyle of doing lots of drugs and having sex with countless women - could a persona really get better than that? Even if they act like Noam Chomsky offstage - onstage, it's still one of those ultimate rock and roll shows where nothing is taboo and excess is encouraged.

With new bass player Spyder cutting his teeth, Panther ripped through favorites like "Goin' in the Backdoor" and "Asian Hooker" before going into their new track "Never Too Late (To Get Some Pussy Tonight)." The debauchery came quickly, as a

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topless woman came up on stage ready for pretty much anything. The boys had to contain themselves somewhat after some pretty heavy grinding and what looked like a covert nip lick.

Ten security guards tackled one overzealous fan (who must have had cocaine strength) and struggled to take him out of the venue - Satchel commented on the scene - "Getting kicked out, that's metal as fuck!" For "Weenie Ride," another fan was brought on stage - a more modest woman who took delight in being serenaded to about all the ways she would ride or suck each band member's weenie. After the song, she suggested more girls take the stage, and this amounted to about 30-40 women rocking out in Halloween costumes onstage to "17 Girls in a Row."

"Death to All but Metal" ended the set with a no-frills, hard rockin' bang, and the encore of the classic "Community Property" no doubt had the guy dressed up as a huge dick thinking "this song is all me." Halloween, New Year's Eve, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day - Steel Panther is a band for all occasions and this Halloween Howler is one to keep in that glory hole of a memory of mine.

-Ryan Dyer



## Testament

Exodus

Death Angel

October 8, The Palace, Calgary AB

The Bay Strikes Back - I was born in the '80s so I could only guess, but if there ever was a tour which embodied the spirit of '80s thrash, this was it. No neo-thrash bands on the bill, no ballads and no BS. With the Bay Strikes Back, we get three of the most respected thrash bands who all could very well be number five on that "big four" list. For a show like this, lists don't matter, though. The history is written with just the blood upon the stage.

A Slayer tattoo on a fan's arm made me realize that with Gary Holt and Dave Lombardo being on stage tonight, the spirit of Slayer was an unadvertised ingredient to the event. This show was 100% sold out, so every thrash, crossover and heavy-minded punk fan in the city was packed into the Palace. This meant that it was denser than a Beijing subway in there, but that didn't mean there wasn't any movement - starting with Death Angel's set, the

floor was moving and it didn't let up until Testament's final note.

Set lengths for Death Angel and Exodus were shorter than Testament's, which was fine, though the many fans who favored the first two bands would have preferred them play longer. Death Angel ended their set with "Thrown to the Wolves," which turned the pit into hungry animals who were salivating at the promise of Exodus up next.

For Exodus, the hungry wolves in the crowd turned into a "Piranha" feeding frenzy as Exodus gave the crowd what they wanted - lesson after lesson in violence. Steve Souza would don a Calgary Flames jersey halfway through their set, saying it was his first time visiting the city and that he was a hardcore fan. This hyped up the people even more as they ripped through "The Toxic Waltz" and "Strike of the Beast."

Testament are well deserving of the headlining slot on the tour, and with it brought smoke machines and a little bit more stage decor compared to the other bands. With Dave Lombardo behind the skins, the band sounded like a thickly armored juggernaut. They went through a few songs from Lombardo albums, notably "D.N.R." which hit like a bag of bricks. Chuck Billy acknowledged the indigenous people in the building for "Native Blood" while "Over

to yet another impressive set from the boys.

It's safe to say that each of the four bands had their own handfuls of fans who came specifically for that band. Whitechapel, after Trivium, were no doubt the second most popular band of the night, yet had the second slot of the tour. Whitechapel in 2022 is a more mature, methodical band than the Whitechapel you knew in 2010, and they weren't afraid to show their vulnerable side with the majority of their set being songs from their last few records. Fortunately for those in the pit out for blood, they performed one *This is Exile* track, being the title track from the album.

Between the Buried and Me are one of those bands whom knowing their material front to back makes for a better concert experience. The band is so ambitious with their songwriting - and witnessing how they perform those songs live is fascinating. Those who didn't know the band were a bit confused as to where a song ended and another began, yet the BTBAM faithful were quick to let people know "it's still the same song!" I counted five songs and checking the setlist after, was correct. Definitely a band that is worth at least double the time they were on stage for.

The stage was set up like a shrine for tonight's headliners, Orlando's Trivium. It has been four years since Trivium came to town, and at that time Matt Heafy couldn't attend due to his twins being born. "What the Dead Men Say" started things off with a bang, going into "The Sin and the Sentence" before things got a little too frantic during "Amongst the Shadows & the Stones" when Heafy stopped the show to make sure a girl who was hurt in the pit was taken out to safety.

Heafy being conscientious to his fans' safety is one thing I learned about the band this night - other things being Heafy looks a lot like Canadian rocker Danko Jones with a bald head, and Heafy must list KISS as one of his main influences because the guy loves to stick out his tongue.

Heafy practically seduced the Calgary crowd, telling them that they were one of the top 10 North American audiences ever for a Trivium show. I've heard this a lot lately, and would like to attend every other Trivium show on this tour to see if he says the same thing. Heafy's fatherly training came in handy later during "To the Rats" as he acknowledged a small fight in the front row - saying this is what he does to his twins at home. The band staple "Pull Harder on the Strings of Your Martyr" was the penultimate song, before Heafy and company came back for the anthemic "In Waves."

-Ryan Dyer

# Absolute Film Reviews

**Three Thousand Years Of Longing**  
*Three Thousand Years Of Longing* is the latest film from George Miller of *Mad Max* fame.

It tells the story of a Djinn (Idris Elba) who is freed from his lengthy imprisonment by Professor Alithea Binnie (Tilda Swinton). He tells her his stories of how he came to be imprisoned in a bottle.

The Djinn offers Alithea the traditional three wishes. However, Alithea knows her lore, it's her field of expertise and she fears the Djinn will try to trick her, so instead he tells her about his past life and how he came to be trapped in the bottle. These are tales of longing, love, lust, and loss, which, lets face it, are very often the same things if only we admitted it to ourselves (They all begin with the letter L too, which makes that line pleasing to read aloud. Go ahead, try for yourself!).

And this is where George Miller's own myth-making turns this myth on its head. As The Djinn tells the tales of the how his imprisonments came about, it becomes clear he is no trickster, rather a sincere loving creature who genuinely intends the best. I loved that element of the story especially in this era of false news, where we have reduced others to simple clichés and sound bites, not fully realised people in their own right. The first story The Djinn tells is the tale of the Queen of Sheba, his lover. She was courted by King Solomon, who imprisoned his rival The Djinn in the bottle to keep him out of the way. It's a heart-wrenching and tragic tale.

The second tale takes place in the palace of Suleiman the Magnificent. Freed from the bottle, The Djinn finds himself involved in intrigue and tragedy on an epic scale, resulting in long periods of loneliness (not a popular word in our fake 21st century world of Facebook 'friends'; yet as the Pandemic proved, we are all alone for long periods, we are all often just as imprisoned as The Djinn in his bottle. Except we so often imprison ourselves, at least The Djinn had no choice in the matter) until he finds himself back in the bottle again.

In The Djinn's final story, he relates the tale of Zefir, the young wife of a much older Turkish merchant (she is intelligent and realises she is regarded as no more than the trophy of a rich man). He gifts her The Djinn's bottle on its recovery from the sea. On his release from the bottle, The Djinn offers the customary three wishes. Zefir wishes for knowledge, which the Djinn gives her; firstly in the form of literature; then to perceive the world as Djinn do, which is magical, but too much so.

The Djinn falls in love with Zefir and she becomes pregnant with their child. But Zefir has grown overwhelmed by both Zefir's presence and the weight of her knowledge. To protect her, The Djinn says he will reside in his bottle until she needs him, but as he starts to return to the bottle, Zefir makes a wish to forget she ever met The Djinn, leaving him trapped and alone once again. Can even an immortal creature bear such loneliness and the longing for liberty?

The third tale strikes a chord with Alithea's longing, the longing for love, which every living creature shares (making it the ultimate universal theme). So moved is Alithea by The Djinn's story that she wishes the two of them to fall in love with each other, which they do, as I said, The Djinn is sincere. The Djinn and Alithea return to Alithea's home in London and at first, they are very happy together, they love each other, and The Djinn finds a wonder in all things that few of possess. Is it a childlike wonder or is it that a wise creature retains the curiosity of a child, of living in the moment and seeing beauty and awe in all things? Decide for yourself when you watch the film.

But then tragedy strikes. The Djinn's health is being destroyed by the

electro-magnetic radiation from the huge amount of mobile phone and television transmissions that bombard us every day.

Alithea returns home to find her love dying in front of her eyes, unable to speak, as if he's been erased by the radiation in front of her eyes. She used her second wish to give the dying Djinn the ability to speak again. She apologises for using her wish to deny him the chance to fall in love with her of his own free will.

Then, she uses her final wish to set the Djinn free so he can return to his own world and be restored to full health.

Alithea doesn't expect to ever see The Djinn again. But The Djinn really has, of his own free will, fallen in love with Alithea, and returns to her for as long his health will allow, through her entire life.

A beautiful ending to such a beautiful film! It struck a chord with me for more than one reason. I loved both characters, they were both terribly lonely in their own way, and had so much to offer. I wanted them to be happy together, as simple as that.

I also loved the theme that features in all George Miller's films that we use myth and storytelling to navigate our way through this hard world.

Be honest with yourself, are you not the hero of your own narrative? How could you not be, you could no more not be your own hero than not breath (and with the same results!).

Miller has said he takes great inspiration from Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, as do I. It's a unifying book because the similarities between the myths and legends of so many cultures prove all humans feel the same, face the same demons, have the same emotions.

Race is a man-made construct, a very dangerous one as it makes us see 'others' where really we should only see ourselves. While in the *Mad Max* films, Max is almost an archetype for us to project ourselves on, a lone force of order in a world of chaos, in *Three Thousand Years Of Longing*, the characters are different, they are ourselves laid bare, the masks we all wear are gone, and we see two people who feel loneliness, love, fear, desire, pain, happiness, curiosity and more. Thus, the film acts as a mirror image to ourselves! We don't see that others feel what we do, that there are more similarities than differences and really, we need to, if this world is to get any better.

I saw the electromagnetic radiation from phones, wifi and so forth that disrupt and destroy the Djinn as a metaphor for the huge distances between us caused by the revolutions in so-called communications technology. Be honest with yourself, weren't things more hands on between people before this 'revolution'? How can a text compare with a hug? How can a tweet compare with a handwritten letter professing love? How can an email compare with a walk hand-in-hand through a forest or any kind real deed done for another? You know the answer in your hearts, it doesn't, and we are all the poorer for it. We are all like The Djinn in our own way, except that we sealed ourselves in the bottle by our own will.

Finally and most importantly, I thought about why The Djinn and Alithea fell in love. Alithea fell in love initially with The Djinn through the way his tales of love and loneliness mirrored her own secret thoughts and desires. I also think there was a big element of kind heartedness there, but what is love without a kind heart? The Djinn on the other hand, really fell in love with Alithea of his own free will because he actually spent time with her and saw her as she really was, a lovely special unique person as we all know we are if only we let ourselves be, and if only we were brave enough to see it in ourselves and others and act on it. I think too, there's an element of magic in a special movie, see it

for yourself and decide, after all, it's stories that make and remake our world, there's a great quote-"We are blind to the worlds within us, waiting to be born."

Time for us all to start letting those worlds within us be born!

-Steve Earles

## Chupacabra Territory

During a movie binge which lasted a few days I came to *Chupacabra Territory*, a found-footage film of the indie variety. As I have an interest in the Chupacabra and cryptozoology in general I figured what the hell... may as well give this one a go. After watching I can say that I was pleasantly surprised with this--as found-footage films are sometimes known to be passé and redundant. Here goes...

A group of amateur cryptozoologists head into the California woods in an area that is hailed as "Chupa Town," a place where bizarre sightings of the famous cryptid run rampant. The area is riddled with animal mutilations, bizarre happenings and backwoods gossip...which helps lead the group on their adventure of hunting for the elusive monster.

What starts out as friends seemingly joking around turns to hellry when the group realizes that they may have signed up for more than they bargained for--and a few nights in the deep California darkness brings forth more than beer and liquor. What happens next? I guess you will need to watch the film to find out.

Now as I said above found-footage films can sometimes be less than desirable, but honestly, I found this to be a hell of a lot more interesting than *The Blair Witch Project* which is thought to be the grand daddy of the genre. *Chupacabra Territory* seems to have racked up a load of negative reviews online but personally I think the team pulled this one off nicely on a shoestring--not to mention that the acting was on par. It may be low budget but the cast of characters had well distinguished personalities and the few jump scares that came with this were entirely on point.

There was some of this that was left unexplained but I guess it leaves a bit to the imagination... anyway. I guess what I am trying to get across is that I would suggest this film to others whole heartedly providing you are down for low budget indie films. They may not be for everyone but there are those of us that really dig this kind of thing. Honestly I prefer stuff like this over major Hollywood titles. *Chupacabra Territory* gives the vibe that a handful of people got together and thought, "Hey. Let's make a movie!" And they did exactly that. And I say they did a damn good job of it, too.

-Devin J. Meaney

## Scout's Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse

Feeling like a hearty helping of cheese I made my way to the internet to see what Tubi had to offer. After a brief search I made my way to *Scout's Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse*, a 2015 comedy/horror. I like zombies and I like to laugh... so this seemed like the perfect way to end the night.

Bio: "Three scouts on the night of their final scout camping trip learn what "true friendship" means when they attempt to save their town from a zombie outbreak."

I wasn't actually expecting much but this film was pretty damn good. It had loads of gore and cringe humor and as usual when these two things combine forces the outcome is both comical and highly entertaining. Like most movies within this genre the splatter is prominent and the jokes are crude...but without a doubt fans of this kind of entertainment are sure to indulge with joy. Take a movie like *Eurotrip* or *American Pie*

and put it in a blender with pretty much any higher budget zombie flick and the outcome will probably always be something like this. In the same vein as *Zombieland* (or films similar)...but with more focus on the teen comedy.

All in all this was a fun watch and I'd suggest it to pretty much anyone who has interest. It took me the better part of a decade to get around to watching this...but it was highly enjoyed none the less.

-Devin J. Meaney

## The VelociPastor

Months back my friend Ron told me about the movie *The VelociPastor* and he encouraged me to watch it. It took me this long but after watching all I can say is this was potentially the stupidest thing I have ever viewed...and strangely enough I mean that in a good way. *The VelociPastor* was actually genuinely hilarious and I dare say this is something that I might actually watch again. I know I will be trying to push this on my friends...just as Ron pushed it on me.

According to Wikipedia *The VelociPastor* is a 2017 (it says 2018 on IMDb) American comedy horror film written and directed by Brendan Steere... though I need to mention that this is light on the horror and very strong on the comedy. As for the plot *The VelociPastor* is about a priest by the name of Doug Jones who travels to China after his parents die. In China he is infected by "the dragonstone" which turns him into a dinosaur. Aided by a hooker/doctor/lawyer he then uses his dinosaur powers to fight crime. Oh! And there are ninjas!

An interesting fact about the production of this movie is that the director originally thought up the idea in 2010 when he was a student of the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. His phone autocorrected the word "Velociraptor" to *VelociPastor*...and I guess the rest is history

(you can get a more in-depth story on Wikipedia).

*The VelociPastor* is a great film and with a \$35,000 dollar budget I'd say Brendan did an exceptional job. All of the humor within this movie is on point and the only negative thing I have to say about this is that there weren't enough fight scenes with the dinosaur.

Something worth mentioning is the movie's ability to turn bad acting into good acting. It is easy to tell that this is "bad on purpose"... and it is literally so terrible that it does an absolute 360 and becomes something that is entirely awesome. So to put an end to this review I will just state that this is one of those features that can somehow be one of the worst films yet one of the best films at the same time...and I daresay that you should watch it. I mean come on...what kind of person doesn't enjoy the idea of a crime fighting dinosaur priest?

-Devin J. Meaney

## Death of a Rockstar

Röckët Stähr's *Death of a Rockstar* has redefined what a concept album can look like as an animated movie experience. There's honestly not enough material in this specific subgenre for fans to enjoy (the others are Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and "Metalocalypse: The Doomstar Requiem"), and I love them all! The throwback animation style may not be for everyone, but I find parts of it very nostalgic. It felt like watching a Fleischer Studios cartoon with vintage rock and roll music added on top.

We're presented with a story about the fate of a four-armed frontman (Stähr) as his show comes to a finale. After his band delivers a rousing performance to a packed house, someone in the crowd fires a gun, and the title card is displayed--he's presumably killed. As this dying musician vibes back to his rise to stardom, we're shown his success didn't come easy.

Also, there are even some moments which remind me of Nelvana's "Rock n' Rule", as this star sings his heart away. One detail I love is the lyrics rendering in real time like a karaoke video!

We hear songs recounting his life. The flashbacks include his creation, something straight out of a Frankenstein movie. He's created by a mad scientist, Creigh A. Tor whose goal is to spur a movement to free the world from C. Czar's oppressive regime. Röcky's birth is no different from any other creation myth, and he's lucky to not live an existence in excess. What he learns and expresses via song deserves attention.

It's amazing that 24 songs can cover it all. I feel that if I'm to offer my favourite tracks, it'll spoil the first time experience. A few of them tell how this four armed Röcky views life and what he has to say sounds like something David Bowie, ELO, or Elton John would put out.

After watching this film, I want to know more about this rocker and what he's produced in our reality. Stähr's Facebook page and the bonus material in the home video release (available through eBay) reveals he's very much an advocate for freedom of speech and being able to express yourself. He also explains why he went for a more traditional ending than his original idea, which is darker.

Also, he's a self-taught musician and independent filmmaker who spent thirteen years creating this movie. The fact he made it mostly alone deserves high praise. To animate, score and voice all these characters himself isn't vanity work.

While the social commentary he injects is nothing new for the punk genre, the joy I have lays with how like Billy Idol this cartoon hero is. If that's not enough to make me to sing "Rebel Yell," then I don't know what will.

-Ed Sum



# Absolute Comix

## COFFEESTRATION

Hey Dick, what's with the bat? Scared of Krampus?

Ira! Just playing WHAMageddon with my cousins.



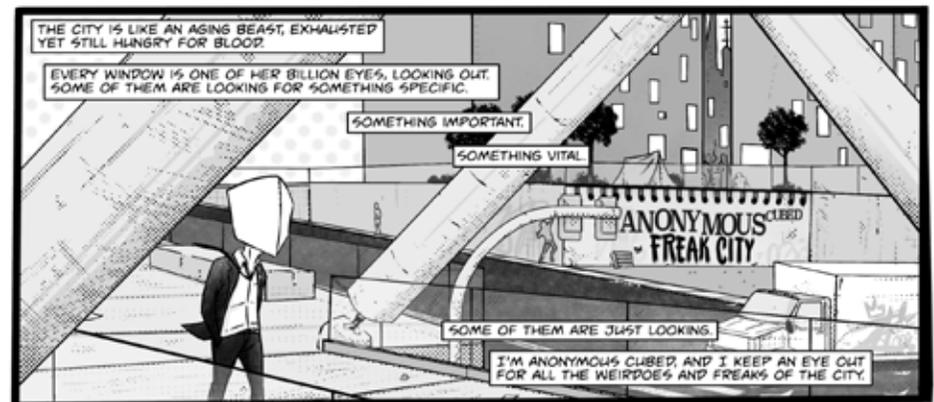
The game where you try to go without hearing WHAM's "Last Christmas" all of December? You don't need a bat for that.



Really? Shit. This would help explain why Kurt and Madelyn left the country.



-DICK KAUFER '22



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## Skate Autochtone

(Presence Autochtone - Montreal - Aug 10-16, 2022)

Interview with Paget Williams

### Absolute Underground: What can you tell us about Skate Autochtone?

PW: Skate Autochtone is an event put together to give indigenous kids a chance to get out and try skateboarding with some coaching from Canada's top indigenous skaters, Rose Archie, Joe Buffalo and Nations Skate Youth (nationskateyouth.com). The event gave kids a safe space in downtown Montreal to come and learn how if you were a first timer or just to session the ramp.

### AU: What is the translation of Skate Autochtone?

PW: It's French for Indigenous Skateboarding

### AU: What else will make Skate Autochtone unique?

PW: Having downtown Montreal and Presence Autochtone as a backdrop for a learning platform is pretty



### important to the community? Especially since it will be all-ages.

PW: An event like this is important because it empowers a part of the community that has always been neglected. It shows kids that they can do anything and skateboarding is a great place to start. Everyone that takes part walks away with something.

### AU: What features will be part of Skate Autochtone?

PW: We had a minicamp donated by Vans and a street course donated by

### AU: What is the ultimate dream for Skate Autochtone?

PW: Our dream for Skate Autochtone is to be able to reach kids of all ages and give them the chance they may



never have had to learn something that can help change their lives.

### AU: Are there currently any shows, events, comps, or demos planned?

PW: There are artisans, dancers & shows associated with the event on the Presence Autochtone main stage.

Skate instruction is at the Skate Autochtone site. There is something for everyone.

### AU: Who are currently some of the raddest indigenous skaters?

PW: Without a doubt Joe Buffalo is at the very top of the list.

### AU: Has the community responded to your event?

PW: Yes, we were able to reach out to exactly who we wanted to reach. One day we had a group of kids for the foster care system come and you should have seen the smiles on their faces.

### AU: How can people reading this help out?

PW: Spread the word so that next year we get more kids to take part. Strength in numbers!!!

### AU: Where can people find more info online?

PW: Go to the event web page and socials and share them with your friends.

[skateautochtone.com](http://skateautochtone.com)  
[nationskateyouth.com](http://nationskateyouth.com)

Photo Credits: Paget Williams & Dan Mathieu



## Bol du Cap

(Trois-Rivières, QC)

Interview with Paget Williams

### Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your involvement in the Quebec skateboarding scene?

PW: My name is Paget Williams. I am a concert and event promoter who has promoted music/skateboarding events since the early 90s. I have been skateboarding since I was a kid and presently I am co-owner of Revolution 514 Skateshop in Montreal and now Bol du Cap in Trois-Rivières.

### AU: What can you tell us about Bol du Cap?

PW: Bol du Cap will be an indoor skateboard club in the basement of an old church that is soon to become L'Eglise des Arts.

Club because it is a limited space big enough for the bowl and a mini ramp. It will be a space for young and old skaters to come and hang with friends and skate. Scott Radinsky, singer of the band Pulley, was kind enough to donate a load of old skateboarding memorabilia to help create an old school skate vibe.

### AU: What is the translation of Bol du Cap?

PW: Cap-de-la-Madeleine is the neighbourhood that the bowl will be in. It is more or less a literal translation of Bowl of Cap. No sense in mixing words...

### AU: So there will be a venue upstairs and a skate bowl downstairs of the church. Anything else like art shows planned for the space?

PW: At the moment no, only because we are in prep and reno mode... But I am sure that the small entrance bar will host many smaller cultural events. The venue will host various types of shows.

### AU: What else will make Bol du Cap unique?



PW: Bol du Cap will be unique in the way that it is a space built by skaters for skaters.

Where else will you be able to skate the bowl then go upstairs and check out a show. Bol du Cap will give new life to an old building.

### AU: Why is a place like this so important to the community? Especially since it will be all-ages.

PW: We are taking over a space that was used as an old age community centre for the past 30 or so years.. It is our mandate with the city to rejuvenate the area. The introduction of Bol du Cap will help bring a younger energy to the area. Bol du Cap will give the kids in the area an opportunity to express themselves through skateboarding. It gives kids of all ages a safe, healthy environment to skate or just to hang out.

### AU: What features will be part of the skateboarding basement level? Will there be ramps as well as the bowl?

PW: Bol du Cap will occupy space in the basement in Eglise des Arts. For now we will have the bowl and probably a minicamp. Plans for



the future involve making the bowl significantly bigger.

### AU: Tell us about the cool old skate memorabilia that will also be on display.

PW: The memorabilia donated by Scott is an awesome collection of pictures, posters, flyers from all throughout the glory days of skateboarding.

### AU: What is the ultimate dream for Bol du Cap?

PW: My ultimate dream for Bol du Cap is to create a self sufficient, intimate skateboard space for skaters. A place where dads can come and skate with their kids, bands will be able to have a quick session after soundcheck, kids that feel as though they have nowhere to fit in, have a place to fit in. Bol du Cap will be a place where lifelong friendships and memories are made.

### AU: What is your mission statement as a non-profit skateboard club?

PW: Our mission stage is to create a self-sufficient

skate space for skaters of all ages to call their own.

### AU: Are there currently any shows, events, comps, or demos planned?

PW: Not as of yet, only because we are not yet open for business. Mid may once we get the doors open, we will be hosting a bunch of benefit concerts upstairs.

### AU: Who are currently some of the raddest skaters in Trois-Rivières?

PW: Not sure yet... But I am sure we will find out as soon as we get our doors open.

### AU: How can people reading this help out?

PW: Anyone can help very easily... Donations are the easiest and best way to support, but if you can't donate please take a minute to repost and share the link with all your friends... a little bit from a lot of people gets the job done.

[bolducap.com](http://bolducap.com)  
[gofundme.com/f/bol-du-cap](https://www.gofundme.com/f/bol-du-cap)



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## Fallen One Inner Demon

Interview with author Silas Kimola  
by Natas Cremator of Souls

### Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for these days?

Silas Kimola: I might be known for "working on other projects," as that's the answer I give when I'm asked if I'm playing in a band these days.

### AU: What started you on your path to becoming an author?

SK: When I was ten, I was on my way home after playing a round of Shinobi at the corner store. I'd got to this level where green ninjas start jumping out of nowhere and for some reason, I wanted to make a story with one of them as the protagonist, then I decided the lead character should be ten, because ten-year-old me didn't think there was enough kids in action stories. Even then I knew it was a concept that could be hard to take seriously, but I fixated on trying to find ways that could make it work.

My first attempts when I was little, twelve I think, had me sectioning parts of a page with a ruler, putting small drawings of characters in the boxes with word bubbles, and then stapling the pages together trying to make it look like a comic book. More recently, around 2014, a coworker showed me a book he'd published and it got me thinking about finally writing my old story.

### AU: Who or what are some of your inspirations?

SK: I made a point of modeling most of my characters after what I saw in my old favorite arcade games; Wardner, Vigilante, Ninja Warriors, and then Shinobi had this basic plot where the sensei attempts to rescue his abducted students, which I incorporated into the book as well. Theatrically, I also tried to stick to what I was into back then; like *Enter the Ninja*, *Bloodsport*, and *Return of the Living Dead*.

### AU: Tell us about the book you just had published.

SK: It's the first of a trilogy, set in 1989 because that's when I first started creating the characters and story, and takes place in the fictional small city of Dorian, much of which is modeled after how Victoria looked at the time. Ninjas were a big interest to me, as well as the friends I hung around with back then, so that's the basis for the story, but writing it as an adult I chose to add in some other themes such as addiction, abuse, and fear (I can't remember how many times the protagonist gets afraid and runs away) There's also some preexisting traumas in some of the characters that superficially seem to have it together and generally speaking everyone has their inner demons.

### AU: What details of the story can you share without any spoilers?

SK: It starts with the protagonist, Ilvan, running for his life from some thugs in his school. After he gets away there's a bit of reference to his martial arts obsession, hopefully it's not a spoiler to say he gets training. The story kind of bounces around a bit, as there's a few conflicts taking place. The police take an interest in Ilvan, and eventually suspect him to be connected to local gang violence. At one point he does something

that manages to result in death threats from a motorcycle club, and when he turns to his sensei for assistance, he learns that his teacher has a deadly rivalry with a former clan member whose split resulted in creating his own faction. It's a small book, but there was a lot I wanted to throw in.

### AU: What genre/style of book would you classify *Fallen One* as if you had to?

SK: That's a tough one. It's a question that came up during the publishing process and I think I just typed in "action/adventure" but for a book that's about ninjas there's a lot more dialogue than fighting. When fighting does take place, I didn't hold back on the violence, but I also wanted to include some psychological warfare and other manipulative tactics to show that some villains could be dangerous to people who don't really realize it.

### AU: What can you tell us about Catacomb Publishing?

SK: When you self-publish you need to make a publishing name, so on the spot I went with Catacomb Publishing, and added a picture of some skulls I took at the Parisian catacombs. At first it was just intended for the *Fallen One* books but my dad wrote a book called *Long Beach Knights* and has asked me to publish it for him.

### AU: The book is titled *Fallen One - Book One: Inner Demon* - What can we expect from the rest of your planned trilogy?

SK: Book two will be noticeably bigger. It takes place in 1992 and probably about half the characters are new additions and most of the originals are fixated on revenge over the events three years prior. The framework for book three is set, but hasn't been fleshed out yet. I've learned

that to some extent the story shapes and changes itself along the way so I don't want to commit to too big of an agenda, but much of the plot will be driven by a McGuffin that had one or two references in *Inner Demon* and will likely take place in 1995.

### AU: How can people get a copy of the book to check out?

SK: Physical copies and Kindle are both available on Amazon. Copies are also available at Cavity Curiosity Shop.

### AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items; Book you read.

SK: It was a re-read but I'd say *The Hiram Key* by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas

### AU: Movie you saw:

SK: I think movies these days suck so bad they should be boycotted.

### AU: Album you heard.

SK: Perdition Temple – *Merciless Upheaval* is my album of the year.

### Band you saw live.

SK: Devouring Void.

### AU: Best local band deserving of more recognition?

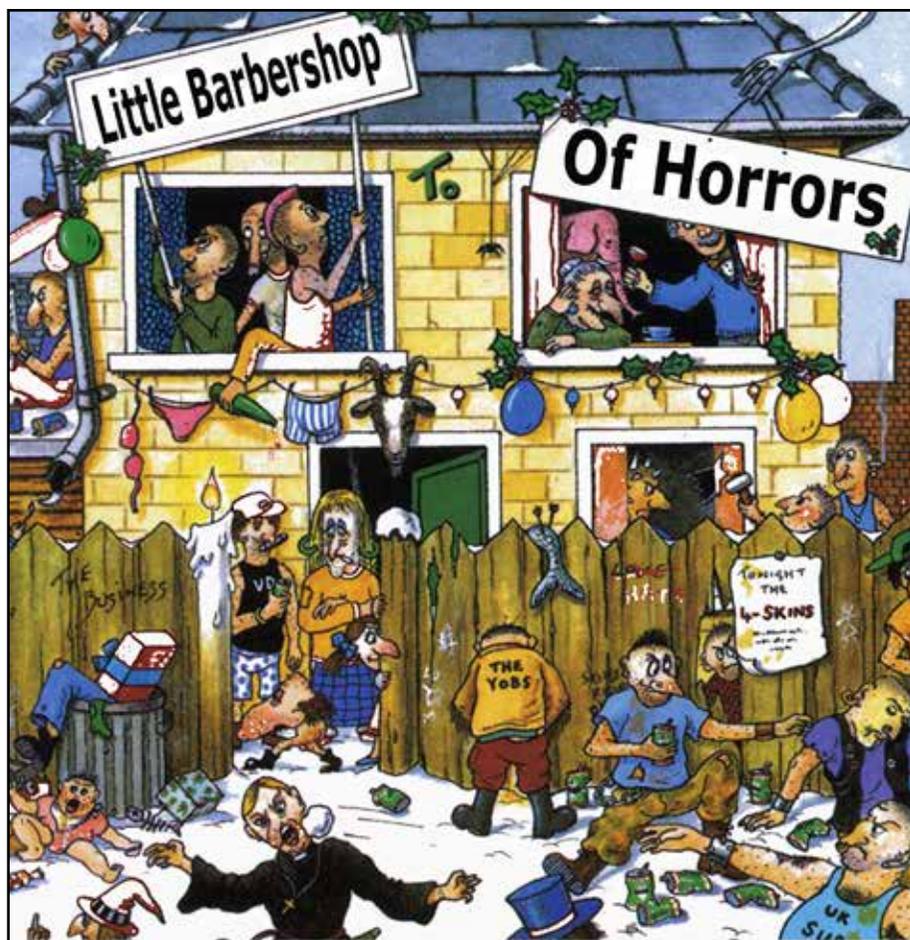
SK: Heidenland

### AU: The thing that blew your mind the most.

SK: While spending May in New Zealand with my wife we saw Split Apple Rock. It's a 238-ton granite boulder split down the middle and propped above the water level on support stones and has an alignment to the winter solstice sunrise... it's the type of thing I geek out over.

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

SK: What surprised me after the book published was how many people told me they had an idea for a book they've been meaning to write. We live in a time where anyone can publish, so write your book.

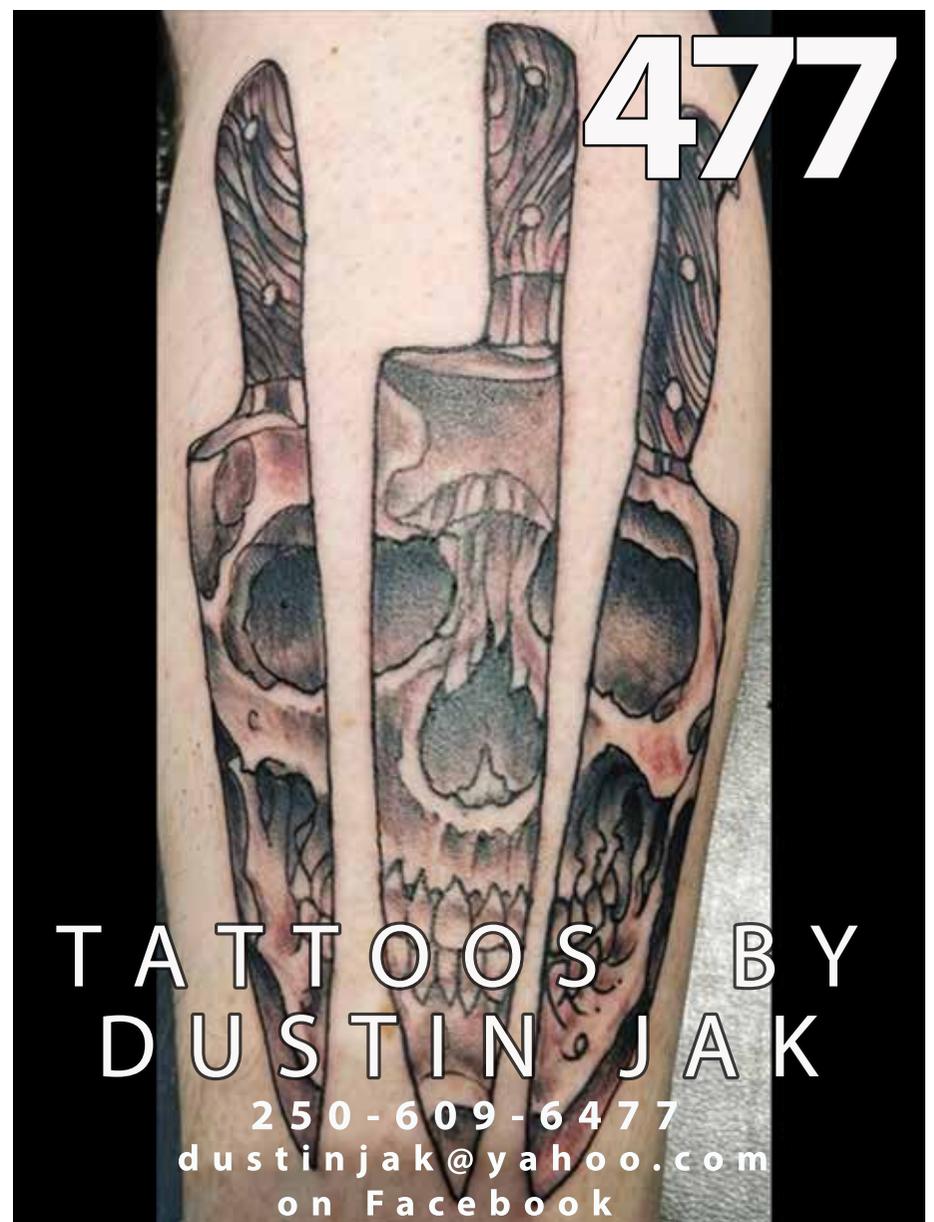


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# COMIC BOOK ICONS



## Sergio Aragonés PART 6

Interview by Ira "Cheese Dip" Hunter  
with question assists by Ricky Long Jak  
and Gareth Gaudin

### Absolute Underground: What is the secret of a happy life?

Sergio: So far I have been fortunate with my wife and my kid. Everything that I wanted to accomplish, I have. So no complaints. But I worked hard for it. It didn't come easy.

### AU: Do you have any stories about Stan Lee or Will Eisner?

Sergio: I have zillions of them. Because I was a fan of them. Well not Stan Lee, that much because to tell you the truth, I've never read a Marvel comic in my life. They didn't arrive in Mexico until later. DC Comics had a translated thing. But Marvel Comics, the superheroes, they were not in Mexico at all when I was a young kid. So I was never familiar

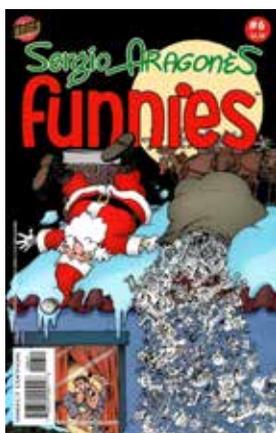
with Marvel at all. When I did that take-off on Marvel, Mark (Evanier) wrote everything. I didn't know who the characters were. I love adventure. But superheroes have never been important to Europe or to other countries for many logical reasons. Other countries have had wars in their lands. The United States never has. They have had interior fights, like the Civil War and the Revolutionary War but that was a long time ago. But the Second World War, the First World War, the annexation of Mexico by the



Americans and by the French, all those things happened and no superheroes came to help. They had to do it themselves.

So the new generation in Europe likes superheroes because of the movies or the quality of the artwork but not

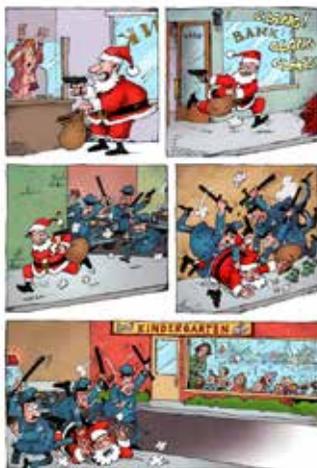
because of the superhero subject. For the Americans it was easy, send Captain America to fight Hitler. So they send Captain America and then continue going to the bar and going to work and they didn't give a shit. But in Europe the Germans and the Allies destroyed their countries fighting against each other. Imagine the poor French guy, just



some farmer and suddenly they decide to fight on his land and his house, his castle is destroyed, that's it. The superheroes never came.

### AU: Would you say your comic The Mighty Magnor was sort of a superhero comic?

Sergio: It was. He was an alien who lived on another planet. He came and read a lot of comic books. He thought he was in a comic book and he was used as a superhero. But he wasn't. He was the antithesis, he's a total anti-hero. He did what he read in the comics. For instance, if he was to see somebody robbing a bank he would smash through a wall, take them outside and wrap a lamp around them. Destroying all kinds of things because that's what he read in the comic books. Then people will sue the publisher because he destroyed the building. He was destroying the city through his acts. It was satire on comics. It was not a superhero comic. It was a satire on superheroes.



### AU: As well as doing work for The Simpsons comic books you were also actually featured in an episode of Futurama.

Sergio: Ha-ha yes.

In Futurama they used me as

the only cartoonist surviving to their century. The hero, Fry, wants to become a cartoonist so he goes to the museum and my head was on a desk as the last surviving cartoonist. He thinks my moustache is the secret to becoming a cartoonist. So he pulls it off and I go "Aaahh!" That is me, they recorded my voice for that show. It was fun being part of that as the last surviving cartoonist in Futurama. I love the Simpsons because it is such a clever show and everything belonged to it. Every time they created a new character. It belonged to that city. It was like the city was growing up as they were writing episodes. I've watched all of them. I have them all. I collected all the figurines of The Simpsons. I have everything.

**AU: Do you still have your Simpsons pinball game in your office?**

Sergio: Right now it's in my bedroom because I needed the space in the studio for something else but I still play it there.

### AU: Are there certain things you won't draw if asked to do certain commissioned art?

Sergio: Usually the commissions that I do have to do with Groo or with something related to that. One thing I will never draw is a woman because they never like it ever, ever. I have never done anything with a woman because I know the results, they don't like caricatures. They like portraits and I don't do portraits.

### AU: What are the names of



### the two witches in the Groo comics?

Sergio: Arba and Dakarba which backwards spells Abra-Kadabra.

### AU: How do people find you online?

Sergio: They don't. I don't want to be found. I don't have any social media or Facebook. I think Scott Shaw has a thing called Friends of Sergio.

### AU: But you do have the aragonescartoons Facebook group that your daughter runs?

Sergio: Yeah, she does one for the selling of things. The other one that Scott does is for friends and fans. There's a group called THE GROOP they are all Groo fans and they talk. I wish I had the time and the patience to deal with a computer but I don't.

### AU: Can you leave us with a funny Scott Shaw story?

Sergio: All the ones that funny ones about him, he has already talked about. I remember one about dressing like a turd, as a character. He was full of peanut butter. Ask him to tell it to you because he will tell it right. I thought that it was extraordinarily funny.

### AU: Any final words of wisdom for Canadian comic book fans in our igloos?

Sergio: Well, it's very simple. Canada is part of the world. Don't think Canada, think the world. The world is in the hands of the artist. Don't think locally.

Produce locally. But think globally.

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

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

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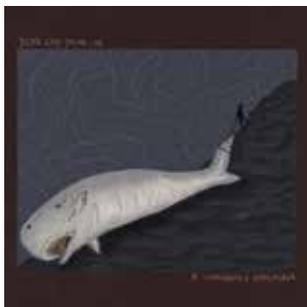


## 2023 Updates for Where to Find Dead End Drive-In

By Ed Sum

Indie-punk rock group *Dead End Drive-In* are ready to resume touring and make a lot of noise in 2023! First, their next album, "A Worthwhile Endeavour," is set to release January 13th (Early Onset Records), with a show at Red Gate Society. And if this new year wasn't already busy enough, those looking for a music video will get the earliest teaser for the band's track, "Human Spirit," in time for New Year's Eve celebrations.

Hailing from Vancouver, *Dead End Drive-In* takes after such acts as *Titus Andronicus*, *Diarrhea Planet* and *The Replacements*, and have no problem mixing meaningful lyrical content with relentless



lead lines. Formed in 2014, the band quickly began recording their first EP, *B-Movies*. With that, *Dead End Drive-In* established themselves as an exciting local act.

As other fans have put it; their music is chock-full of feedback, finger tapping and heart-pounding hooks. Those who have reviewed their shows describe them as having a, "punk edge will grab you and pull you in."

Since 2021 the band has release of 3 EP's, one full-length, toured Canada and the U.S. and opened for acts such as *The Flatliners*, *Lagwagon*, *Spanish Love Songs*, *Off With Their Heads* and *Mercy Music*.

The band then rounded out 2021 with the addition of new bass player Dana Edwards of *Rest Easy/Daggermouth/Carpenter* fame.

*Dead End Drive-In* has found a home with Early Onset Records for the release of their second full-length, "A Worthwhile Endeavour."

With shows coming back and people hungry for some new music, *Dead End Drive-In* will make a hell of a lot of noise in 2023.

## Five Holiday Themed Comics to Countdown to Christmas With

By Ed Sum

It's sometimes easy to identify which comic books are getting a gala themed issue or special. Some are obligatory annuals and others not. I'm also adding the criteria that the release must also be from the horror genre in order to be counted! After all, don't we all love a ghost story paired with the season?

Presented here are my top five choices to close out the year with.

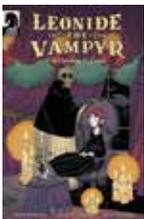
### *Stranger Things Holiday Specials* (Dark Horse)

Anyone who has missed out on the individual releases isn't missing anything. It's bound to be collected into a trade paperback, which is an even better way to bring in new readers who've discovered *Stranger Things* for the first time, and are impatient for the continuing Netflix adventures. In this book, the kids are encountering other terrors haunting Hawkins-like The Child-Eater!



### *Leonide the Vampyr: A Christmas for Crows* (Dark Horse)

Over Halloween, Leonide's coffin crash-landed upon a sea-side town, where the citizens of said town saved her. But what they didn't know was that this girl they'd saved was a vampyr. This book offered plenty of gentle frights.



In her second outing, a tribute to Dracula's landing in Europe, she visits a mountain resort, and reveals that she is a young lady with even more sinister secrets to unveil. This read is a must for fans of Mike Mignola's dark storytelling, and Rachele Aragno's artwork.

# COMIC-GEDDON

### *Happy Horror Days* (Archie)

The holidays are going to be different in Riverdale, as this book brings together the characters from the past Archie Horror novellas and comics into one tidy package. Plus, we see Krampus invade Riverdale! What more can one want? The fact various folktales from all over the world are given an Archie update is enough to sate fans.



### *Monsters of Metal: Krampus in Concert* (Opus Comics)

Written by director and visual effects artist Jason Howden (*Guns Akimbo*) and Lexi Leon (*Iron Maiden: Legacy of the Beast*), this comic book special will put our favourite monsters up against Krampus! Maybe Krampus doesn't like the music? It'll be very interesting to find out why.



### *Grimm Tales of Terror: Holiday Special* (Zenescope)

This quarterly magazine promises to deliver even more dread this issue. And for those who are on Keres the Goddess of Death's naughty list are in for a surprise when she's the one saying hi to you on Christmas morning atop the sheet.



# 8<sup>TH</sup> DIMENSION COMICS

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## Forever Dead Pretending We're Surviving

Interview by Mal Concent

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

JG: Hey Hey! You are talking or reading the ramblings of Jorge Gratz. I'm kind of like a Brown Recluse.

### AU: Who else is in the band and what does it say on their Tinder profiles?

JG: Forever Dead! is Chelsea Heart (vox): ADHD nail artist. Jorge Gratz (bass) : wildcard, guzzle guts. El Gratz (guitar): Gnarly bush whacker. Tylore T. Destroyer (Drums): Right baked topic generator and on again off again Mrac (Guitar): Squirrly cat whisperer.

### AU: Give us a brief history of Forever Dead.

JG: Forever Dead! started in 2005 as a Psychobilly horror punk band. We had Chelsea on vocals, Jorge on upright bass, Tylore on drums, Mrac on guitar and Jessica Hochins on keyboard. We put out one album with that line up titled *Not Quite Dead Yet...* in 2008, and did a small Ontario tour. About



a year or so after that Jessica left the band and Mrac soon followed. Jesse (El Gratz), the older brother of Tylore and Jorge, moved from B.C. back to Thunder Bay and joined the band in 2010. Then we set out on another small tour of Ontario with the new line up. We recorded our self-titled album *Forever Dead!* Shortly after and did another Ontario tour in 2011. In 2012 we decided to ditch the Psychobilly thing and go back to our roots which was punk and hardcore. We then recorded *EpicDemic* and released it in 2015. We didn't tour that album at all and haven't really been out on the road much since 2011. We mostly

just play shows in Thunder Bay and open for cool bands that come through. In 2018 our original guitar player Mrac wanted to rejoin and play some shows and write some songs with us again.

During the pandemic we recorded our new album *Pretending We're Surviving* and released it in 2021. We also recorded an EP in 2021 which will probably be out in 2023.

### AU: Sex, Drugs, or Rock 'n' Roll? or all of the above?

JG: Some more than others. A little bitty this, a bite a titty that. Whatever the mood calls for.

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

JG: UHH. I think it's pretty self explanatory if you listen to a song or two, We draw a lot of influence from punk, hardcore, and alternative music.

I have heard people say Chelsea's voice sounds a lot like Gwen Stephani and Brodie Dalle mixed into one, A lot of our influence comes from bands like SNFU, NOFX, Rancid, Lunachicks, Joan Jet, Distillers, Bad Religion, Propagandhi...

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

JG: We put out an album called *Pretending We're Surviving* that we recorded and produced with our buddy Paul Dutil. He drove to Thunder Bay from Alberta in a snowstorm with his recording gear and we set up shop in our rehearsal space. We recorded the whole thing in less than a week while Paul camped out in our space. Did I mention our space is in a creepy old church? Some nights you can hear the whimpering of children.



We are pretty pleased with the way it turned out. It's got 18 tracks of high energy punk rock and it's a must have for parties, road trips, work tunes, pretty much any setting where bitchin' tunes are a necessity. You are definitely going to hear the word "fuck" a lot on the album. We tried to count them all but lost track.

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

JG: Topics are our jam. If you want topics, boy do we have topics? Topics for days, Jr. Haunted dentures, riding bikes without seats, monster trucks, beer, weed, modular men, DOOM!, salvation, psychaelics, genocide, people who pull guns on people, places that don't exist anymore,

love, space stuff. Life stuff and junk. Tip of the ice burger my friend.

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

JG: "Backpedalling" or "Backpedal," I can't remember what we called it on the album. Fucking good tune though! Subliminally I think we ripped off Propagandhi. That band rips tit. "Fuck Yeah Hell Yeah" was a throw away track but we decided not to cut any songs from the album, It turned out awesome and it rips tit. Thirdly and surely squirrely is "Beer Today Bong Tomorrow." It's a great party tune. It's got what you need in a song, catchy riffs, singalong parts, lyrics people can relate to and chords.

### AU: Any plans for Christmas this year?

JG: Probably sit around in my underwear eating Hawkins Cheezies drowning in a two-six watching *Die Hard* while thinking about how corporate the season has become meanwhile the utilities keep going up and the groceries keep going up and gas keeps going up and the government lost my income tax. While schmucks like us just keep getting fucked, struggling and struggling to keep our heads above water, while these corporations have their foot on the gas driving this planet into a concrete wall. Rabble rabble rabble!

Nah, we are all family in Forever Dead!, Chelsea and I are married and have two kids. Tylore and Jesse (El Gratz) are my brothers and they have wives and kids. We have known Mrac since kindergarten and is practically our grown-up kid. We will likely spend some time hanging with family and friends having winter solstice bonfires, maybe go out to camp for a sauna party, maybe take a psilocybin vacation, Mrac's birthday is right after Christmas, so we usually eat shrimp rings and drink tequila. Probably squeeze a jam sesh in there somewhere and keep on given'er right on into the new year bud?

### AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

JG: Both to the point that they cancel each other out. Fuck you Santa!

### AU: What's on your X-Mas wish list this year?

JG: Fresh socks and gitich. Last year's batch have had enough abuse. Oh and my fucking income tax from 2021, Service Ontario.

### AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2022 list for the following items. Book you read. Movie you saw. Album you heard. Band you saw live. Best local band deserving of more recognition? The thing that blew your mind the most.

JG: Books: I don't really read music, but I am reading the SNFU book.

Movies: I didn't really care for the *Ghostbusters Afterlife* movie, the ending was lame.

Albums: The new Flatliners album is pretty good.

Bands: Artificial Dissemination is a cool band. I saw B.A. Johnson at Tumblestone this past year, he's hilarious. I also saw Headstones play recently,



I have never seen someone throw around a mic stand so much.

Local Bands: Bottom Rockers and Morning Light are awesome.

The thing that blew my mind the most: Last winter. Fuck was there a lot of snow and fuck was it cold.

### AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

JG: We are trying to line up some shows in eastern/southern Ontario and some in Quebec for the summer of 2023. We haven't been on the road since 2011 and only playing in Thunder Bay is getting stale So If anyone out there is reading this and you want some Forever Dead! in your town, get in touch with us eh!

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

JG: We come from the isolated region of Northwestern Ontario, most people think there is nothing here or nothing worth checking out, but that's just absurd. Or they hear Thunder Bay and think North Bay. It's pretty amazing some of the bands we have got to open for here namely, The Misfits, SNFU, Reverend Horton Heat, and The Real Mckenzie's although they haven't come back since that brawl that we started at the show. Well we didn't start it but it was started because of us.



Some fuck heads just dont understand what a circle pit is I guess. A lot of bands are actually shocked when they learn that we are the local band.

Stuff to promote, Check out our new album and all our music on any streaming service you like. better yet buy a CD or digital copy. Preferably not on Bandcamp, it's a scam, you can buy merch directly from us. Just contact Forever Dead! by email or on social media. Also check out *Decline LP* Side



A and Side B on Youtube. It is a side project my brothers and I recorded with some old pals we were in a band with back in the early 2000's. It's a great, punk rock, Christmas album.

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

JG: Thanks for reading this and thanks for picking up a copy of Absolute Underground. Sorry about all the bad grammer and run-on sentences, English class didn't stick.

**ForeverDead.org**

**xforeverdeadx.bandcamp.com/music**

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SH: Whoever in the group that composes and/or arranges a piece of music often scores all the instruments, then we pass the parts to the individual players of the piece, much like an orchestra or a big band group. We've tried writing/jamming at the rehearsal and it just doesn't work, the group operates more like an orchestra than a band in that way hence it's more productive for someone to score something out. It doesn't rule out changing the parts if someone has ideas and such.

## Opus Arise

**Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Mag, for readers unfamiliar with the band, who are you, and what do you do?**

SH: Greetings readers! This is Shawn Hillman, guitarist, and founder of Opus Arise, it's an honor to be featured in this issue!

**AU: You have your sophomore album *The Network* just released on December 2nd, what can you tell our readers about this record?**

SH: This album has been a long time coming, lots of trial and error to get it where it is. Our drummer and violinist, Matthew Logan, is the mastermind behind the music of this cyberpunk-influenced world where two individuals seek discovery and truth in a digital world. Compared to the debut *Revelation*, it's much less metal but more complex and progressive.

**AU: How was it making this record, you're a band of 9 members and various instruments, how do you all work together for the writing and recording?**

**AU: We read that some members are from Vancouver extreme metal bands *Svneatr*, *Thousand Arrows*, and *Ysgaroth*, how is the translation from the extreme to a more classical- influenced instrumental prog band?**

SH: Myself and Matt are part of the Black Metal outfit *Svneatr*, I'm also part of *Thousand Arrows* (Power/Thrash) and *Ysgaroth* (Black/Death/Prog). Bassist Kyle Hagen is also a part of underground legends *Aggression* and death metallers *Assimilation*. All of us have musical backgrounds from Symphony Orchestras, Jazz to World Music. Being fans of all sorts of music, coming into something like *Opus Arise* felt natural.

**AU: We read that the album's music is inspired by a cyberpunk storyline, what drew the band to this concept?**

SH: Matt was the visionary with this project and a big fan of electronic/synthwave music as well as bands like *Between The Buried and Me* and *The Deer Hunter*. With his classical violin background and these influences it naturally worked its way into what *The Network* became.

**AU: What can fans expect from an Opus Arise show?**

SH: A big string section and a huge wall of sound!



If it's a fancon sorta show, then expect us to be in costumes as well!

**AU: We really enjoyed watching the band's video on a *Star Wars* night for the Vancouver Canucks game, any future plans for more events like these?**

SH: Thanks! It was really something else and we reflect on that event quite fondly! In the pre-covid times, we played the Vancouver Retro Game Expo at the Anvil Centre every year and it was always an amazing time, especially arranging and playing video game music.

**AU: Will the band be touring the album this year? or any upcoming select shows fans**

**should mark down on their calendar?**

SH: Not for the foreseeable future, we're not a live band at the moment as we're most members are busy and we want to focus on bringing more content out. Never say never!

**AU: Anything else you like to add for our readers?**

SH: Thanks for taking the time to read this and the folks at Absolute Underground for featuring us! Check out our two albums for the time being as we got some more stuff coming in 2023, cheers!

[facebook.com/OpusArise/](https://facebook.com/OpusArise/)



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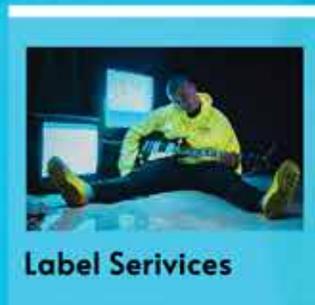


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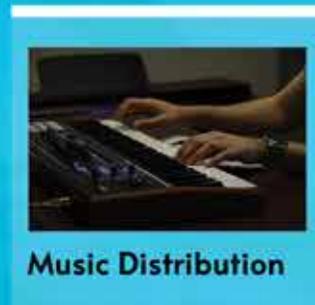
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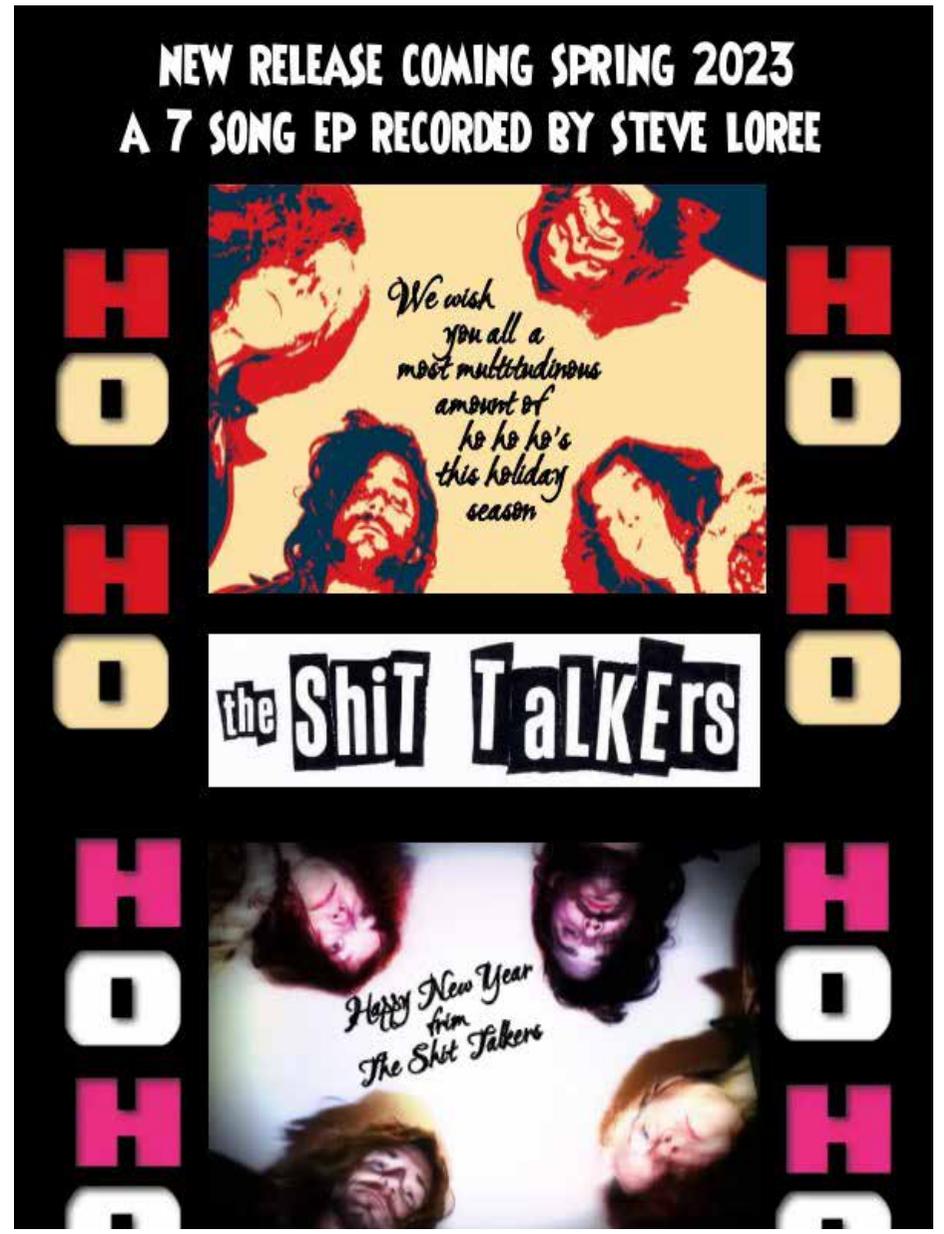
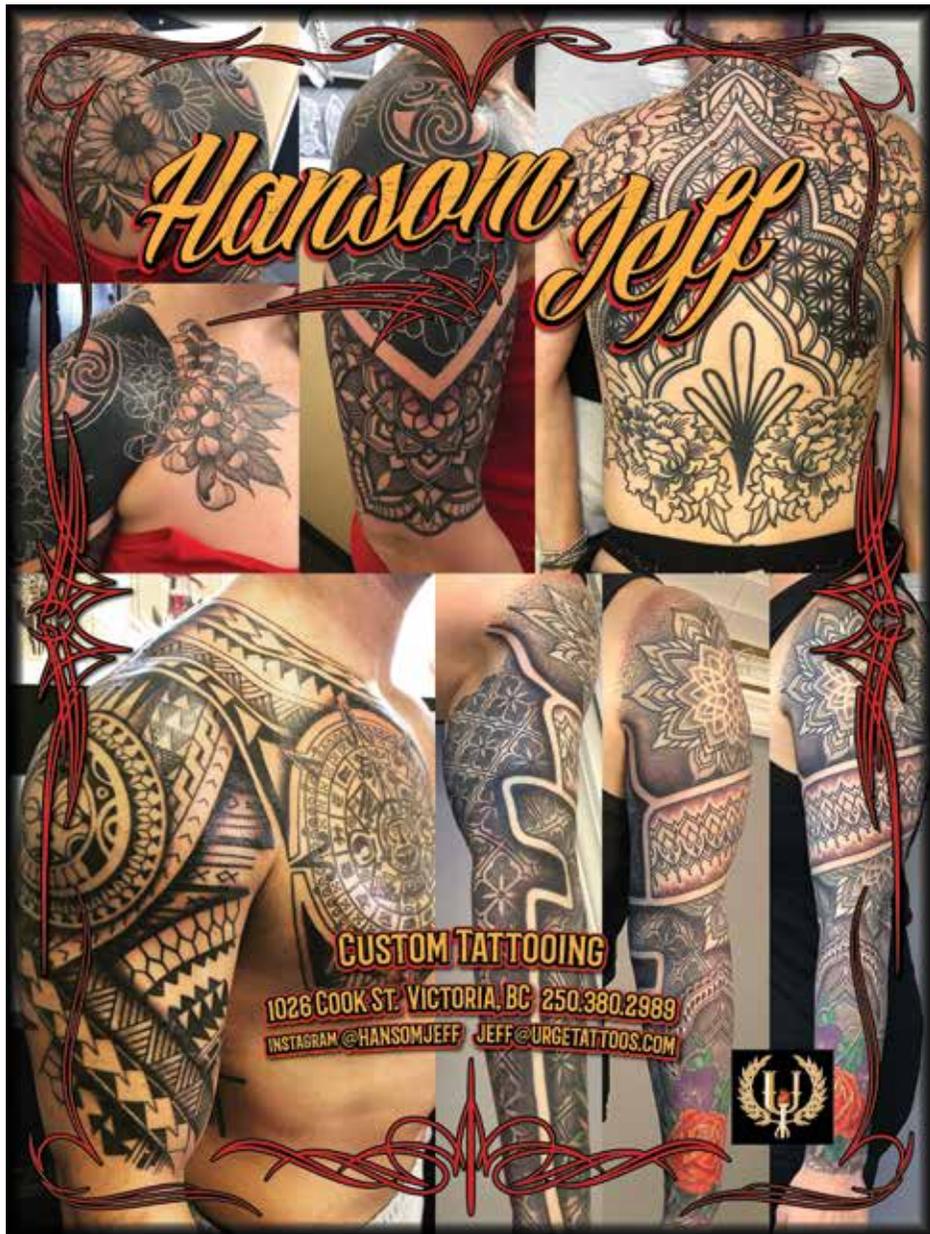
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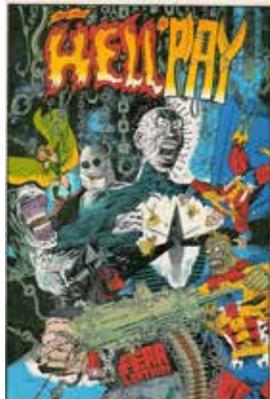
**Kevin O'Neill**  
(22 August 1953-3 November 2022)

By Steve Earles

It is with great sadness that I write of the untimely death of one of comics all-time great creators-Mr. Kevin O'Neill.

Kevin is, and always will be, famous for *Nemesis the Warlock*, *Marshal Law*, *The A.B.C Warriors*, *Metalzoic*, *Bonjo From Beyond The Stars* and *The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. Kevin began working for British publishing company IPC as a teenager on the comic *Buster*. In those days Britain actually had a thriving comics industry. From 1975 to 1970 Kevin published *Just Imagine: The Journal of Film and Television Special Effects* which ran to five regular issues and one special. A story that gives you an idea of Kevin's character is the way he secured an interview with iconic stop motion artist Ray Harryhausen. Kevin simply called the only person with that name in the London telephone directory. He also worked for Gerry Anderson in a design capacity.

Kevin was involved with the creation of the iconic comic *2000AD* from its inception. An area where Kevin deserves massive acclaim is his introduction of creator credit.



Kevin made his imprint on *2000AD* from the very first issue. That's his picture of Tharg (*2000AD*'s alien editor) on the cover, and in the iconic *Valley of Gwangi*-inspired *Flesh*, that's Kev's drawing of the *Flesh* base! Kevin's art and design for a huge part of *2000AD*, posters, short

stories, covers and more were all rendered in Kev's astonishingly original and detailed work- the Hieronymus Bosch of British comics!

Kev also produced some fantastic *Mad Magazine* inspired stories in this time period, *Dash Decent* (a wicked parody of *Flash Gordon*), and *Bonjo From Beyond The Stars*, which is just nuts in the best possible way.

Kev's first major comics creation was the design of *Ro-Busters* (written by Pat Mills) in *Starlord*, itself inspired by Kev's excellent *Mek-Memoirs* comic that he published himself. Though Kev wouldn't actually draw *Ro-Busters* until *Starlord* merged with *2000AD* his designs and covers for their time in *Starlord* are awesome. No one ever has or ever will draw robots with such originality and character as Kev.

*Ro-Busters* would spin off into an incredible saga called *The ABC Warriors* (also written by Pat Mills), telling the tales of Hammerstein from *Ro-Busters*, and his companions, making up *The Mek-Nificent Seven*, and their adventures during the Great War and on Mars.

Next would come *Nemesis the Warlock* (again, written by Pat Mills); one of the finest comic sagas of all time. Kevin's work on *Nemesis*, a breathtaking universe of strange aliens is without peer. I was a teenager when *Nemesis Book Three*

was published in *2000AD*. I used my lunch money to buy two *2000AD*s (no mean feat in 80s Ireland, money was short), so I had one to read, and one to take out Kev's art to put on my bedroom wall. I can tell you *Nemesis Book 3* is burnt into my imagination, I could describe every frame vividly to this day.

An important story of Kev's I must mention is *Shok!*, a beautifully drawn tale that appeared in the 1982 Judge Dredd annual. It's an inspired idea, a war-droid salvaged from the Cursed Earth is reactivated in a Mega City apartment building.

I must say Kevin really deserves a *2000AD* best of in the same vein as *The Best Of Gerry Finley-Day*.

Post *Nemesis Book Three*, Kevin started to work for the American market in the 1980's, running into trouble for a crucifixion scene in an Alan Moore scripted *Tales of the Green Lantern Corps* #2 in 1986.

The Comics Code Authority objected to this story's art. When DC asked what was wrong and what could be changed. The CCA replied that they found Kevin's entire art style objectionable. DC, fair dues, ran the story with the CCA's silly stamp of approval! 1986 also saw the publication of *Metalzoic* by Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill, a creator-owned property. If I had a to pick a favourite of their collaborations, it would be this one, and it's just crying out to be reprinted in black and white because really, it deserves the widest possible audience.

Next Kevin O'Neill and Pat Mills would collaborate on *Marshal Law* for Epic comics, another creator owned series about Hero Hunter Marshal Law ("I hunt heroes. I haven't found any yet."), an excellent venomous satire on the entire superhero genre. After a six-issue series, and a



couple of well-received one-shots, *Marshal Law* moved to well-received but short lived British comic *Toxic*. Over the years *Marshal Law* would appear again and again, my favourite being a crossover with Pinhead from Clive Barker's *Hellraiser*.

In 1999, Kev joined forces with Alan Moore for the epic *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, using various characters from Victorian literature to great effect. This would be Kevin's primary project for many years, saying he would retire on the story's completion. It's

well worth quoting what Moore said of O'Neill in *The Guardian* in 2011. "He is one of the finest and most distinctive comic-book artists this country has ever turned out. Also, he is the only one of my mainstream collaborators who is from a similar background to myself and who has ever taken my side in any of my bust-ups with the comic companies."

Despite being ill, Kevin continued to work with both Garth Ennis and Pat Mills. I did not have the privilege of knowing Kevin, however, my friend David McDonald at Hibernia Publishing did.

The nicest thing of all David said was simply: "Kevin was a gent." Kevin's art style went beyond comics, it transcended it, his art was excellent by any criteria. He's up there with Bosch, Hogarth, Bruegel and Goya. Kevin, thank you for your wonderful art and storytelling. While people still have

an imagination, a sense of awe, joy and wonder, your art will always remain immortal!

*A longer verion of this tribute, containing more anecdotes about Kevin O'Neill, and an extended piece of writing by Hibernia Publishing's David McDonald, is available at absoluteunderground.tv*





## Dan McCafferty

Oct 14th 1946 - Nov 8th 2022

By Sheldon Byer

Dan McCafferty born William Daniel McCafferty on October 14th 1946 was the vocalist of the iconic hard rock band Nazareth. The gravel-voiced Scotsman tore through 23 albums with the band from 1971 to 2014 and influenced a plethora of iconic singers and bands throughout. In fact at a submarine base in Glasgow Nazareth supported Brian Johnson of AC/DC's freshman band "Gordie" in the mid

1970s. Johnson recalls needing to grit up his game after Dan and co.

stole the show. Unfortunately, on November 8th 2022 Dan passed to causes not made public knowledge. He was 76 years old. Dan has left a legacy of music, loud n' proud, now the afterlife is messin' with a son of a bitch!

REST IN POWER!

## Laura Marie Wiebe

(1976 - 2022)

### A personal tribute by Steve Earles

We have been surrounded by death during the Pandemic. Yet, it's always the deaths of those who have touched us in our lives that hurt the most.

Laura passed away on August 16th after a brave battle with cancer. I lost my own father during the to cancer during the Pandemic, and I will always remember the genuine warmth and kindest Laura showed to me I look back in retrospect and realise how much pain she was in herself, and so value it all the more.

Laura and I first came into contact when I reviewed a book she had contributed an article on doom metal to. She graciously contacted me to thank me and asked me if I'd like to contribute to Hellbound.ca, where she was



both a writer and an editor. We worked together for the next ten years until she became too ill to continue. I cannot emphasise enough the positive contribution Laura made to the music scene in Canada and abroad. Many bands and labels were helped by her. She was endlessly enthusiastic, no suggestion I made was ever turned down, and the endless hours of unpaid work she put in stand in tribute to her. It was always a pleasure to read one of her letters or emails, as she had a beautiful mind, lightning quick at making connections on a multitude of topics; able to connect John Carpenter to HP Lovecraft and quantum mechanics.

My overriding memory of her will always be her endless kindness, as she truly was one of the kindest people I have ever had the privilege to know.

And, I mean, how can you not love a lady who



calls her cat Asbestos? If I ever get a fifth cat, I'm stealing that name Laura! My sympathies to Laura's beloved family, her sisters, her special niece Sarah, and much loved partner Adam.

Laura, you may be gone from this plane of

inspire me.

I'm sure you're reunited with your folks and your beloved cats.

Till we meet again, love always, Steve.

existence (I always think of the line from Stephen King's 'The Dark Tower' - 'Go then, there are worlds other than this'), but you won't be forgotten. I'll always treasure our correspondence, especially towards the end when you could no longer type and it took great courage to put pen to paper. A fighter to the last breath! Your courage will always



## Wilko

## Johnson

July 12th 1947 - Nov 21st 2022

By Sheldon Byer

John Andrew Wilkinson better known as Wilko Johnson might not be the first name you think of when asked about iconic guitarists. Wilko and his pioneering pub rock band Dr. Feelgood defined a sound in the mid 70s that set the tone for the '77 UK Punk movement.

His signature fingerstyle guitar attack enabled him to play rhythm guitar and riffs/solos at the same time creating a highly percussive guitar sound. Cited as a major influence of The Clash, The Jam, the Sex Pistols and Franz Ferdinand, his angry, twitchy, out of control demeanour set a blue print for

spastic and confrontational stage presence. After four albums, Johnson split from Dr. Feelgood and released a string of solo albums, starting a few other projects and also collaborating with Ian Dury and Roger Daltry. After taking part in the fantastic *Oil City Confidential* documentary,

he was cast as the mute executioner Ser Ilyn Payne on *Game Of Thrones*. The producers were looking for someone who "went around looking daggers at people before killing them." Unfortunately on November 21st Wilko passed away at the age of 75. REST IN POWER.



## Wesley Phelps

October 19, 1969 - October 9, 2022

One day I get up to see our buddy Wes all over Facebook and realize it was not his birthday. What a blow Victoria gets dealt! One of the biggest supporters and fans of local music had left us way too soon, leaving so many of us heartbroken, its gonna take a while to get over. I had known Wes since high school when he drove a Celica and got speeding tickets on Friday nights cranking Ramones or The Cult. On some weekends we would go to the Rat's Nest. We kept running into each other over the years as he would be at every show I was at too. This guy was down with everyone from Meatlocker 7 to Gnar Gnars, Dayglo Abortions to AK-47... and he brought these scenes together as well. We all know how much he liked his dogs and his martial arts (he saved my ass twice at Logan's) and he was one of the

funniest humans on social media. It's hard to say how many funny late night chats we had, as I'm sure he had lots as well with all of you. I can't say how many local bands Wes played me first before I had heard them because he had seen them and recommended them, but there were quite a few. His party house on 404 Wilson Street in the late 80's gave the Delta Fraternity boys a run for their money. Hell, I could go on all week, fact is Victoria is gonna miss you Wes Phelps. Make me a good playlist for when we all meet again... Rock In Peace our good friend.

-Dustin Jak

Everybody in the Victoria music scene knows how supportive Wes Phelps was when it came to the bands he loved. One particular incident stood out with me in abundance.

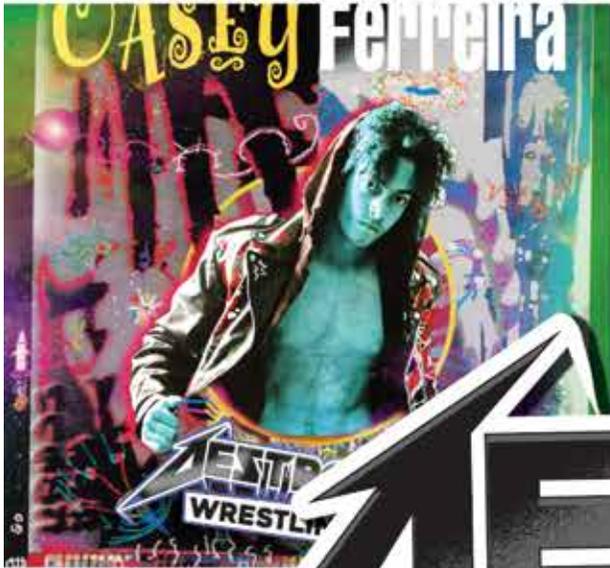
One night, The Gnar Gnars got off stage and I was manning the merch booth, when Wes approached with a smile and a hug (as he usually did). It was then that he spotted our neon green printed booty shorts. His eyes lit up and he bought a pair. I thought that was real nice of him to buy panties for his girl or gramma or whatever. We finished the night, said our goodbyes and went our separate ways. The next morning I woke up and scrolling through my phone I discovered multiple messages from Wes. As it turned out the undergarments were for him to wear as his girlfriend took pictures of him with nothing but the Gnar panties on, blowing kisses, shaking his money maker and what not... needless to say I lost my shit laughing (as he intended). Wes was truly one of a kind and one of the warmest people I've ever met. And he taught me to never assume who will wear your panties. May he rest in Peace.

-Brains Desfosses

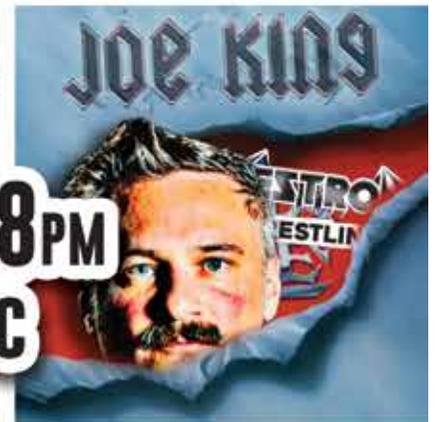




# DESTROY WRESTLING 3: WRESTLEOCALYPSE



# ESTRO WRESTLING WRESTLEOCALYPSE



FRIDAY, JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 AT 8PM  
RICKSHAW THEATRE - VANCOUVER, BC



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