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Vol. 21 - #5 - Issue 125 - AUG/SEPT 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Published by Ira Hunter

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CROSSWORD BY PAUL GOTT	6
VERNACULAR	8
NEWFOUNDLAND NIGHTMARE - GUNTMOLD	9
AUSTRALIA'S BELAKOR	10
VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY - HEDONIST	13
VANCOUVER VENGEANCE - THE BIFURCATED	17
CALGARY CARNAGE - SUB//CELL - DYING REMAINS	18-19
INFEST 2025 - ANTHRODYNIA - UNHOLY GRAVE - SCALDING	21-22
PURPLE CITY - DON - PADDY DUDDY - BONDBREAKR	23-24
TORONTO TRASH - GOMER	26
SASKATOMB - KRATORNAS	27
MONTREAL MASSACRE - Z-COCOON	28
OTTAWA ONSLAUGHT - DOLL	29
HAM JAMMERS - THE ISOSCELES PROJECT	30
BENEATH THE WHEEL - EXSANG	31
QUE PASO CANADA - SUBLIME IN TEXAS HEAT	33
INK SLINGERS - BABYTEETH TATTOO	34
NEW MUSIC SHOWCASE - CHURCH OF SCUM	35
POWDER SEEKERS - STORM OF THE CENTURY PART 4	37
ABSOLUTE HORROR - EXISTENTIAL CRISIS	38
BACKSTAGE PASS VENUE PROFILE - THE GLOBE LIVE STUDIO	40
CROWDSURF COMEDY - SIMON KING	43
SHRED SESSION - LADYSMITH SKATEBOARD COLLECTIVE	44
RECORD LABEL PROFILE - CARTRIDGE HEART	45
CANNABIS CORNER - VICTORIA CANNABIS COMPANY	46
TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE	47
BLAST FROM THE PAST - THE DOORS IN VICTORIA	48
BREWING 101 - LOVE SHACK LIBATIONS	49
BONES BEFORE FORTUNE - KEITH DUROCHER	50
KILLOTINE	51
HOG MEETS FROG	53
ON THIS SPOT	55
OPHIOLATRY	57
RICHARD HELL - FIRST PUNK - TELEVISION	58
SYRINX	60
SHORES OF NULL	61
VORTEX	62
SINISTER SYNDICATE	63
EVERYTHING ELECTRIC - ROBERT LLEWELLYN	64
TEN DAYS LATE	65
DARK ANGEL - GENE HOGAN	66-67
OZZY OSBOURNE MEMORIAL TRIBUTES	70-75
MAC SABBATH - PHILLIPS BACKYARD MUSIC FEST	76-77
CRYPTOPSY - AN INEXTINGUISHABLE VIOLENCE	80
HELLOWEEN - GIANTS AND MONSTERS	82
METAL MELTDOWN - DAVE LOMBARDO PART 1	83
GWAR - SAWBORG DESTRUCTO - BEEFCAKE THE MIGHTY	84-85
COLD SLITHER	87
NOMEANSNO MUDHONEY PART 3	88
SUPREME ECHO - SIKPHUX	90
WITCHKILLER - RETURN OF THE SAXONS	91
FLY THE INSECT	92
SNUF COMIC BOOK - COME WITH ME, I'M ON MY WAY	93
DIY - GO KICK-ASS! 3	94
TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH - ANGIE EDWARDS	96
INVISIBLE ORANGE - OCTOPOLPE	97
COMIC-GEDDON - PURPLE CITY 2025	99
REVEREND BEAT-MAN	100
CHECK YOUR HEAD	101
THE CAVERNOUS	102
ULTRASONIC FILM - JOSEPH SIMS-DENNETT	103
SEASON OF MIST - STONED JESUS	104
STOMP RECORDS - THE PLANET SMASHERS	105
LONGSHOT MUSIC - BOMBER	106
PIRATES PRESS RECORDS - HUNTING LIONS	107
ENDNOTE RECORDS - DOGWHISTLE	108
KINDA COOL RECORDS - DIE JOB - RIPCORDERZ TOUR TIPS	109
LUNCHMEAT VHS - FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 2	110
HERBAL WITCH - FIGHT CLUB FIRST AID	111
DNR - DO NOT READ - DO NOT RESUSCITATE	112
ARTIST PROFILE - KEENAN POLONCSAK	113
HEADSTONES - HUGH DILLON - PARTY	115
NIGHT COURT	116
DIE KREUZEN - MAD WET SEA	118
ABSOLUTE LIVE REVIEWS	120-121
DOUBLE J PHOTOGRAPHY - SPIDERFEST COLLAGE	122
SKA AND REGGAE FESTIVAL PHOTO COLLAGE	123
ABSOLUTE COMIX - SBAM RECORDS	126-127
ABSOLUTE MOVIE REVIEWS	128
UNDERGROUND IN RECOVERY	129
ABSOLUTE ALBUM AND SNACK REVIEWS	130-131
ANARCHY ON ABBEY ROAD	133
FALLEN SOLDIERS - JIM DURKIN - STEVEN LECKIE	134



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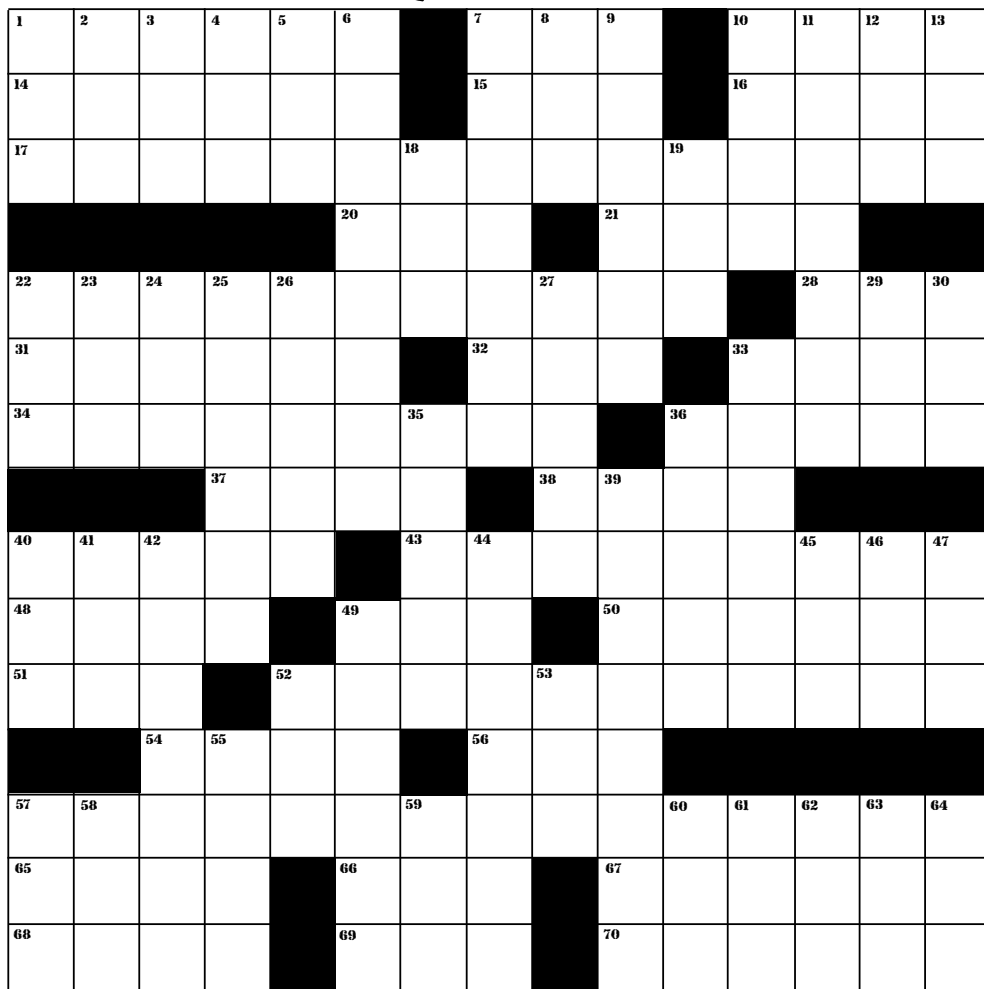
IT'S OPPOSITE DAY!

ACROSS

1. Greene and Olmos in "Battlestar Galactica"
7. Form of gambling (abbr.)
10. Look over
14. Mental & emotional condition
15. Popular South American vacation spot
16. River in Tuscany
17. * Mob hit in Toronto?
20. Billy Bishop, for example
21. Highly corrosive substances
22. * Convoluted comedy in Brantford?
28. Joint or cooler
31. Leading to a deduction (with 'a')
32. Hogtown
33. The Ramones' first label
34. Piece of workout equipment
36. See 40-across
37. 'Ski _____' chain in Utah
38. High-tech tavern?
40. With 36-across, beautiful music in Toronto?
43. Start of a telephone prompt
48. Moss used in gardening
49. It sets rates in the States
50. Famous scholarship
51. TV interruptions
52. * Target for Nike or Adidas in Hamilton?
54. Svelte
56. Canada's contribution to the space shuttle
57. * Pensioners in Vancouver?
65. "My Name is _____"
66. A loooong time
67. Anything but extraordinary
68. Home of CBGB's
69. Punk _____ (Hot Wheels car)
70. You, after being in the pit

DOWN

1. Org. for busses and metros in the Montreal area
2. Shithead-led band
3. Info on an airport monitor
4. Absolute Underground, for ex.
5. Option at a tavern
6. Keep for later
7. Command
8. Social media first name
9. _____maker beer cocktail



CROSSWORD NO. 118

THE FALL OF 2025

10. Sign often including an "!"
11. Actor Glover
12. ____-Margret of Viva Las Vegas
13. Seasonal drink
18. Green prefix
19. Partner of mus.
22. Family doctors
23. "You ____ Not Alone"
24. Model played by Angelina Jolie
25. Modern address ending
26. "_____ my case"
27. Wooden peg
29. "____ I saw Elba."
30. Popular 80's gaming system
33. "Not exactly"
35. Give a film a second chance?
36. Task in Temiscaming
39. Ingmar and Ingrid
40. It may be at a hot spring
41. Merge together
42. _____ Townships (region of Quebec)
44. _____ Harvey video game
45. Alien on "Deep Space Nine"
46. Keanu in "The Matrix"
47. Approx.
49. It makes the Mustang and Jaguar
52. "No Sleep ____ Brooklyn"
53. Swedish epic film "____: The Knight Templar"
55. Word before mackerel or cow
57. Bo Derek on film
58. Common animal fodder
59. Speak softly to a lover
60. Big stock market index
61. Get mad
62. Doctors' group in the U.S.
63. League in MLB
64. Leader of the Family Stone

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By John Carlow

In this new feature Absolute Underground takes a few minutes to highlight someone in the local Vic scene.

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself

Sina: My name is Sina Valizadeh and for most of my life I have been living on Lekwungen territory, also called Victoria, BC, originally moving from Iran at a young age.

AU: Current and past projects?

Sina: Past projects: Mike at Large.

Current projects: Androgyn, Cooplore, IQ78, Jobsite, Pindian and the Nation of Creation, Queens Park, TECHNOPENG.

AU: What draws you to the local scene?

Sina: What draws to me to the scene is the music. I love music and watching live performances. I also go to shows to watch my friends perform or attend the shows they organize.

AU: Where did you learn to play drums?

Sina: I got into playing drums by playing *Rock Band* as a kid! After smashing that kit for a year, my parents signed me up for drum lessons and I spent about three years (from ages 12-15) learning drums at Long and McQuade with a local teacher, Mike Fraser. I had some off years after I stopped taking lessons, but I started playing again by the end of high school. As a way to keep learning, I've gone through a couple drum books and try to emulate what I see my favourite drummers doing, but I attribute most of my drumming knowledge to the lessons I took back then.

AU: Fav bands?

Sina: Growing up, I mostly listened to metal (Metallica, Avenged Sevenfold, Megadeth) and rap (Tupac, Biggie, Nas). Rock bands like Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, and Rush were also my favourites. For the past few years, my favourite band has been Tricot, a rock band from Japan.

AU: What are you reading?

Sina: I try to read often and read books about lots of different topics, usually more non-fiction than fiction. Right now, I'm reading a book called *Black Cat*, a collection of short stories written by various authors, and edited by Shanon Sinn.

AU: Thoughts on the state of the local scene?

Sina: It's hard to describe where the local scene is at right now; on one hand, we've seen multiple venues close over the past few years and it's not clear how these spaces will be replaced, on the

to slow down without more venues opening up dedicated to music.

AU: What did Logans (RIP) mean to you?

Sina: I've had only positive experiences at Logans. By the time I was attending more shows and performing more, the pandemic lockdown started and Logans had to shut down. I'm grateful I had the opportunity to perform there two times with Mike at Large and watch a few shows, I've heard so many people talk about their times at Logans it's made me understand its importance to the local scene.



other hand, bands are still finding places to book shows and there are usually 3-4 shows on any given Friday or Saturday. The musicians in Victoria are vibrant and they are finding ways to organize events, but it's impossible to guess whether this is a sustainable way forward or if the scene will start

AU: Do we need a soundtrack to a new revolution?

Sina: If there's anyone writing the soundtrack to a new revolution, that would be my friend Alex who performs under the name Pindian. I play in his live band (the Nation of Creation) and I can say

first-hand that Alex's music is opening up people's minds to the realities of colonization and how the oppression of Indigenous people and ways of life is still present and ongoing.

AU: What else is important to you?

Sina: Shout-out my friend Chloe who has been advocating for making shows more accessible and being the local consultant on accessibility in the music scene. If any promoters want help organizing accessible shows, they can reach out on Instagram (@[crip.toria](#)).

Events in any scene are made possible by the people who attend and support the events. For artists, organizers, writers, etc., maybe the most important role we can take in our scene is that of a show-goer as well.

Indigenous people are still oppressed by imperialists, here and elsewhere. We need to work to restore living in balance with the earth rather than accept this unsustainable, forceful rule.

Trans people are facing harsh attacks by politicians, and we all need to recognize and stand up to this discrimination. The Conservative party is blatantly transphobic.

Let's support the organizations helping people who need places to live. This city is outright cruel to the groups of people sheltering outside, they deserve more compassion than what they get from police and politicians.

Keep pursuing interests and whatever else that's fun. Obviously, stability and relationships come first, but making life interesting by your own standards is highly important.


AU: What's in the future for you?

Sina: More love, more music, more work, activism through music and work, observing and experiencing this hellish era of human civilization, death.

Photo by Finding Charlotte Photography

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NEWFOUNDLAND NIGHTMARE



Guntmold

SANCTUARY OF TORN FLESH

AU: Who are we talking to?

Hails! We are Guntmold, we are known for being the only extreme metal group for probably hundreds of miles, being from the small distant town of St Lawrence, Newfoundland.

AU: Where are you from?

We are from Newfoundland, Canada. The music scene here is quite active. The best metal groups from here are Grenadier and Grole.

AU: Tell us the dark origin of the band.

Guntmold was formed in 2023, by Grim and

Embalmer as the first metal group out of the town of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland. After a couple of demos in the style of thrash, Guntmold decided to become more oriented to black metal, and with the joining of member Gavin we released the "Blackened Infection" EP. Now after a long wait, we have performed our first show at the end of 2024 and then released our first album, *Sanctuary Of Torn Flesh*!

AU: What kind of music do you perform?

Guntmold performs black metal, with elements of old school death metal. Heavy inspiration comes from Darkthrone, Emperor,



Burzum, Celtic Frost, Death, Stormtroopers Of Death, Ifernach, and Carpathian Forest.

AU: Tell us about your new album.

Sanctuary Of Torn Flesh is our first full length release, standing at just under a half hour in length. After the introductory piece, the listener is ripped apart by "1929", a song written about the tidal wave disaster of the Newfoundland Burin peninsula. Each track is a slab of evil, dark black metal, until the pensive acoustic piece "Beyond The Trees", which acts as a calming intermission

before the grand finale "Black Dense Fog in the Valley of the Mutilated Corpses", a slower tempo piece that transports you to a vicious battle in the night, fog so thick that you cannot hear your brothers call out to you, and the occasional dim flash of light from swords clashing in the dark.

AU: Tell us about your inclusion on a metal compilation from Guts and Blood Records?

Guts And Blood Records contacted us in regards to featuring "The Sickness" from our first EP "Blackened Infection" on their compilation... They have reviewed our EP, and interviewed us for their magazine Rotten Pages. The CD press of that compilation should be out soon!

AU: Tell us about opening for Spectral Wound.

A member of Spectral Wound attended our first show in December, and not long after that we were informed by our close friend in Grenadier that we were chosen to open alongside them for the (at the time) unannounced Spectral Wound show that summer! By the time this interview is released, we will likely have played that show. Very exciting!



AU: Anything else to mention?

Our album is very likely going to be released on a label this Fall... not telling which one just yet, but this is a great achievement to us!

AU: Any tours in the works.

No tours to announce just yet! Hoping to do some shows off the island soon.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Hail Satan.

AU: Where can we find you online?

You can find our music on Bandcamp as well as most streaming services (Spotify, Apple Music, etc.), our Instagram page is @gntmold709.



Finnish Twilight and Studio Visions: Australia's Be'lakor

By Alia Synesthesia

AU: You are about to start your first-ever North American tour. Are you excited?

Steve Merry: Yeah, of course we are. You know, it's a huge logistical undertaking, but there's always a mixture of feelings before the tour until you know you've got everything ready to go. Regardless, we're looking forward to it.

AU: You describe your approach as studio-first. Is it challenging to turn your studio visions into live performance?

SM: We've started using some backing tracks to help bring more atmosphere to the show. For example, the song "The Smoke of Many Fires" has a lot of atmospheric sounds, so we're incorporating more of that live where we can—adding a bit of extra ambience through the backing track. The trickiest part is the multi-layered harmonies. Sometimes we have three or four layers of lead guitar going on at once, and

those are the hardest to translate live, but I don't think it's too bad. There are bands that find it harder—some have a full orchestral sound, but we aren't that kind of band; we're very riff-driven.

AU: Do you recall any moments during your live shows that stood out to you?

SM: Yeah, especially on our European tour two years ago. We played the Twilight Festival in Finland—we'd never been there before. The sun was setting, and there were mountains and forest surrounding the festival stage. Some people had been waiting quite a while to see us, and the energy was incredible. All these things combined made it feel truly special. Another time I can think of is when we played in Zurich, near the tour's end. It was a smaller venue, with a mirror ball on the ceiling. I'd never played under one of these before. It shone across the whole crowd with shimmery lights. It was a similar kind of feeling [to Finland]: a lot of excitement, but also this beautiful, serene atmosphere.

Those two really stood out. It's always fun playing somewhere new, especially when someone says, "I've waited 12 years for this." You feel how special

it is for them... and that energy builds. We all feel it—it's really cool.

AU: Nothing in your tracks feels out of place. This typically demands a lot of precision in composition and songwriting. How do you balance this with musical spontaneity? Do you ever improvise live or in the studio?

SM: We haven't done much improvisation while recording an album; we probably do more of that with the atmospheric parts. We come in with the complete skeleton of a song that we feel very clear about, but then think: How can we elevate this further with some additional sounds that could help to bring more feeling to the track? We usually don't plan those elements much beforehand. Sometimes spontaneity comes in when you're working with a producer, friend, or an audio engineer who has ideas. When we worked on *Vessels* with Julian Renzo, he brought in sounds and atmospheres that we would not have thought of. So that's probably the only space for improvisation we currently have. We'd be a little too scared to come into a studio without a very clear idea of what parts we're recording. Because we put so much into our songs—it takes us a long time to plan everything through, which is why we take three to five years between albums. If we went into the studio with bits missing, we'd spend way more time there.

AU: Philip Glass is mentioned as one of your influences. How did that happen?

SM: Philip Glass is certainly an inspiration to me as a keyboard/piano player. I wouldn't say the



other guys even know who he is. I write a lot of music on piano, and he was one of my first eye-opening listens. He has five-to-ten-minute progressive piano pieces with few repetitions and a lot put into musical idea development. Overall, there is a very broad set of diverse interests in the

band. John, our bass player, listens to a lot of EDM, and Shaun is into Alcest and more of that shoegazy/proggy stuff. George leans more into the groove or tech side.

AU: After the tour, what's next for Be'lakor? Are you thinking of working on new material, or is something already in the works?

SM: We've been working on a new album. We still have some writing to do, but we've written well over half, or probably three quarters of it. After the tour, we'll just go back into that writing mode. It's a lot

of hard work, but this is our calling—to make and release new music.

Be sure to catch Be'lakor in Toronto at Lee's Palace on September 12th, as well in Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver in September.

belakor.bandcamp.com



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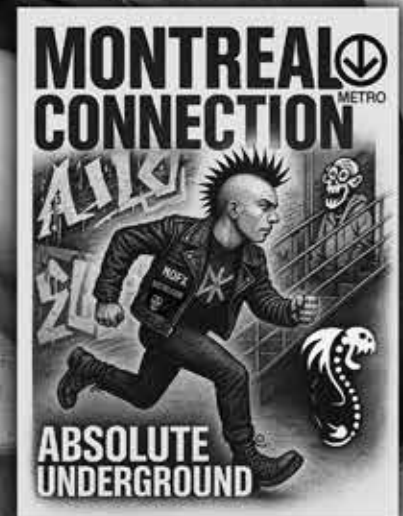
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HEDONIST

By John Carlow

Absolute Underground: Introduce the band

Hedonist: Guitar: JP

Guitar: AA

Drums: CB

Bass/Vocals: AJ

AU: When/how did the band come together?

Hedonist: For both being into a niche subculture, JP and I somehow have almost entirely opposing tastes in punk and metal. We wanted to start a death metal band together based on the one thing we both appreciated: Bolt Thrower. We took shared crust influences and elements of Swedish death metal and started Hedonist. The writing process is still an absolute warzone and the songs that you hear have won gruelling battles between very antagonistic ideas of how death metal should sound. When we formed in 2020, we knew Cody needed to be drumming and after releasing our first demo and deciding to play live Anatol would join on guitar. All of us have recently completed our first full length record together.

AU: How did the name happen?

Hedonist: We play the music we want to hear.

AU: How do the music and words come together? What are the songs about generally?

Hedonist: The words are loudly projected and poorly articulated to the rest of the instruments. It's poetry.....

AU: Would you like to add more production to

the live show?

Hedonist: With more resources, maybe we could add production like Yamantaka Eye of Hanatarash driving a bulldozer leaking gas through the front door and into the venue. The KLF and ENT also had some cool pyrotechnics/machine guns at the Brit awards in 92.



But in all seriousness, we don't require anything more than having good sound. We will always be stoked on playing basement shows and DIY venues.

AU: Thoughts on the local metal scene?

Hedonist: Victoria has always had a small but dedicated underground scene that is maybe more active now than ever. The biggest issue is the lack

grind, black, and thrash has always had more of a presence.

I've been in the scene since 2010 so can't offer first-hand insight on the old Victoria stuff, but

the label Supreme Echo is doing great work reissuing old metal bands on vinyl, mostly violent thrash like Deranged, Karrion, Archfiend, Mission of Christ, and recently Jonas' lone brutal grind demo from '96. I'll also single out the Dementia - *Reticulation 7*" which is extremely primitive and sloppy death metal played by kids in '87-'88 reissued on NWN! My favourites from the old scene are the Armors and Conqueror full lengths.

AU: What has the band recorded to date and what are you working on now?

Hedonist: We currently have a demo available, and we have just finished recording our first full length which will be released by Southern Lord sometime this year.

hedonistdeathmetal.bandcamp.com

hedonistdeathmetal@protonmail.com

@hedonistdeathmetal

Photo by Finding Charlotte Photography

of venues. Altered Dead is the longest running DM band from here, great band and people. That is really all I can think of when it comes to other straight up death metal that is active. Punk,

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CALGARY CARNAGE



Sub//Cell

Garage Swamp Rock

By Chadsolute

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

SC: We are Sub//Cell based out of Calgary, located on Treaty 7 territory.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band?

SC: Colin and Joelle ran into each other walking home from Sled Island two summers ago and decided to jam out some songs and then yeah, our band slowly started growing from there. Now it's Colin, Joelle, Ethan, Eirik and Kaitlin. Sled born lol.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

SC: We're a bit of a mash up of garage, post punk,

psych rock, we're calling it Garage Swamp Rock.

AU: What's a memorable concert story?

SC: Last spring we went out to Vancouver and played the Wisehall which was huge for us. Played with our new besties Never Plenty (big fans) as well as Doom Cocoon and Decomme, all rad Vancouver bands. Anyways, didn't get enough sleep but had the time of our lives. Shout out to Eirik for doing the majority of the driving.

AU: What are some of the inspirations you draw on while writing music?

SC: It's definitely a mash up from all of us as we all have different music backgrounds which has helped our unique approach to music writing as well as our sound. We also draw a lot of the lyric ideas from shared experiences. For example re//LAX is about Joelle missing her flight in LA (a trip

her and Colin took to see D.I.V.). OH and... haha, a few of our songs are 100% about LOTR!

AU: How do you approach writing music?

SC: Originally Colin and Joelle started writing the songs and then would bring them to the group to polish them off. More recently we've been sitting together and coming up with riffs where everyone kinda pitches in and comes up with ideas, it's honestly the best thing about being in this band. Everyone works really well together, and we have a blast doing it.

AU: If you could hire anyone to do your album art, who would you pick?

SC: Well we had our buddy Gus from Brainbent/Cheer do the art for a show poster for our lil BC tour which we really loved (planning on using the same graphic for merch), and would definitely work more with him in the future. Also, Eirik did the art for our single release, and honestly I think we are all in agreement that we want him to do the art for our upcoming EP cover. He used cut outs from old porno mags which was pretttty sick.

AU: Most memorable live show you've performed and why?

SC: Definitely the Wisehall show. Shout out to Vanessa from Heartache No.2 Records for taking a chance on us. Biggest stage and one of the biggest crowds we've played so far. So many good buds out there and new friends from the whole bill, epic vibes. Oh, yeah we opened for Metz when we first started out at the Palomino last August, which was also epic. Thanks Dan Northfield!

AU: Greatest career highlight to date?

SC: Getting into Sled Island the first summer we were officially a band was pretty sweet seeing as that's how and where we started off. I think we're pretty excited to see where we go once our EP is released to the world, so yeah, more highlights to come.

AU: Career lowlight?

SC: HA, we had a rough show at the ship awhile back when we decided not to practice beforehand, and then Joelle also tripped her power lol. HOWEVER, we are playing there again this week and are up for redemption.

AU: Tell us about some of your other projects, are they currently active this year?

SC: We're all in a few different projects. Joelle also plays for Window Lamp, Colin and Kaitlin are in Lushings, Kaitling is also in All Hands on Jane, Ethan is in Cheer, and Eirik is in Parisian Orgy. All pretty active so WE BUSY haha.



AU: Anything else to promote?

SC: We are super stoked to be playing Moments Fest this year, August 30-31 on Siksika Nation. Also we will eventually be releasing our EP, it's kinda stuck in some purgatory right now, but we're working on it! Check out our single re//LAX though - it's on all the streaming platforms.

AU: Final words of wisdom for our readers?

SC: Play music with your best buds.


Bandcamp: subcell1.bandcamp.com



Facebook: Sub//Cell

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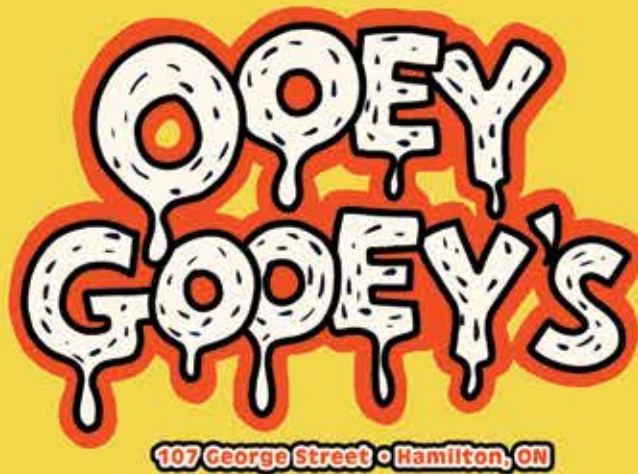
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SEPTEMBER

4th - Jump Coven, Jesse James & the willows, Eli Wells & the well wells, Jupiter allan
5th - Baby's First Pistol w/ guests
6th - Rat Sabbath cover band
10th - Dale Ross w/ guests
11th - July Effect, Wrought, Mace, Dambe, One to Blame
12th - Peter Elkas Band
13th - Cartridge Heart with guests
18th - The midwife crisis folk punk night with guests
19th - Hotfix, Lightkeeper & more TBA
20th - Yung Scumz with more TBA
21st - Monthly MOTHER drag night hosted by Xtacy Love & Karma Kameleon
22nd - Open Mic Comedy
24th - World News Band w/ more TBA
25th - Sullen, Public Health, with more TBA
26th - Arcane Ghosts w/ guests
27th - The 45 Selector DJ night
28th - Just Right, Die Alone, Skullgate, and more

AUGUST

14th - Mucho Disaster & Pretox
15th - Mike Legere, Jesse Bout, Dartboard
16th - Jaida & Carolyn w/ guests
17th - Monthly MOTHER drag night hosted by Xtacy Love & Karma Kameleon
20th - Punk Rock Sewing Night
21st - Dyke Takeover
22nd - Fbombs, Soap Eaters, Evelyns
23rd - The 45 Selector DJ night
24th - Cam Wilson w/ guests
25th - Open Mic Comedy
28th - Hooky Cover band
30th - QEW, Captain Wildchild, Strawberry Cough, Unknown Voldz
31st - Anorak w/ guests



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DYING REMAINS

Merciless Suffering

Interview with Damon MacDonald (Vocals, Guitars)

By Ryan Dyer

Calgary's Dying Remains has battered and beaten Canadian crowds for the past couple of years in support of their Entombed in Putrefaction EP. This September, they take the show on the road with a U.S. tour alongside Gored Embrace and Mutilation Barbecue, in support of their first full-length album, Merciless Suffering (Maggot Stomp Records). I caught up with Damon MacDonald before the trek to talk new music, album art, videos, saw blades and torture racks.

AU: Entombed in Putrefaction gave listeners a taste of Dying Remains. What can people expect from the full meal that is Merciless Suffering?

DM: With Merciless Suffering, we wanted to take what we established with the EP and really lock into that sound—polish it up. The slow riffs hit harder, the fast, intense sections are spread

throughout, there's more dynamic songwriting, more solos—but most importantly, we wanted to stay true to what we'd already started. If you liked the EP, you'll like the album.

AU: The cover art by Shoggoth Kinetic is a gnarly hellscape filled with demonic, skeletal entities, but it doesn't feel like a direct copy of any one style. What direction did you give?

DM: I gave Lucas a really bad sketch and bad composition originally, but he told me to use more descriptive words to build a feeling. I

said "bleak," "suffering," "rotting," and "torture," and we think he nailed it. It's greasy, dark, surreal—perfect for the album's tone.

AU: The "Hung and Drawn" video has a muted, smoky horror aesthetic—and features Dominic from Satanic Tea Co. getting roughed up. Did he brew the wrong thing?

DM: We're trying to get him to make coffee next, and this video was a representation of what will happen if he doesn't. Dom rules, and it was a blast working with him. Aron Diaz, who shot and edited, helped a lot. We're all fans of '70s-'90s gore films, so we



tried our hand at making our own with friends. It was just pure fun.

AU: The album is full of weaponry—saw blades, torture racks, scalpels, even the simple "Crushed." What's the worst way to go that you've described?

DM: Either being hung and drawn or forced into the rack. In our version of "hung and drawn," there's no quartering—you're hung by hooks and your innards are slowly ripped out. With the rack, you're slowly pulled apart, ligaments and muscles tearing, eventually losing limbs and having your stomach rip in half. Pretty horrific, unless you pass out from the pain.

AU: You've joined Maggot Stomp out of California, alongside bands like Gates to Hell and Fulci. How are they treating the Canadians?

DM: Maggot Stomp rules! Scott's a cool dude who's helped us along the way. I've admired the label since it started, so being part of it still feels special. We've been treated really well these past two years. We're meeting Scott for the first time this fall, and we're excited about that.

AU: I saw you with 200 Stab Wounds—an intense set that tore some heads off. Was that the peak so far?

DM: That short run with 200 Stab Wounds was incredible—we just wish it was longer. Manitoba Metal Fest

2025 might be the peak, or the run we just did with Creeping Death, Krueley, and Upon Stone.

CALGARY CARNAGE



But honestly, every Dying Remains show feels like a peak—there's always sick bands and great people.

AU: You're heading to the U.S. with Gored Embrace and Mutilation Barbecue. How does a Canadian death metal band prepare for such a trek?

DM: We're beyond excited—nervous too—but we think it'll be amazing. Step one: make sure you have your passport (laughs). Otherwise, it's like most tours—long drives, fun shows, new places to eat, meeting people, seeing great bands. The prep is mostly the same, just with visas and all the legal stuff to get across the border.

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doom band 15+ years ago. Both of us enjoy cannabis, and the heaviness of doom metal is just that much more intense with that. Furthermore, we can really create some dynamic and varied songs by combining doom metal and death metal together, and that's something we both find very appealing.

AU: Has your personal approach to writing music changed over the years, considering you both have been in bands prior to Anthrodynia?

DO: Our writing approach has been the same for as long as we've been in bands— I'll come up with riffs/sections, and then we arrange them together until we're satisfied. The main difference with Anthrodynia versus previous bands we've been with, is that we usually add stuff to the songs during the recording process— layering in guitar melodies/harmonies, synths, and even all the vocals are done in the studio as opposed to being rehearsed in the jam room.

AU: What bands/artists outside of the metal genre inspire you to make music, if any?

DO: Both of us are into a lot of music outside of metal. I love a variety of punk/post-punk/shoegaze/d-beat bands such as the Chameleons, Sonic Youth, Discharge, Swervedriver, Killing Joke, and Swans. A friend of mine told me he heard a lot of post-punk influence in my lead playing with Anthrodynia, and he's not wrong!

AU: Do you find the sound of the band changes when you play with live musicians at your gigs? Is this perhaps different than the sound the two core members of the band envision when recording?

Anthrodynia

By Dre Calderon

Absolute Underground: Who am I talking to, and who else is in the band?

Derek Orthner: This is Derek Orthner (guitar/vocals). The other member of the band is Durell Smith (drums).

AU: You say on social media that you intend to be primarily a studio band and play the odd gig live. Why did you decide on this approach?

DO: We decided to be primarily a studio band because we quite frankly don't have a lot of time to tour, and instead of rehearsing the same songs all the time, it's a better use of our time to be creative with writing/recording. Durell recently became a father, which further emphasizes these points.

AU: What is it about doom metal that appeals to you so much?

DO: We've both been doom metal fans for a long time, even playing in a more stoner-oriented

DO: Our live line up executes the sound we've created on the recordings pretty accurately. I try to ensure I have tablature for all the music I write, and our live members fulfill their roles very well.

AU: Do you plan to record any new material in the near future?

DO: The second Anthrodynia album is mostly complete already. It's already been recorded; we just need to finish writing lyrics and record the vocals.

AU: Please explain where the title of your album comes from?

DO: *Unspeakable Horrors Emanating from Within* is a reference to the lyrical themes on the record. Many of the songs are about awful human behaviour (or, in the case of the one song I wrote lyrics to, depression), and that kind of stuff comes from within the mind and outward to negatively affect the world around us.

AU: How important are lyrics to you? What message, if any, would you like to get across when writing these?

DO: Lyrics are of course very important to us. The main theme of the band (and also the definition of the name Anthrodynia) is how exhausting human behaviour can be, especially with how petty people are, or how unempathetic they can be towards others. Our frustrations and struggles are reflected in the lyrics we write.

AU: Is there anything about your band people may be surprised to know?

DO: The only thing I can think of that may be surprising about Anthrodynia is that Durell and I have both been in several bands across many genres together. We were both in a stoner doom band called Cygnus many years ago. We then



did a d-beat/grindcore band called Dysplasia, a shoegaze/post-punk band called Daydreaming, and both play in a crust band called Falsehood. This is Durell's first death metal band he's been in, which forced him to bust out a double kick pedal for the first time in 20 years.

AU: When will your album be released in physical form, and where can people get a copy?

DO: Our debut album drops on August 15th on Nameless Grave Records. The CD/LP will be available from their webstore, our Bandcamp,

and we'll also have copies with us for our appearance at Infest this year.

AU: Any final words?

DO: We are truly appreciative of all the support we've received for this band. Playing music is a huge part of both of our lives, and we are certainly lucky to exist within a scene of so many creative and talented folks who reciprocate the excitement that we have for it. We'll try to play shows when

appropriate, but until then, we can't wait to unleash our debut album this August!

anthrodynia.bandcamp.com

Cover art and logo by Karmazid

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Vocalist Takaho Komatsu

By Ryan Dyer

Unholy Grave have been a key part of the grindcore scene since the early '90s, known for their intense and uncompromising approach to extreme music. Originating from Japan, they have toured worldwide and built a strong following through their powerful performances and relentless work ethic. As they prepare to play INFEST in Edmonton, I spoke with vocalist Takaho Komatsu about their experiences touring, connections within the Canadian grind scene, and their thoughts on festivals and life on the road.

Absolute Underground: What made you decide to play at INFEST in Edmonton this year?

Takaho Komatsu: Because the organizer was honest in inviting us. We really appreciate their work.

AU: What do you know about the grindcore scene in Canada?

TK: Mass Grave are good friends of ours. Fuck the Facts, Dahmer, Mesrine, Soil of Ignorance... Canada has great bands.

AU: Visitors often make the trip to Banff. Are you planning to visit Banff National Park?

TK: At this point, no. I'm not sure if we have enough time.

AU: You've played many shows around the world. What is the most memorable place you've played in?



TK: Los Angeles, USA.

AU: What is harder now about touring, compared to 20 years ago? What is easier?

TK: It's harder to get through immigration, but communicating with people to make things go smoothly is much easier now.

AU: Is the visa process difficult for Japanese bands wanting to play in Canada?

TK: I really don't think so, as the organizer took care of this part for us, so it must not have been that difficult!

AU: You have played Obscene Extreme many times. What does that festival mean to you?

TK: Obscene Extreme is the best. We would love to return anytime.

AU: What Japanese food or comforts do you miss most when touring? How do you make things more comfortable?

TK: Food— ramen. Whenever I go abroad and see the stores in other countries, I really feel that Japanese convenience stores are the best.

AU: Would you ever cover a Canadian punk/grind band, like DOA or Dayglo Abortions?

TK: No. But I used to cover a Slaughter song with my very old first band called DEATHPEED.

AU: Are there any more countries or festivals left for Unholy Grave to make an appearance at?

TK: We would love to play in South America. Festivals? We'd love to play at any festival around the world we have never been to.

unholygrave.bandcamp.com

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POWELL RIVER



Scalding

Interview by Dre Calderon

Absolute Underground: Who am I talking to and who else is in the band?

Tony Sirriani: This is Tony, I play lead guitar in the band Scalding alongside my main axe man Simon Millington who is also the vocalist, Jon Maheswarar is the thunder on the bass and we got the hammer Kevin Emms slaying the drums.

AU: How long has Scalding been making music and how has your sound changed since its inception?

TS: Scalding was founded by Simon and Jon around 2020. Soon after restrictions were lifted, I was contacted by Simon asking if I would be interested in coming on as a lead guitar player. Once I checked it out, I was taken aback by how fresh the songs were, coming from a new Vancouver based band. We had a few jams and now here we are.

AU: Some of your tracks shift between sounding completely aggressive and brutal to being melodious and softer sounding. What is about that dichotomy that appeals to you?



TS: I think when any band starts out, it takes time to build and establish a foundation. Simon has a wide pallet of taste which brings diversity to the band's sound. He leaves no stone unturned and I think that has led to unique elements within some of the songs on Exordium.

AU: Your last recording includes a completely acoustic track. Do you plan on recording other material in this same vein?

TS: Never say never, but I don't think we've even looked at an acoustic guitar since those songs were written! If it works it

works, we don't want to deny that in our song writing.

AU: Your last recording was released almost two years ago. Why the break?

TS: The original drummer Jordan Decker had some life events happen and had to gracefully bow out of the band. It sucked but life happens, we still love the mother fucker! I was already working on a side project with Kevin and he asked what was up with

Scalding as we had a gig with Rotting Christ around the corner and recording booked. Basically, he offered to "fill in" and he had two months to not only learn 14 new songs but then had a week or so to learn a 30-minute set of old songs to play to a sold-out Rickshaw Theatre opening up for Rotting Christ. We would not be having this conversation if it wasn't for Kevin!

AU: Do you plan on releasing any full-lengths in the near future?

TS: FUCKING RIGHTS WE DO! We're stoked to release our next record *Nuclear Winter Spell* by

the end of November. We just released the first single "Plaguestorm" just before Armstrong Metal fest; we're very proud of it and can't wait to unleash this onto the world.

AU: What bands/artists outside of the Metal genre, if any, inspire you to make music?

TS: I feel like we have a large collective of influencers among us but speaking for myself I try to just not deny what I like. When I was younger

if it wasn't "metal" it fucking sucked. Now, genres I grew up hating (country, goth, pop) I've come to appreciate for what stories or emotions they are trying to convey. I love music as a whole and if it's good it's good. End of fucking story!

AU: Do you plan on completing any touring besides the Infest show in Edmonton?

TS: I am happy to announce we will be touring Japan from December 4 to the 14th! We're extremely excited to have this opportunity to support the new record and close out the year. Hoping to announce a few more shows in parts we are yet to have played also before the years end so keep your eyes peeled!

AU: What can someone expect from a Scalding show?

TS: Unapologetic decibel violence! If you are stoked then fuck yeah! And if you don't like it then I hope we ruined your fucking night only to go back to your shitty 9-5 just to bitch about us!

AU: What have been some highlights for the band since its forming?

TS: This new album is our next milestone but being able to play with the likes of Abbath, Rotting Christ, was huge for us. We are stoked to have played with peers like Erosion, Grave



Infestation, Wormwich, and up-and-comers such as Antichrist Siege Machine and Funeral Chant and look forward to what's ahead.

AU: You played a show raising money for children in Gaza. How was that experience?

TS: We were honoured to be a part of it and even though we can only help so much, the idea of using music and our privilege to do so is the least we can do. The evil minds that plot destruction are the sorcerers of death's construction.

AU: Any final words?

TS: I would like to thank everyone who's checked us out or given us the time of day, we're extremely grateful for anyone who's given us a chance. We look forward to exploring the next chapter of the band.

scalding.bandcamp.com



Paddy Duddy

Drummer for D.O.A., guitar for the Kill Rats, and bass/vox for Circle the Wagons.

by Chadsolute

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

Paddy Duddy: My name is Paddy Duddy and I'm probably most known for ordering up to three types of potatoes in a single meal. I also play drums in DOA, guitar in the Kill Rats and bass and vox for Circle the Wagons.

AU: Tell us about your history with DOA, how does one become a member of Canada's original Hardcore band?



early lineups and early DOA drummers. Dimwit, Card and of course, Biscuits all big influences and true Canadian punk rock legends. In 2013 I saw that Joe was selling a newer Gibson SG guitar and his old Marshall head that he had since the early 80's. I wanted them both, but I didn't like the price tag so I came up with an idea. I own a screen printing shop in my hometown Nelson BC, so I called Joe and offered to trade a whack of printed DOA shirts for his guitar and Marshall head. It was a good deal for me as I could print everything cheap and a good deal for Joe as he could sell the merch and make more money than he was originally asking for his gear. It was win/win. He was into it.

I drove the boxes of shirts from Nelson to meet Joe in Vancouver and while we were making the trade he happened to mention he might be looking for a drummer. I didn't say anything at the

PD: I always was a fan. I heard my first DOA song in 1983 when I was 12 years old. It was the track Unknown and it was on some random mix tape along side Ramones and the Sex Pistols. I was hooked on punk in general since I was 10 years old and a 16 year old Irish girl introduced me to the classic Adam and the Ants, Dirk Wears White Socks album. Later on in the early 90's (and through the 2000's) I was in bands that had either toured with or opened for DOA so I got to know Joe a bit during those years. Plus I would go see DOA every chance I got. Loved all the

time but when I got back home I decided to call him and offer my services. He seemed puzzled and said "aren't you a bass player?" As I had most recently opened for DOA in Circle the Wagons and was in fact the bass player and singer that band. He didn't seem super excited about the idea at first, but a few months later I got an email asking if I could do some upcoming tours. I said sure! We only had time for four rehearsals (in which I played terribly) and we were off to play my first show in Portland with MDC. That year I toured the US, Tasmania, Australia, Hong Kong, China and 8 or so countries in Europe, it was an epic introduction to touring with DOA. As of 2025 I've played over 700 shows with the band all over the world, recorded four releases and am the longest serving drummer in the bands history.

AU: What has DOA been up to so far in 2025?

PD: We are in Europe now as I write this, been a super busy three week tour, almost no days off. Germany, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands over in England now. We played Rebellion Fest last night in Blackpool, two nights before we were in Poland playing a crazy festival close to the Ukraine and Slovakia borders. A lot of travel, but the shows have been incredible. Still a strong demand for old school punk rock over here. We have ten more dates in western Canada shortly after we get back from overseas.

AU: What can Edmonton expect when you play the Purple City Festival next month?

PD: Edmonton can expect to see the sharpest, fastest and fiercest version of DOA yet! Expect to see your favourite old punk rock pioneers fresh of big summer tours all filled with piss and vinegar.

AU: Tell us about some of your other projects, are they currently active this year?

PD: Yeah, I have the Kill Rats, (plague punk from Nelson, BC) we are playing this fall but I think just west coast shows, Circle the Wagons, my 25 year old hardcore project are gonna rear their ugly heads again to go play some south of the border shows early next year, mostly Mexico and Costa Rica. I am gonna finally pull my '64 Valiant out of storage and put it on the road. Maybe drink less beer and eat less potato chips this fall, try to drop a belt loop or two.



AU: Final words of wisdom for our readers?

PD: If your folks are still alive, call them.

AU: How do people find you online?

PD: The usual places. DOA has Insta and Facebook and suddendeath.com. I can be found easily enough @paddyduddy

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AUG. 23 - SNFU Spartans Club Comic Release featuring Dad Religion with Western Death Ballads, The Strand & Reckloose

AUG. 29 - INFEST 2025 - Day 1 - WHORES. with KNOLL, EYEL, ADOLYNE, THE WEIR, ECHTHROS & RITUALIZER

AUG. 30 - INFEST 2025 - Day 2 - ARCHGOAT, NUNSLAUGHTER, LIMINAL SHROUD, SPIRITUAL POISON, SCALDING, GOATHAMMER, GRAND MAL, WARWOLF

AUG. 31 - INFEST 2025 - Day 3 - MIDNIGHT, FUGITIVE, WARPCHAMBER, ARES KINGDOM, BAYONET DISMEMBERMENT, CLOSETALKERS, PEARL MALLE, DIVINE APPREHENSION

SEP. 13 - DIESEL BOY with Guests

SEP. 13 - Emo Night North

SEP. 19 - High On Fire with Charger & Bastardane

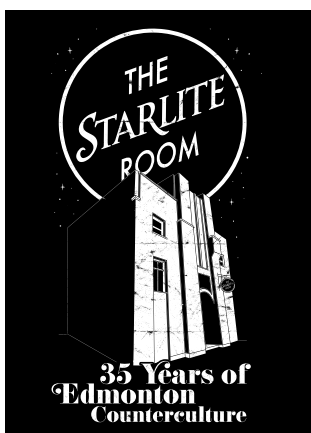
SEP. 21 - Symphony X and Sonata Arctica

SEP. 25 - Suffrajettes with Guests

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**35 Years of
Edmonton
Counterculture**





Interview by Dre Calderon

Absolute Underground: Who are you and who else is in the band?

G: Hi, I am G, lyricist, DIY label owner, and the frontwoman of BONDBREAKR. Ciaran is our guitarist and primary songwriter, Patrick is our drummer and samples creator, and Thad is our bassist.

AU: What is the creative process used for your songwriting? Has it changed at all since the band's inception?

Ciaran: Our current process starts with me recording demos on my laptop at home, then Pat and I will meet up at our rehearsal space to work out the core structure of the song. From there Thad will write his bass parts, and G will sketch out vocal ideas at the space as we play through the entire arrangement.

This is how most of the songs are written, but we will occasionally have songs that are borne out of rehearsal jam sessions that G records on her phone. We're not necessarily trying to come up with new material during these sessions— we're really just warming up before the set starts, but we've occasionally stumbled on some cool ideas/ loose structures that eventually become full songs.

AU: What influences do you have that may surprise people?

G: Well, my bandmates know this, but I'm a sucker for vaporwave. Parallels, Com Truise, bbrainz, Sunglasses Kid, and Tupperwave are some favourites. Thad turned us on to what I guess you'd call Weather Channel music? So, I enjoy listening to artists in those genres like Cat System Corp., Limousine, and LensCorp International. Lately, I've swung back to dubstep. Been blasting

Rusko's "Woo Boost" and "Cockney Thug" like nothing else these days.

Ciaran: We've often been labelled as a crust/d-beat band, which is awesome but I can't say that we have drawn much influence from that scene specifically. I think our sound is probably more the result of a nexus between death/black metal and ska/pop punk, which seems totally incongruous and probably is, but it's sort of where all of our sensibilities meet. Of course, there are other influences that came into play for EXILE, such as anarcho-punk, '80s hardcore and post-punk/shoegaze, which not too many people have picked up on.

AU: Describe your experiences working at the Girls Rock Austin Rock Camp. What takeaways do you have from that experience?

G: Jude Jecker, GRA Program Director, invited me to co-lead this year's Intersectional Music workshop, a curriculum-driven collaboration with music industry professionals, Xiochi Solis (DJ Mira Mira, Future Front Texas) and Bobbie Kleman (Hellfury). In addition to learning about new-to-me artists Chavela Vargas (1919-2012) and Sophie (1986-2021), I also learned from the campers, ages ranging from 8 to 17 years old, and let me tell you, these are the brightest and coolest kids. These kids asked questions about identity, what it means to be othered in various dominant culture-filled spaces, and how to effectively communicate with their parents and guardians. They left me in awe and the revelation that curiosity is the fountain of youth, nothing more.

AU: Your last recording was released in 2023.

Any plans to release any new music in the near future?

G: Yes, we have planned releases coming out on my DIY label, Angry Tooth Records, and the independent label the band is currently signed to, Spaceflight Records. We're also working with Ska Punk International on a split with our friends

in Plastic Presidents, so, yes, there will be new music all around in the coming months and next year.

AU: You played the Purple City

Music Festival in Edmonton in 2024. What was your experience like? What made you want to come back to the same fest in 2025?

G: Rocky and the Purple City team have treated us with the utmost respect, giving us space to share our music with an international audience, and all just amazing human beings all around. We gave direct support to Wolf Eyes at Y Afterhours last year and it was one of the highlights of my life. The venue staff were accommodating and just incredibly cool. We made so many new fans



thanks to our friends at Checkered Past: The Ska'd Cast (checkeredpast.ca) who also came to our set at the festival, which was a big deal to us. I have so much love for these entities, it's unreal.

Overall, the Canadian people are kind, do their best to acknowledge and respect indigenous cultures through economic initiatives and various programming, and I must admit to falling head over heels for poutine.

AU: Lots of your lyrics seem to be social commentary. How important is it for a band to use their platform to convey a political message? What do you hope to accomplish

with your messaging?

Ciaran: To us, it's vitally important— we wouldn't exclusively label ourselves as a political band, but there are strong convictions that absolutely factor into what we do. Whether we have the capacity to effect meaningful change is certainly up for debate, but if we can offer any kind of solace to those who feel the same way that we do about Gaza, white supremacy, climate change, techno-fascism, etc. that is meaningful to me, especially during what is widely acknowledged as an exceptionally dismal time for America.

G: My lens is Black and hetero-female, making my existence and my art political. Underneath the paint and costuming, I am a Black woman, an artist whose trauma is unique to the African-American experience, and I scream about it. It's not fair that Black women's anger has been stereotyped and ultimately weaponized. I mean, if you're actually paying attention, regardless of race, there is so much to be angry about. And I'm not afraid of my anger.

I embrace my anger because I can't turn politics off; my skin colour and my socioeconomic reality don't allow for it. It would be disingenuous of me to ignore or bury the plight of others in my lyrics. To me, that's not punk rock. That's just giving fear a different genre to exploit, a genre gatekept and weakened to manufacture and garner implicit consent. Bands must use their platforms to call out and bring awareness to what's harming their communities, local and global.

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GOMER

Interview by Bowser Tabarnak

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

GOMER: Jessica and Chad of GOMER.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band.

GOMER: After Dragon City Radio disbanded, Michael Hawco and Matty Marshall continued to work on a new band with Chad Kerswill joining on vocals and Oscar Laguan and Jessica Fleming on guitars, releasing our first album in 2022. Since then, we've had Andrew McMullen replace Matty after he moved on with his beautiful family.

AU: Does your band have a specific message to give?

GOMER: Gomer is an "every-person" just trying to do their best in an unfair world. They make mistakes, stumble through stacked odds, and occasionally win. It's exhilarating and a little saddening to feel like you are starting to understand how the world works, only to realize it keeps shifting before your eyes. There are no reptilians pulling the strings. No secret overlords.

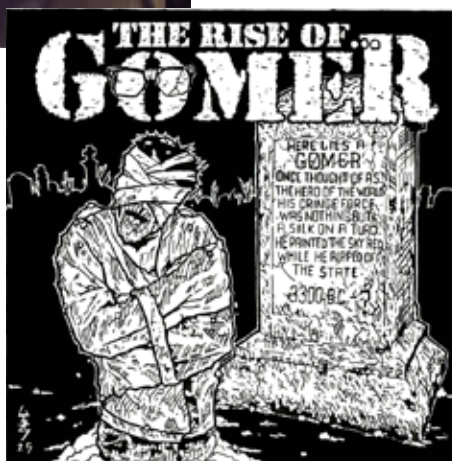
Just gomers who are flawed, idiot, ordinary people. Ego personified. As easy as it is, everyone's a gomer but don't be that GOMER.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

GOMER: If you took elements of punk rock, metal, and psychedelic rock and tossed in tongue and cheek lyrics, that's a good start. We've heard "power grunge" and we think that's pretty accurate. There's also a SOLID punk rock foundation to the entire thing.

AU: What is your creative process like?

GOMER: The band generally comes up with riffs and each member has a rough song idea and brings it to the band, which explains each song's diversity. Our vocalist takes ideas he's constantly writing down and squeezes them into the mold, something any GOMER can comprehend.



AU: Have you released an album or any songs recently?

GOMER: we released our album *The Age of GOMER* in 2022 and just released our second album *The Rise of GOMER* in early September 2025. We've been demoing the 2026 tunes through the summer and we'll record those this coming November.

AU: In your opinion, what is wrong with the music scene now?

GOMER: We don't think that there is anything wrong with the scene per se, it's just like any other creative ecosystem. There will be good aspects and bad aspects. It's ever-changing and it has to be that way otherwise it just remains the same all the time. I'm not interested in eating a warden burger unless it's got a list of credits. If anything, the scene needs more variety in musical tastes,

more bands need to spread their GOMER gums and start flapping to each other.

AU: What are some things your band does to give back to the community?

GOMER: We've played a few fundraisers and have local artists help us with our artwork.

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

GOMER: Songs about people who lie for their own benefit ("Silk on a Turd", "Hero of the World, The Cringe Force", "Billionaires", and "Toronto Traffic"). We just released a music video we made for our song "Paint the Sky".

AU: Describe your band's live show verbally if you can.

GOMER: The songs we write put on the show, no

TORONTO TRASH

blood or nudity, just raw music. The vibe is jovial and the music is heavy.

AU: What's the music scene like in Toronto these days?

GOMER: Find it hard to find a venue to play that doesn't charge a cover, other than Penny's which is probably the best local bar for people who don't like paying a \$25 cover right now. We hear about new scenes and places people play fairly regularly mostly through socials etc., and I love that it never stops.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

GOMER: August 23rd at Penny's in Toronto and September 6 at See-Scape in Toronto with They Might Be Fascists, Laid to Rest, Artificial Dissemination and Well and Wasted.

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

GOMER: Jess has a YouTube channel called Jess Tracks from Scratch, she plays bass in Thunder Glove which is Canada's Premiere Barbarian Band that makes 8-bit video game inspired music, and she plays lead guitar in Luau or Die which has been my surf band forever at this point. Chad also plays in the hardcore punk rock band from Toronto called SAGO, about to record some new tunes. Oscar plays in The Calrizians going on years now.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

GOMER: Keep your stick on the ice, head on a swivel, and listen to more GOMER.

IG: @gomer.gram

gomertheband.bandcamp.com



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

Bruno Zamora: Bruno Zamora here. I did Kratornas from 1995 until 2010. It became 'active' again in 2015 when I found a drummer, but nothing's been certain from 2016 to now. I've got new priorities these days, but I'm still here because of metal. It's the lifeblood of everything I do.

AU: You're releasing your new album *God of the Tribes* towards the end of August. The record marks a major sonic shift for Kratornas. What inspired this darker, more atmospheric direction compared to your earlier, hyper-aggressive releases?

BZ: Yes, and the shift was deliberate. One lazy afternoon, a raven told me to make a new album. I said to myself, "if I'm going to do another one, I don't want to just add to the sea of millions of albums out there. I want to make something different". With *God of the Tribes*, I figured that if I couldn't release a "unique" album, I could at least try to release something "different." Something that strongly opposes my previous "hyper-aggressive" releases. Kratornas was already done in 2010. I'm not wasting my time writing another album that just sounds like a copy of the old ones.

AU: You've described the album as something that "wrote itself." Can you explain how instinct shaped the songwriting and production process this time around?

BZ: There was nothing in the way during the process. I remember buying a left-handed guitar just to write "riffs" for this. About half of the album came from that guitar. I'm right-handed, so I later

transcribed everything to "main" L/R guitars. Then I threw in chimes, jaw harps, all that, and didn't overthink it. The ideas just kept coming, and I followed where it led. I had plans to push it to a 70-minute album, but time ran out.

AU: For longtime fans expecting the usual blast beats and chaos, what should they brace themselves for when diving into this new record?

BZ: It's a dissonant album, with each track linked by "misaligned frequencies" in the mix. It's a mess, but listen carefully, because each instrument is played in sync and anchored to a parent note. Some of these L/R guitars took several takes, as they're too "complex" to perform or record but it had to be done. I'm thinking that combining these tensions (minor, min7th, sus4) with linear structures creates an avalanche of confusion for someone used to consonant chugga-chugga or catchy "brutality." While that's good, I can't play that. I won't. I'd rather drive around than make an album that sounds like that. I mean, it's 2025, not 2005. This is the album where I'll dare say: I put real thought into it and know what I'm doing. Or at least that's what I'm trying to tell myself.

AU: You've been a one-man war machine since 1995. How has working solo evolved over the years, and does isolation still fuel your creativity?

BZ: No. I've been alone since 1995 because I

didn't have a choice. From where I grew up, there was no one around back in the '90s. I found a drummer in 2015 and still used that idea up to this album. There is a drummer, and *God of the Tribes* is really a "fast album," but I cut his parts, rented an acoustic drum kit, and replaced them with my own slower ones. These are not "MIDI drums," so I triggered everything to make it uniform. Technology played a part here, but I'm old school; I don't abuse it. I want this to feel as "authentic" as possible when people are listening. There are errors, a lot, but only I know that. I think "creativity" is a thing of the past. Too many perfect albums, and with AI taking over, you'll never know if you're listening to an AI or a "human band" in the future. Unless it's *God of the Tribes*. They need to train their AI to learn the labyrinth of this album, haha!



AU: You worked with Dan Swanö, a legend who has worked with countless praised bands to master the album. How did that collaboration come about, and what did he bring to the final sound that elevated the record?

BZ: With this mastering, I sent Dan the files and

SASKATOMB

gave my "instructions," and days later, I got the album cleaned and finalized. There are mistakes on my part, but it's still my mix, and I like what I'm hearing. It's like he just read my mind, and it was all done. I've worked with a few MEs before, and while they did great, some re-EQ'd my mix until it didn't sound like what I wanted, but I still had to use it. None of that happened here.

AU: You've mentioned wanting to preserve dynamics and avoid loudness wars. How did Swanö's mastering help achieve that organic, breathing mix you envisioned?

BZ: I recorded and mixed *God of the Tribes* without using compression, no quantizing, etc. You can hear the natural fluctuations of the drums' misaligned hits in each song. I wanted that "real emotions," that kind of dynamic, preserved in the final masters. The best way to do that was to get it mastered by someone who's a strong advocate for audio dynamics. I couldn't think of anyone doing it. Most of the other MEs "portfolios" I've heard were "modernly loud." Now, if anyone has a problem with the mix, blame that on me!

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

BZ: Buy *God of the Tribes*, it's the last album that is 100% written and recorded by humans! LISTEN TO THE OLD WORLD!

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Z-Cocoon

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Please tell our readers who you are and what you do.

Marc Zolla: My name is Marc Zolla, and I play guitar/vocals in a band called Z-Cocoon from Montreal.

AU: You released your latest EP, *Angels*, this past July. The EP delivers three electrifying tracks. Why did you choose to keep this release short and punchy, and how do these songs represent the current Z-Cocoon sound?

MZ: When it comes to releasing an EP, it's always best not to put filler material and make sure each track is a banger. People have a short attention span nowadays, so each song has to be able to catch their attention on an EP. I like it when it's straight to the point.

They represent the current Z-Cocoon sound because it's the first release that was recorded as a band, and the first release where I recorded and mixed it DIY at my home studio. Mastering sent to Kent Stump of Wo Fat as usual, and he always delivers.

AU: When listening to each track, I noticed each one had its own vibe, from the bluesy menace of "Dr. Crane" to the doom-laced "For

My Life". How did you decide on these songs for the EP?

MZ: Honestly, Z-Cocoon isn't just pure stoner rock, so there will always be some songs more doom and some songs more blues or heavy grunge. I like to call it the sound of Doom Blues, so it just envelopes everything. I usually write the riffs, so it depends on my mood when coming up with the track, but it's more fun when there are three different style tracks played in the same tone, same instruments, and such, rather than three songs that sound exactly the same with the same progression, same chords... Some songs will be faster, some slower. For example, when I hear Zeppelin, Dio, Deep Purple, or Black Sabbath, they have a lot of different types of songs.

AU: I remember Z-Cocoon starting as a one-man project. And now for this EP, you're a full three-piece with bassist John Burton and drummer Michel Paradis joining you. How has this changed your songwriting dynamic and live performance?

MZ: Got a little bit tired of it being a solo project and working with session musicians. I'm still capable of doing that, it's great, but it's a little bit more fun as a band, I would say. Chilling, recording, writing, and partying as a band is something I've been wanting for a while. Jonny B and Michel Paradis are friends of mine in the music scene, and they helped out with shows and recording. It sounds great, but they have other plans concerning music and such. Anthony Farina joined on drums, and Alejandro on bass. There will be new music, shows and music videos on the way. An album will be in the works.

AU: You've said this EP was recorded live and mixed in-house at Casa Cocoon. What do you hope listeners feel or take away when they crank it loud?

MZ: THEY WILL EXPERIENCE THE REAL DOOM BLUES! NOT AI WRITTEN NONSENSE!

This EP was not recorded live all together, since I don't have 16 mic inputs but recorded each instrument separately (Michel on drums first with seven mics, Johnny B on bass second, and I on guitar third, vocals and backing vocals, guitar solos last).

I hope they enjoy it and take what they want from it. I think it personally sounds better than any of the other recordings done in the past, and being able to record and mix DIY, you can do it exactly as you hear it in your vision, without a time limit or \$/hr at regular studios. Everything is too expensive nowadays. Not gonna call myself a professional studio guy but I can hear what the Cocoon should sound like, and honestly surprised myself.

Not really interested in paying at recording studios anymore unless there's a great producer opportunity that arises in the future, but realistically, nobody cares where and how you record in 2025, end of story. They just wanna hear good original music. Having your own gear and studio brings a sense of freedom that you can do and record whatever and whenever you want without somebody telling you what to do.

AU: How was it working with Wo Fat's guitarist and vocalist, Kent Stump, who runs Crystal Clear Sound, to master the EP?

MZ: He's fast, delivers, and professional. I'll be working with him on an upcoming album. It always sounds great, and I don't have to ask for revisions. He just gets it and it's magic.

MONTREAL MASSACRE

AU: What can you tell us about the EP artwork with a guitar-wielding gargoyle looking over a city's night skyline?

MZ: I was looking for something that came out of a DC Batman comic book. The track "Dr. Crane" is also about the Scarecrow villain from the Batman universe. The gargoyle looking down on the city with a Fender Strat represents how the Cocoon is back at it and not slowing down. Artwork credit to Camille G.

AU: With *Angels* now out, when can fans expect a full-length album?

MZ: We'll be recording an album of minimum 8-10 tracks once the fall hits, and we'll take a break from shows to really focus on recording bangers. BANGERS. Ideally, the plan is to get it out there in Spring, send it to some labels and whatnot before it goes out, and see what happens.

AU: Any upcoming tour dates or live shows planned for 2025? What can fans expect from a Z-Cocoon performance now that the cocoon has fully hatched into a trio?

MZ: LOUD, CATCHY, DOOMY, FAST, SLOW, CLEAN VOCALS, BADASS T SHIRTS. DOOM BLUES EXPERIENCE. ORIGINAL.

Aug 9 - Longueuil, QC - Le Barrage

Aug 30 - Ottawa, ON - Avant-Garde Bar

Sept 13 - Montreal, QC - P'tit Ours

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

MZ: Check us out live. Listen to our music. Maybe you'll hate it, or maybe you'll love it. It doesn't matter if you're more punk, metal, stoner, grunge, or whatnot, I think it's original and there's something in it for a lot of different genres of fans.
z-cocoon.bandcamp.com

Doll

Interview with Christina Kasper

Absolute Underground: It's been a few years since we last spoke to Doll. How have you been and what have you been up to?

Doll: We've been good, still writing and playing music every day. Doll was on a bit of a hiatus as we were busy adulting, but we're back with a new album. Most of these songs started the way they always do— someone hits a nerve in the middle of a jam, in our basement, or that 15-minute break from work where we just happen to be near our guitars. It strikes a nerve, and we keep looping over it, playing the same riff 100 times, without any concern for time, no overthinking. No forcing. Just letting it grow into whatever it wants to be. That raw edge, that first spark. It's always been a Doll thing: keep it real, keep it honest, and don't dress it up too much.

AU: You released your new EP *Better Days, Different Times* this past July. The EP feels like a rebirth for Doll. What stories or emotions were you most eager to explore with this release?

Doll: This release marks a shift— more collaborators, new instruments, fresh energy running through the tracks. We've moved beyond the borders of the last two records, drawn from new experiences, and let the songs grow without constraint. It's more honest, more personal. Still dark. Still unmistakably Doll. Just with a few more layers in the songs. With this album, we wanted to pull listeners in closer to what's top of mind to us, our values, our experiences. It's not just something to hear; it's something to sit and listen to. It's less about the volume this time, more about the weight behind the lyrics.

AU: Listening to tracks like "Bleeding" and "Shark Bait" demonstrates a darker, more cinematic side of your sound. How did those songs come together, and what inspired this tone?

Doll: "The Bleeding" is one that came out of watching *True Detective*, actually, the last season, we were huge fans of the season, and that influenced us lyrics and musically, making it that darker feel but with lots of single notes, which is more than we used to ever do before. There is homage to the trauma that the Indigenous people went through in Canada. "Shark Bait" was a fun song that we had come up with after playing around with some hardcore style riffing and our passion for the *Jaws* movies. We have



always had a strong attraction to shark movies, and when Pete came up with the riff for the chorus, it just felt so right with the "Shark Bait" vocals, everything was clicking, and we just went for it.

AU: You released *The Ragdoll Diaries* over a decade ago. What sparked the decision to come back now, and how did the time away shape your songwriting?

Doll: We've kept playing and writing together over this past decade. We've got a huge library of unreleased material. We've put out a few different songs throughout the years, but this time around,

we really wanted to share these songs, so we went to the studio with Josh Hart and Jason Jaknunas over the past year. Doll has always been a blend of dark, grunge, indie, shoegaze, and punk, and with these new songs, it's no different.

AU: Was there any hesitation about returning to the studio after such a long break, or did it feel like slipping back into something familiar?

Doll: It felt very familiar, and we love going into the studio and playing around with arrangements. Every track on this record was handpicked because it struck something deep in us. Some songs come in softer, quieter moments. But don't let that fool you— the weight is still there. The message is still dark, still heavy. This is just the first chapter. Part one of the return. There's more coming. We're not done rocking yet.

AU: As a husband-and-wife songwriting team, how do you balance personal life with band life?

Doll: This one, at the moment, is easy, as we haven't returned to playing live shows yet. Once that happens, then we'll see how that balance will work itself out, but for the moment, we have been able to record around the kids' school schedules, when the kids are away, the adults will play.

AU: What strengths do each of you bring to the table when writing and recording, and how has that chemistry evolved over the years?

Doll: Pete is definitely more the idea generator; he will come up with the rhythm guitar

parts, and Christina weaves the ideas together to really bring out the details and emphasis in her single notes and solos. Over the years, now that we know each other's styles inside and out, we can envision the song even before the other has

OTTAWA ONSLAUGHT

come up with their parts, and that helps create the songs in a more cohesive and coherent flow.

AU: How has the Ottawa music scene changed since your early days, and what role do you see Doll playing in it now?

Doll: That's a very interesting question, we have always felt that we've been either too late to the party or too early in terms of what genre is hot in Ottawa, and Ottawa while it does have a huge hard rock fan base, its more for the established mega bands, and you don't see as much in support of newer bands on the scene, like you do in say Montreal or Toronto. We see Doll playing a role in hopefully showing upcoming bands that you don't have to fit into any specific genre, and while it may not be popular at the time you're doing it, if that's the style you love, then stick with it and the support will come. We often joke that if we had started Doll in the early-'90s when all the Riot Girl bands were coming up, maybe we would have been one of those underground staples as well, but you never know when a movement is about to hit.

AU: Are there any plans for Doll to hit the road in support of the new EP, and for fans to get a chance to hear your older catalogue? What can fans expect from a Doll performance in 2025?

Doll: No concrete plans at the moment for a live show run, but now that the EP has come out, the requests have been coming in, and that's really humbling and motivating that people are interested in rocking out with us a few more times. As for older material, *The Ragdoll Diaries* is available on all the digital stores, and we're super excited to even resurface the debut album again, *Inside the Dollhouse*.

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

Doll: Stay true to yourself, whether people like you or not, doesn't matter, keep on rocking!

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The Isosceles Project

By Ray MacKay and BA Johnston

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

Eric Euler: My name is Eric Euler. I think I'm most famous for slaying stages back in the late-2000s/early-2010s with The Isosceles Project. We played on Much Music's Disband which was a reality TV show about bands trying to get signed back in 2008. We got told (unsurprisingly) to disband after playing a 14-minute instrumental song, however we continued to release two full-lengths independently and self-book tours across Canada and the States. DIY or die, as they say.

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

EE: I started the band in 2007 with Justin Falzon (original drummer) who I met through a friend while attending OCAD. I met Scott Tessier (original bass player) on Myspace and we've been best friends ever since. We played Toronto heavily for the first few years and released our first album *Oblivion's Candle* in 2009. After our first tour out east, Brandon Smith took over drumming duties. We toured every summer until I moved to Louisiana in August 2012. I had every intention to continue with the band every summer but things got busy. I kept writing songs and trying to find ways to do it remotely, however we couldn't find a workflow. Fast-forward to 2021 and I move to Hamilton for work. I met Dan Duff (drums) on Kijiji who I've been jamming with since 2024 and I met Matt Medvesky (bass) at some local shows in town. I had actually photographed Matt's other band The Barrel Rejects in Fall 2023. We eventually started chatting and jamming. I'm grateful for both Dan and Matt. We just had our first gig back in April 2025.

AU: What kind of music does The Isosceles Project perform?

EE: I describe it as heavy instrumental psychedelic stoner prog. I realize it's a bit of a mouthful, but we cover a broad spectrum. Even though the songs are devoid of lyrics and vocals, there is still a strong melodic and narrative sensibility that carries the arrangements.

AU: Tell us all about your upcoming album, *Bear the Torch*.

EE: This album has been labour of love. It's coming out October 17th, 2025. It consists of six new songs and has a runtime of 42 minutes. We're releasing it independently on cassette, digitally, and on streaming services. Maybe we can find a label to do the vinyl at some point. I did every aspect of this record from the music to mixing to layout to artwork. The only other person involved was Dave Sheldon who mastered the album. The record is unique in that I didn't have any collaborators on this release, unlike previous albums, although now that Matt and Dan have joined the fold the songs are already evolving which is exciting.

AU: Tell us about the creative process behind *Bear the Torch*?

EE: The creative process defined the record; I had to light my own way to continue this band. I recorded and mixed everything in my spare bedroom between 2022-23. As much as I wanted to continue with Brandon and Scott, it wasn't in the cards. I had to grow out of the past, which was hard since they are both dear friends. Once I surrendered to that truth and gave myself permission to do the work, the process evolved rapidly. I wasn't intentionally making a solo album but that's what happened as a byproduct of the circumstances.

AU: What tracks are you most excited for people to hear?

EE: I'm most excited for people to hear Celestial Hues. It's a 16-minute monster. It's my way of honouring our past even though I'm writing a lot of shorter songs now. It narratively chronicles a good decade of riffs that I've had marinating in the silo. Some passages I wrote as far back as 2008. It's nice when a riff finds its forever home.

AU: Tell us about the musical themes and styles you're leaning into with *Bear the Torch*.

EE: This record covers a lot of ground stylistically. Big riffs are always balanced with another colour on the sonic palette. Aggressive fuzz has more or less replaced the modern sounding metal tones of previous releases. I've also incorporated synthesizers for the first time. There is plenty of contrast with thrashy passages balancing psychedelia, or mathy moments releasing to a straightforward groove riff. I take a lot of inspiration from bands like Elder, Opeth, and The Mars Volta. While our music may not exactly align with the sounds of those bands, I can't deny their impact on my own creativity.

AU: Greatest career highlight to date?

EE: Getting album of the month in Metal Hammer Magazine (The UK's biggest metal magazine) alongside Mastodon, Alice in Chains, and Isis a few months after being told to disband on national television was a glorious moment. I think that event symbolized that we were continuing to be true to ourselves.

AU: Sex, drugs, or rock n' roll? Or all of the above?

HAM JAMMERS

EE: It's 2025. I'd like to think they can all exist in a harmony with one another. I quit drinking in 2021, but I'll never give up coffee.

AU: What's your fave submarine sandwich shop in town and what's your go-to order?

EE: Meatball at Mike's Subs

AU: 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?

EE: Jorts for the win.

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

EE: *Altered States*, *Life Force*, and *Halloween*.

AU: How you goobers get to shows? Describe your band ride.

EE: We determine what vehicle(s) we'll use depending on the backline situation. I drive a pathfinder, Matt's got a truck, and dan a car. We'll likely rent a van when it comes to hitting the road next spring.

AU: Anything else to promote?

EE: We'll be announcing a few late fall record release shows in Southern Ontario. We have plans to do an Eastern Canadian tour next spring. I have two other musical projects: Cool Animal which is an online instrumental psychedelic rock project and Thesaurical which is me screwing around with synths, sequencers, drum machines, and bazillion effect pedals.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

EE: Find your truth and bear its torch. It'll likely be a battle of uncertainty, but beauty will eventually emerge from the ether.

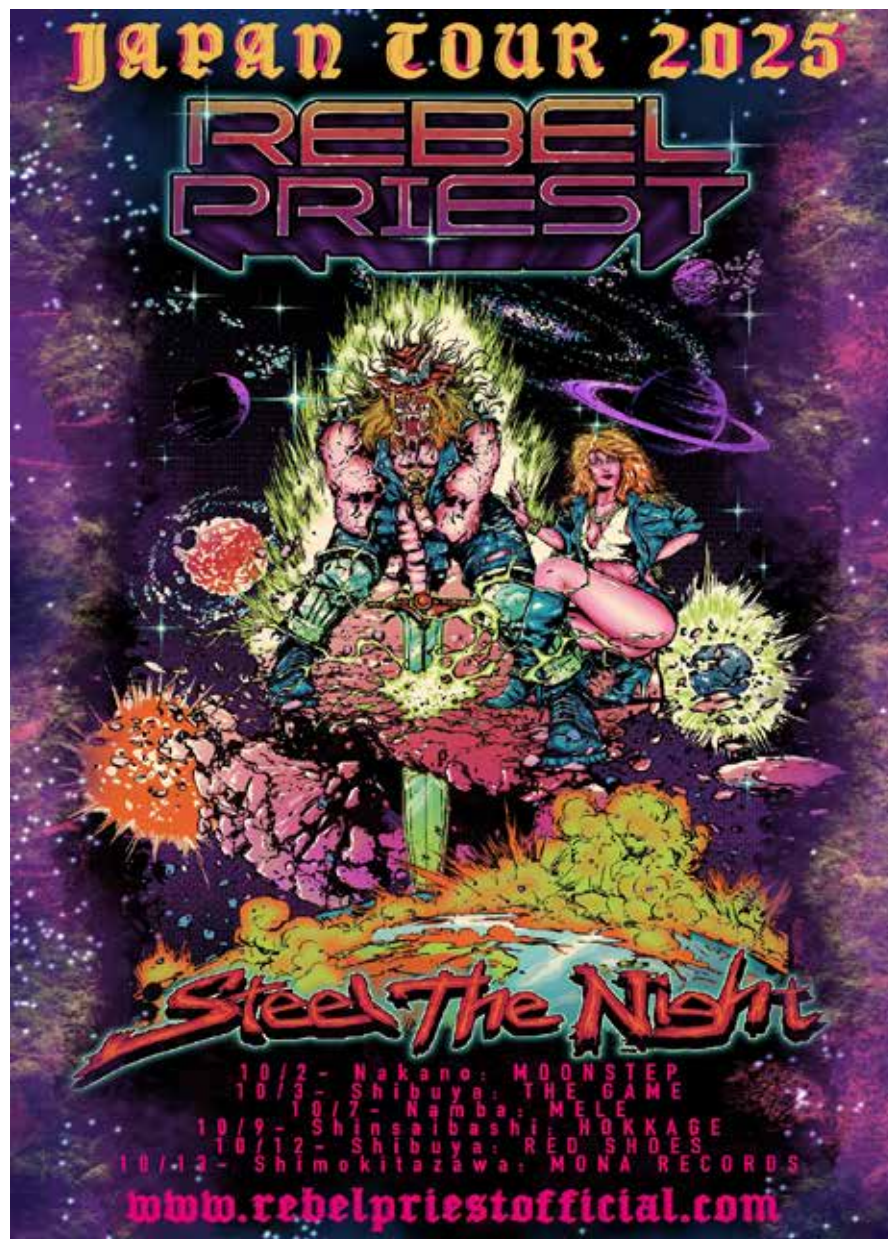
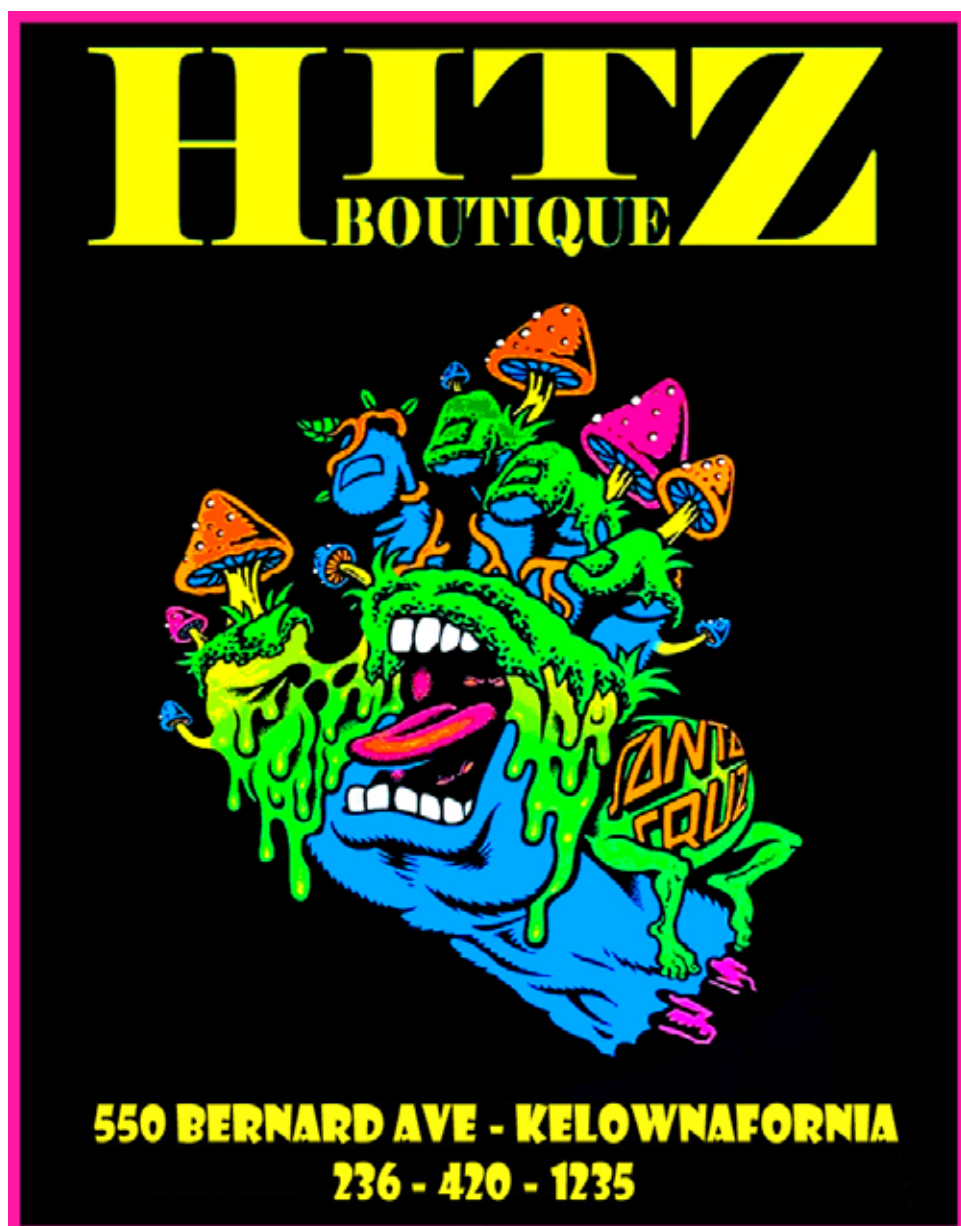
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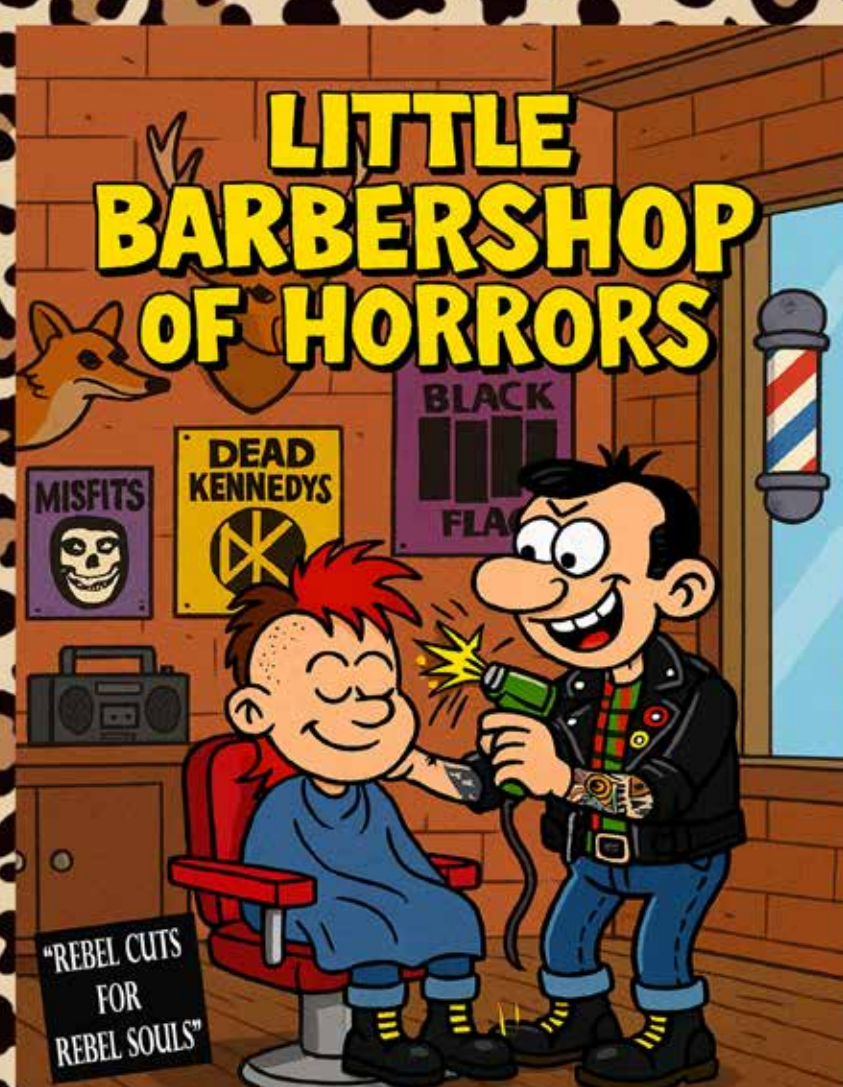
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Exsang

By Sheldon "Has Lots of Blood" Byer

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

Exsang: My name is Matt, and I play guitar in Exsang. We are most famous for enjoying boutique donut shops, and having Gatorade propels at every show. If Gatorade is seeing this, we'd like to talk about sponsorship. I'd say we're the most infamous for showing up to a show without an amp, cables, and pedals which was entirely me; the other guys in the band are saints.

AU: For anyone who hasn't heard Exsang - describe your sound.

EX: Exsang is heavily influenced by Repulsion, Terrorizer, Morbid Angel, and Extreme Noise Terror. We sound like if all those bands quadruple parented a child. We all like grind, D-beat, crustcore, and old school death metal.

AU: How do you all live with having no blood and what were the injuries that caused exsanguination?

EX: True story... our band name is 100 percent influenced by an *X-Files* episode about vampires. In a scene the first responders describe the bodies to be exsanguinated; that is how we got the name. We all have blood and until we invent vampires, we're still just mere mortals. Does that answer the question?

AU: You've got an album *Reactionary Dismemberment*, out on Attack with Force Records. It came out almost two years ago; when can we expect the next album?

EX: We've been on hiatus for the past year and we're currently in the process of writing new material for a follow up to *Reactionary Dismemberment*. We're playing our first two shows back this summer in Saskatoon, and Edmonton.

I think we could realistically look at an early 2026 release. Keep your eyes peeled.

AU: Speaking of the album, I heard a few stories about how it came to be. First off, you had no power to record it so you almost sent the engineer home back to Edmonton. Luckily, the day was saved and you ended up recording. If you had to send him home, what native Saskatoon provisions would've you supplied on his long trip back?



EX: This is a true story and luckily our friend Kris Webb had a space where he rented it to us for the weekend for 48 beers. The local provisions or survival kit I would have supplied Derek for his long journey back would be 48 beer, bear mace, a spray painted BMX, and a Saskatoon berry pie.

AU: Speaking of Edmonton, you have a show there August 16th at the Starlite Room. Tell us more about that.

EX: Yes. It will be our second show in a year at the Starlite Room on August 16th with Sulfuric Cautery, Congealed Flesh, Banzai, and Autolysis. This is going to be a totally insane show. Sulfuric Cautery is my favourite grind band in North

America, if not the entire world. I saw Congealed Flesh in Saskatoon last fall and they absolutely shredded my ear drums and blew me away. Autolysis are total Undergang-sounding death metal with guttural vocals and blazing chainsaw riffs; no timid virgin shit. I've never seen Banzai live, but the latest release on their Bandcamp is brutal AF! It's all taking place on the floor of Starlite too, which is sick. We're so excited for this show.

AU: Another story about your album is that an invalid man that goes by Shane Anderson, approached you directly after seeing you the first time. He said, "We are putting out your fucking record," but Shane doesn't actually speak English. Could you understand him at first and what's it like working with him?

EX: I've known Shane for a long time and I've got pretty good at translating the words coming out of his mouth whether they are

English or not. Shane gets down to business when business is to be had but the rest of the time, he's fairly chaotic. A very silly goose, but a lovable silly goose.

AU: What can we expect from Exsang this time next year?

EX: Next time this year we should have a new

BENEATH THE WHEEL

album out and have a tour booked.

AU: Do you guys like *Hellraiser*?

EX: Yes, we all love *Hellraiser*. In case anyone noticed, our album cover is Pierre Poillievre being ripped apart by chains like in *Hellraiser*. One of our first conversations about starting this band was to add a horror element with a political twist in the themes, and lyrics. I think that our album cover really makes that theme clear.

AU: How do we find you online and where do we pick up a copy of *Reactionary Dismemberment*?

EX: To pick up our album you can visit our Bandcamp, or by visiting Attack with Force Production on Bandcamp. You can get physical copies from us in limited quantities. We are sold out on Bandcamp of physical copies but you can also get digital copies.

AU: Any last sights to show the Canadian grinding-crusties that'll check out EXSANG on the road and in the future?

EX: We've welcomed our new drummer Scott Pichula to our band recently. See him behind the kit this summer and forever.

exsang.bandcamp.com

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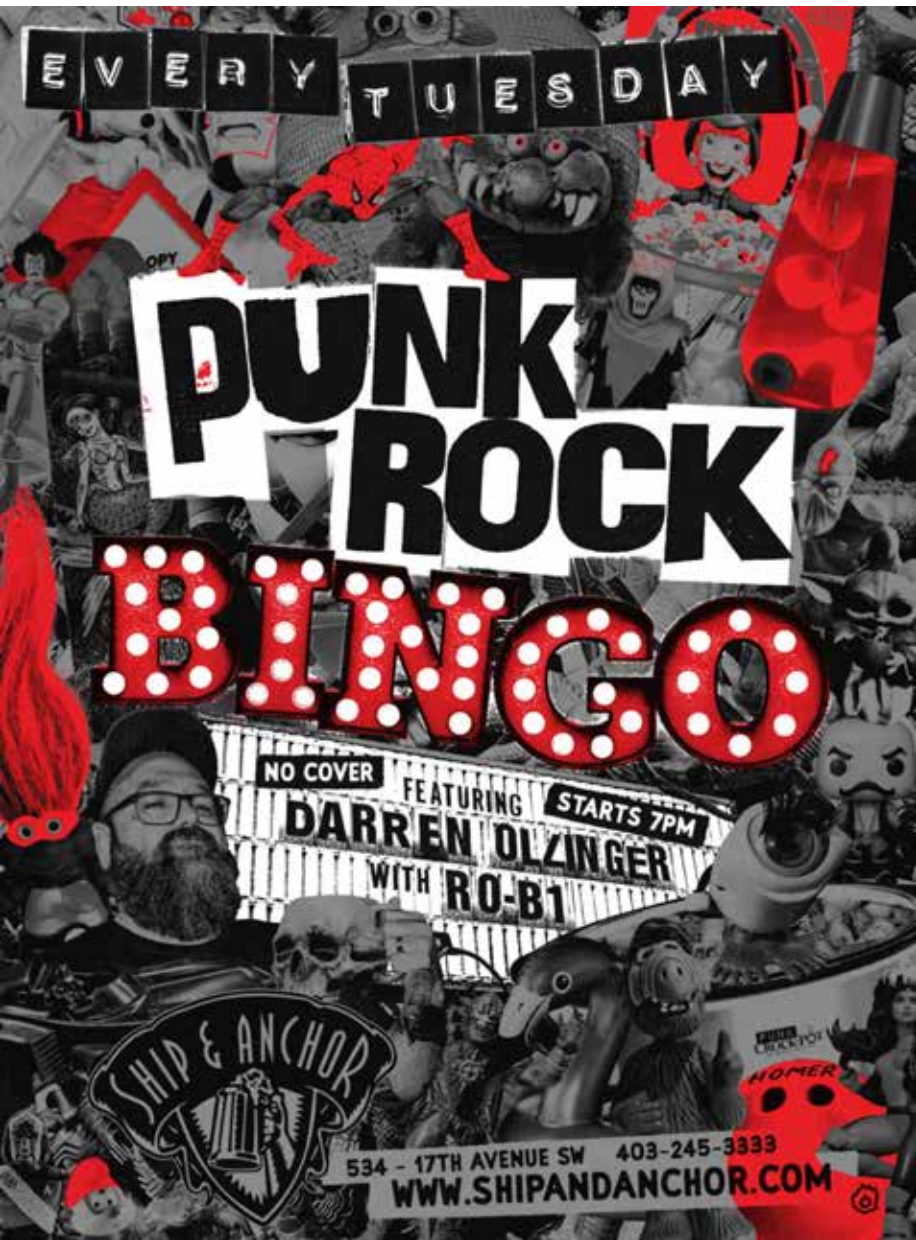
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Sublime In Texas Heat

Interview by Peter Illing

Today I bring you an interview with one greats from the Lone Star State, Stuart Sullivan, and his time recording Sublime's last album with Bradley Knowell.

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what is your role in music?

Stuart Sullivan: I'm Stuart Sullivan, owner of Wire Recording in the Point West Recording Complex. My discography includes a Grammy for Traditional Blues, an Americana Best Song/Album award with James McMurtry, and gold records with Lucinda Williams, Meat Puppets, and Butthole Surfers. I've worked with Tom Jones and INXS, spent 15 years recording with Willie Nelson, and achieved gold and multi-platinum success with Sublime. I've been engineering and producing professionally for over 35 years, and I still love every minute of it. My kids/family, dogs and politics are my favourite non-music pursuits.

AU: Do you recall why Paul Leary (lead guitarist of Butthole Surfers) was chosen as the producer of the album?

Stuart: Paul was chosen because Sublime loved the Butthole Surfers and wanted one to produce their record. He and I worked on Meat Puppets' hit record, so we had credibility in the industry.

Paul went to Long Beach to meet the band, but they were in Mexico. They came back after a few days and hung with Paul. When Paul came back to Austin, I asked him, "So, what are the songs like?" He said, "I don't know, they never played me anything," but he had gotten a cool tattoo of Woody Woodpecker smoking a joint and we got the gig! My feeling was that they felt Paul was able to deal with chaos well.

AU: Texas seems like an unlikely spot for Sublime to record their album. How did they end up choosing Willie Nelson's Pedernales Studio?

Stuart: Paul and I both live in Austin, TX. He and I have worked together for many years. I was based

out of Pedernales and Arlyn studios, and these are the studios where we worked. We started out at Pedernales because 1) The studio had big rooms, great mics, and a vintage Neve, 2) It was an hour out of town and Paul hoped it would remove some problematic temptations, 3) Willie's vibe was ingrained in that space which made it a creative hideout, 4) It's a former country club with a golf course with commanding views of the hill country and Lake Travis.

AU: Did y'all have free time outside of recording to go explore Austin together?

Stuart: We worked every day for a month recording the album.

Bud and Eric were finished with their parts and went home for the break. We didn't hang as we needed a break from the carnival that surrounded Brad. Most of our hang time was during dinner breaks. Paul tried to limit excursions so we could stay out of trouble. He could deal with the studio, but there wasn't the same safety in the outside world.

AU: When the sessions were underway, what was the process like? I've heard the band was somewhere between laser-focused and wildly loose.

Stuart: The tracking sessions were rather chaotic, but when the band was playing, the world was good. Individually they were talented, but when they played together, it was magic!

In the first few days alone, they had an accident in the studio owner's SUV, Lou Dog was grabbing

food off a neighbor's grill, and after a swim in the studio's pool, Brad threw his towel over a wall, unknowingly laying it on a light which caused a fire. Later, Brad messed up a poster of Willie, and amazingly Miguel Happoldt was able to fix it with a pencil, pen, white-out, and a packet of Taco Bell hot sauce!

It was a tornado of fun and absolute chaos. They were so good, but impossible to manage. Paul's genius was knowing how to grab the great parts swirling around the room and leave the unusable parts. He and I spent a lot of time listening and waiting.

We finished tracking most of the stuff, we moved into town at Arlyn Studio, it was mostly focusing on Brad. Unfortunately, someone had taken Brad to Mexico, and he returned with Valium. Miguel helped deal with Brad, but once Bradley started to mix the valium with his dope, everything got even more unglued. We needed vocals and some guitar parts, but progress slowed down. Occasionally, Brad would lock in and just kill a part or two. He always had an effortless brilliance in him, getting that out was a challenge. One day Bradley wanted to record some acoustic solo songs. We set him up and would watch him just sit

there for long stretches, anytime he so much as twitched, I would hit record. Like everything, it was a challenge, but he would reward you with beautiful music.

Paul was worried about Brad and sent him and Miguel home. This was before all the airline security, and let's just say that it worked out



¿Que Paso, Canada?

Deep In THE Sound of Texas

well for Brad as he was always vulnerable to the authorities. Paul and I had a couple of weeks left to mix and now the circus left town we were able to really go through everything and fully recognize how unbelievably great the music the band had given us was. One of the best songs never got usable vocals and we had to leave it behind but other than that it was the best.

On the last day, Paul and I sat around drinking champagne and listening to what had happened. You never know what's going to explode, but we knew this was an epic record. A month or two later, Paul's fears came true, and Bradley died. We were devastated that he was gone and how bad that had to be for his wife and new baby. It was a personal tragedy for everyone. With a family now, Brad had committed to quitting, but his final dose did him in.

After a few days of dealing with the loss, it seemed like the record wouldn't come out. But in the end, it found its way. People still tell me how much it means to them, that it was the soundtrack to their youth, and knowing that record touched so many is really gratifying. That band was so out of this world great and I'm very grateful that the world got to know that. It's cool that the guys and Jakob are keeping the music alive.

AU: Are there any stories from the sessions that you have never told publicly, but think about?

Stuart: I've mentioned a few stories, and some stories better left behind. The record speaks for itself and truly represents the band. Some of the personal stuff was his own demons and existed outside of the band. I have so many great memories, those are what last.

@yoyallpeter



Babyteeth Tattoo

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Misha: My name is Misha and I'm probably best known for my tattoo work.

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

Misha: I've been an artist my whole life. My mom ran an in-home daycare and would have crafting activities to keep everyone busy. I've always gravitated to working with my hands and my greatest feelings of accomplishment have always come from creating something cool or beautiful!

AU: What style of tattooing are you best known for?

Misha: Illustrative B&G with American traditional and Japanese influences. I also love to tattoo pieces that are a little cheeky in nature.

AU: Who did you apprentice under?

Misha: Mason Larose.

AU: Who are some of your biggest inspirations in tattooing?

Misha: There are so many amazing tattooers out there! I'm always inspired by the folks I work directly with and the community in Victoria that I'm lucky enough to be a part of. Hearing about everyone's individual journey through the industry and having the opportunity to learn through

osmosis more about art and tattooing really fuels my fire.

AU: What do you want the readers to know about you as a tattoo artist?

Misha: I think I'd like readers to know that it's important to me that clients feel comfortable and involved during the entire tattoo process, from design to stencilling and application.

AU: What's the craziest tattoo request you've ever gotten?

Misha: I recently had the absolute pleasure of doing a Namio Harukawa inspired piece for a friend. I won't describe here what his work consists of but I definitely recommend checking him out. I giggled the whole time.

AU: What kind of music do you like to listen to while you work?

Misha: depends on the day! It's always fun when we have throwback punk and emo playlists playing in the shop.

AU: Do you have any other hobbies or interests outside of tattooing?

Misha: I like to collect vintage magazines and make silly collages! I also occasionally do glass etching and I try to get out in nature and camp when the weather is nice.

AU: What shop are you working at these days?

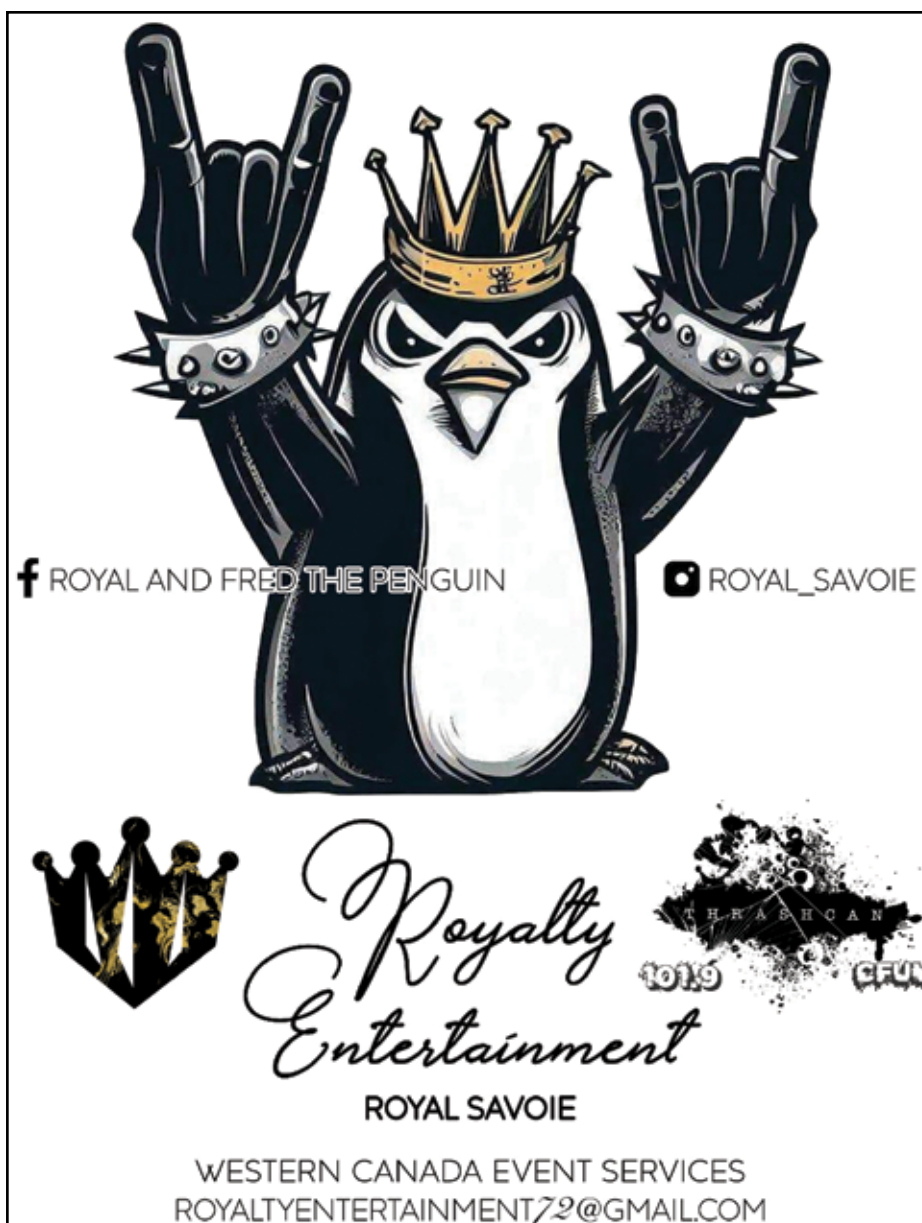
Misha: I work at Proper Poke in Victoria BC

AU: How do people set up an appointment?

Misha: Email or DM!

IG: @Babyteeth.tattoo

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Church of Scum:

A Noir Encounter with Yung Scumz

By New Music Showcase

The Dark Approach

I found myself in the worst stretch of Hamilton, where streetlights sputter and shadows crawl. Ahead loomed a peeling brick church, its stained-glass windows cracked like fractured souls. From inside came a sound I couldn't place— equal parts lunatic howl and celestial chorus.

The Congregation of Decay

Pew after rotting pew was littered with crushed PBR cans and empty tequila bottles. And there, under a single flickering bulb, stood four figures: David Alejandro Pineda aka PIG – vocals/bass, ReNo De Bureau aka Bruiser – guitar, Phil Cienfuego – yelling/guitar, and

Benjamin Cruz – drums. Their silhouettes towered like ancient idols. I hesitated. Then they spoke in unison: “We will grant you knowledge. Ask your questions, mortal.”

Inspiration in the Abyss

Heart pounding, I asked what drives them to make music, how the songs come to life. They exchanged grins that revealed too-bright teeth.

“Our fans,” PIG rumbled. “The raw emotion we pull from performing. The camaraderie, the pure fun.”

Bruiser leaned in: “Writing’s simple. We gather in the Church of Scum, arrange the proper symbols on the floor...”

Their voices shifted, cadences lowering into something demonic. At first I thought they were bleeding, but the crimson wasn't blood— it was whiskey, streaming from eyes and mouths alike. The lights dimmed. I swallowed and murmured, “Maybe we move on, boys.”

Scum and Culture

I steered the talk to roots: “How do your backgrounds shape the sound?”

Phil chuckled, “Being scumbags makes our music scummy.”

He and PIG share a Latin fire, Bruiser injects an East Coast bluegrass twist, and Benjamin— half-Filipino— added, “Using the colonizers’ language

is punk as hell. It's rebellion in every word.”

Kindred Spirits

Next, I asked about fellow outlaws they're proud to share a stage with or dream of jamming alongside. Bruiser's eyes lit up. Their favourites include: Vestigio (Toronto), Dogo Suicide (Quebec), Jesse James Medicine Show (Hamilton) and Mvll Crimes (London). They spoke of sweaty basements and co-headlining dives where the audience thrashes in unison.

Tomorrow's Gospel

NEW MUSIC SHOWCASE

Dawn broke against cracked glass as I posed a final question: “What's next for Yung Scumz?”

“To survive,” came the flat reply— then a grin. “Tour Japan, maybe. But being underground's enough. We're respected; that's all we need. We bring our gospel to punks of Southern Ontario... and wherever shrouded amps still roar.”

yungscumz.bandcamp.com

Photos by New Music Showcase



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Mountain Collective American Tour 2017: The Storm of the Century Part 4 By Brydo "Hot Dog" Parker

I believe we left off last time as we were leaving from Mount Shasta, the second-highest peak in the Cascades, on our way to hit the mighty Sierra Nevada mountain range.

We were cruising at a cool 25 kilometers an hour through a blizzard that had no end and no way back to the beginning. Just relentless snow pounding down in a flat avalanche of mountain highway. Ira and I changed the chains countless times following that little blue google dot. We didn't have to worry about straying across the line because there was nobody on the road except for us Canuckleheads, not even snow plows. But we pushed on and on at a sweltering 25 kms per hour. We had three working brakes and a bag full of bakes from Washington and Oregon. We didn't really need brakes because if I let off the gas we would grind to a frozen halt in the deep pow we were navigating through. We plodded along all night heading to the legendary Squaw Valley ski resort, now called Palisades Tahoe for politically correct reasons, but it will always be Squaw to me.

We rolled through Truckee and we made the right turn up to the mountain. There were a bunch of people at the corner gas station at three in the morning. I knew it was gonna be good as we climbed up through the mountains. We pulled over for a quick stop at the truck pull-out and we heard, as people started to run for their cars, that the roads were about to close. So we high-tailed it back onto the road after a chain tightening and inspection. As we rolled through the gate there was a highways guy closing it. So for you that don't know this means two thing, one it's dangerous as fuck driving, and two if we make it no one else will and we will have the whole mountain to ourselves. We discussed these

possibilities as we drove that 35 foot motorhome up through the deep chowder. I was reminded of a story back in the 80s of an avalanche at Squaw Valley that took out the lift shack and staff lodge. Oh boy, this is gonna be good.

We rolled into the parking lot and we got the RV high-centred and sideways in the parking lot after a celebratory powerslide got us cockeyed and stuck. A whole bunch of parking lot dudes got mad and threatened to tow me. We blazed a fatty and laughed because the highway was closed. The last guy said I was gonna have to deal with the snow clearing machine operators. "Ok" we replied. If there is one thing I know is that snow clearing guys are easily bribed. So there we were high-centered in the middle of the parking lot. Now the pain of not having a snow shovel during the

storm of the century was an oversight of huge proportions. Ira crawled underneath the RV and was attempting to clear the snow with a dustpan. The absurdity was astounding. At that moment a high-powered engine noise was coming from the closed-off mountain road. It was a souped up rally Subaru with all the bells and whistles. The driver proceeded to drift drive around the RV yelling at us, "Hey, do you guys need a shovel?" He stopped and lent us a shovel but it was too dangerous under there in case the RV settled, a person might get pinned, so plug pulled. We invited our new parking lot neighbor to stay over but he said he had his car decked out for sleeping. I asked him a random question: "Do you have any mushrooms?" He replied that he had a concoction of honey and mushrooms. I said, "How much?" he said "Free" he got 'em for free so pass 'em on for free. Right on man.

Just after dinner the snow plow operator drove by. I approached with caution and a 26 oz bottle of rum and waved him down. He opened up his window and asked what was up? I pointed to the RV and said that is us and we are stuck. Could I

give him this bottle of booze and could he tow us two feet to freedom? He said no to the tow and no to the bottle but he didn't care about the parking and that it was nice to be asked.

The next morning we awoke to a perfectly plowed lot, a closed down/snowed in resort, tons of fresh pow covering the bullwheels of some of the chairlifts, and avalanche clearing bomb detonations happening every few minutes. A quick breakfast of honey mush for me and cereal and green goo for Ira and on to being first in line for the best day of our lives. We got 3 runs in before the road opened and people started to swarm. This is Squaw Valley at its absolute best! We found a cliff line on our fourth run that we had a clear view of from the chair so we decided to drop it and ride the gully out. And ride it we did! Best run ever, in my top 10 for sure.

We stopped to smoke a doobie in a small valley in the trees trying to get back to the base of the chair, so we could do it again, when the sound of excited whooping snowboarders preceded their arrival. "Whoa! What is that dope smell?" one guy said and we said "Not sure, it's from Washington or Oregon," we replied, "Can we trade for some Gorilla Glue we have?" they asked. "Sure," we said. So we had a doobie fest and exchange right there. When we told them about the cliff they said "No way, that is never open. Let's go!" When we got to see it again there was ski patrol resetting a do not go line that was buried. We rode right over the line the first time so we hustled and hit it again a little lower than the first time. Bigger cliffs for sure.

Our new friends had asked where we were from and we replied "Canada." and they said "Do all Canadians park so badly?" We could see the RV from where we were and it did look funny with all these cars



parked nicely and our rig frozen mid powerslide. Haha, at least we know how to make an entrance. Finished off an epic day and had another "safety meeting" with all our new friends in the parking lot.

Next issue Mammoth fun at California's Mammoth Mountain.
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Existential Crisis

By Vince D'Amato

I was out with my good friend Josh, it was the beginning of summer and we were having breakfast, when a somewhat odd movie-related subject came up... Neither of us had the same "favourite" movies that we'd had when we were in our twenties.

To provide a little timeline context, we've both been fans of movies since the video store heyday of the mid-1980s-to-90s. Now, decades later, those VHS discoveries that we fell in love with and had felt were the be-all end-all of the horror genre, like Sam Raimi's *The Evil*

Dead and *Army of Darkness*, were no longer on our top-10 lists. Most were not even on my top-100 list! I heard a slightly forlorn quality in Josh's voice when he asked, "But why?" – and I knew exactly why. "I just look for different things in movies now," I said. One of the things that attracts me to the horror genre is the abilities of the filmmakers,

even across the decades, to design and execute a horror film like they're conducting a symphony; composing emotional and visceral creations through a myriad of visuals that connect to subtext and symbolism, not only to service heavy-handed plots and a gory freight train of spectacle. Don't get me wrong, that spectacle of gore can be utterly symphonic as well, as in

Peter Jackson's *Braindead* ("Dead-Alive"), Stuart Gordon's Lovecraft adaptations, or George A. Romero's *Martin* (which, is also extremely existential)... but what I meant was that the other aspects of those films tend to hold more interest for me now. I'd used Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder* as an example, but there are so many more worth observing – Paul Bartel's *Private Parts* or Donald Cammell's *Demon Seed* or Abel Ferrara's *The Addiction* or Larry Fessenden's *Habit*.

I have to say that one of my favourite things about the horror genre is its uncanny ability to twist its sequels into something more existential or esoteric or just flat-out bonkers than the original

film may have been, something that takes a wild left turn into the utterly bizarre... *Ginger Snaps 2*, *Hello Mary Lou: Prom Night II* (which briefly turned that Canadian slasher franchise into a surreal dream-world), and of course we could never forget *Halloween III: Season of the Witch*. But even as bananas as *Halloween III* is, two of my favourite

(and more recent) examples have got to be *Happy Death Day 2U* and *Smile 2*. The first *Happy Death Day* is a very clever *Groundhog Day*/horror film mash-up exuding an exuberant charm and some really engaging young characters who are stuck in a slasher time-loop. Its sequel then propels the potential slasher series into a full-blown sci-fi comedy instead, throwing the original horror angle out the window and turning its slasher origins on its head. It could've gone down the same path as say, *Scream 2* and *3*, but it took its own comedic concept and literally ran away with it. I really wish this one had gotten a green light for a second sequel, but I'm not totally surprised it didn't, as it switched tracks so drastically. *Smile 2* is the most recent film mentioned here, and there is a second sequel in the works for 2026. This one went from balls-out horror to a somewhat shockingly Dario Argento-esque lane change into total surrealism. This drastic shift in style was absolutely appealing to me, obviously taking cues from Nicolas Winding Refn's *Neon Demon* and Luca Guadagnino's *Suspiria* remake, as well as aforementioned earlier horror of the '70s and '80s, where existentialism and surrealism go together like bacon and eggs (or like sex and violence).

Smile 2 stars Naomi Scott in a low-budget Kristen Stewart-type role, though Scott is clearly a talented actress in her own right and does an amazing job with the entirety of the film's heaving lifting, especially as writer/director Parker Finn dangerously abandons his own relentless structure and aesthetic of the first film in favour of some experimental artistry here. Did it work? Mostly. But the obvious effort is impressive and points are scored for daring to do something different. I suppose that there's always a chance that writer/director Parker Finn will pedal backwards for the upcoming sequel rather than expanding where *Smile 2* left off; sort of how all of those glorious '80s and '90s sequels did when the producers from *Halloween* and *Hello Mary Lou* ran back to their slashing-by-the-numbers scenarios (although *Prom Night III* went a lot more tongue-in-cheek), and probably most famously was *Friday the 13th's* return to unstoppable villain Jason Voorhees after the amazingly off-the-rails *Friday the 13th: A New Beginning* (aka *Part V*).

Coincidentally, my friend Josh and I both agreed the we liked *Part V: A New Beginning* quite a bit, clearly the most visually stylish and giallo-inspired of the franchise/series. (At this point, we were still eating breakfast, although I must've been doing most of the talking because I noticed he had one half-piece of toast left to my half-a-plateful of food). Personally, I loved that *Part V* was trying to do something different, although it's worth thinking about the fact that it wouldn't have been different if there wasn't an established backdrop of by-the-numbers films already in place as the standard franchise template. I love that the producers took a chance on a new direction, and even though it



didn't pan out, even the franchise's next writer/director Tom McLoughlin still chose to continue with the character of Tommy Jarvis in *Part VI: Jason Lives*, who had originally been positioned to take over Jason's murderous rampage at the end of *Part V*. Somewhat strangely, the end of *Part V* can still be metaphysically connected to another one of my favourite *Friday* sequels, *Jason Goes to Hell*, where the entire idea of the



entity that is Jason Voorhees is transferred into an actual body-jumping movie (à la *The Hidden*), thereby somewhat further connecting the series to its eventual culmination in *Freddy vs. Jason*, where the two mega-villains duke it out in Freddy Krueger's dream-world reality. By this point, original *Friday the 13th* director Sean Cunningham had taken over the series again, the only problem was that he didn't have the rights to the *Friday the 13th* moniker nor the character of Tommy Jarvis, who by now had been included in three of the previous films – Paramount owned the rights to all of that, and Sean Cunningham was now producing his Jason sequels through New

Line Cinema, the studio that owned *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Around the same time as *Jason Goes to Hell*, Wes Craven had come up with his own metaphysical take on his franchise with the utterly mind-cranking meta-sequel *Wes Craven's*

New Nightmare. And much later, in the mid-2010s, even Sam Raimi would return to resurrect his favourite ant-hero Ash (Bruce Campbell) in a wildly genre-reflexive (and *Evil Dead*-reflexive) updated meta-horror-comedy TV series titled *Ash vs. The Evil Dead* – and where, in the third season, there's even an episode where Ash has to comedically confront the notion that his entire demon-slaying reality may be... just maybe... not reality...

...Now that's what I'm talking about.

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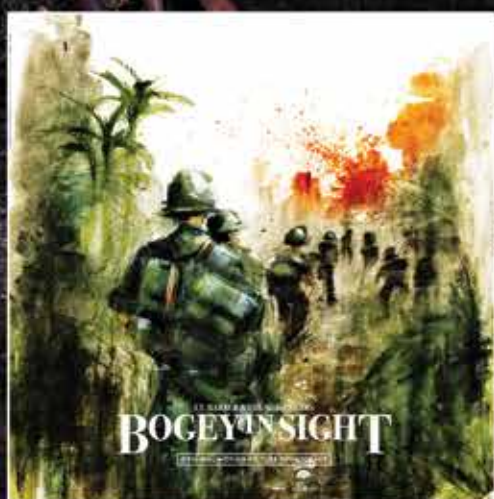
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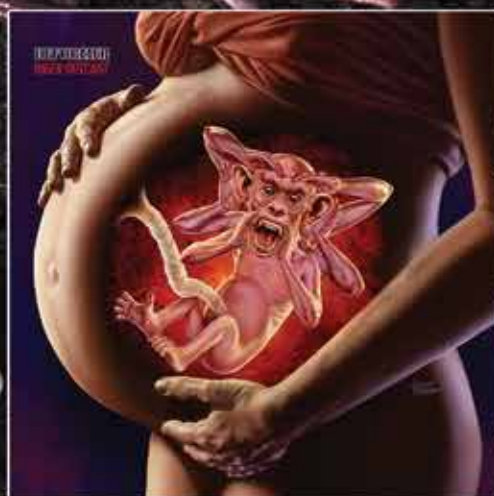
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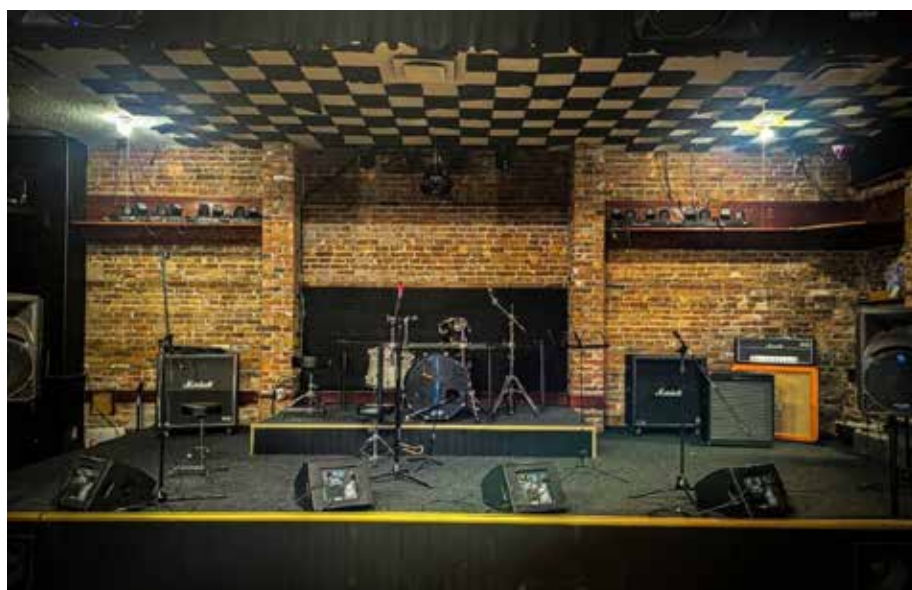
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The Globe

Live Venue in Nanaimo, BC

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are best known for?

Fin Edwards: My name is Fin Edwards, I am the assistant manager and booker at The Globe Live Studio!

AU: How and when did The Globe start?

FE: The Globe was built all the way back in 1887 and has been home to many different businesses over the years, but this incarnation got its start just after covid, when Rich

(the owner) started hosting local punk and metal shows and focussing on the live music aspects of the venue.

AU: What kind of events/shows do you usually hold there?

FE: We mainly specialize in rock, punk, and metal shows. The busiest nights are usually all ages punk shows, or death metal shows.

AU: What's the music scene in Nanaimo like these days?

FE: The scene here is amazing. There are so many great bands and venues. I started playing here in my band Danger Box when I was 16 and since then I have watched so many great bands pop up of all different styles. Some local



BACKSTAGE PASS

AU: How can people book a show with you?

FE: Just send me an email at theglobelivestudiobooking@gmail.com and I'll happily set a show up!

AU: Where are you located? Is there an event calendar people can check out?

FE: We are located at 25 Front St in Nanaimo, right Downtown on the waterfront. You can see all our upcoming events and buy tickets at theglobelivestudio.com or check out our Instagram/Facebook pages where we post a monthly calendar.

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Simon King

By Ross Hansen

Absolute Underground: Tell us a bit about yourself and how you became a comedian.

Simon King: I was born in England, which was common practice at the time, into a showbusiness family. My mother and father met and formed a band in the '60s and toured through Europe until the mid-'70s. My mom was the guitar player and singer and grew up acting her whole life and continues to be a working actor today. My father was a piano prodigy and is currently dead. When we came to the Vancouver area in 1987, err 1982. Yes, 1982— that makes more sense for the human lifespan. When we came to Canada, my mother took up acting again and due to the 1980s lack of access to affordable childcare, I was forced into acting in some of my mom's plays. The good news is, in addition to being a nerdy theatre kid with a bowl cut and glasses, I was also quite fat, had a strong English accent, and my voice didn't change until I was like 14. So, I had A LOT going for me on the road to becoming a stand-up comedian. Fast forward to THE YEAR 2000. After time as an actor, in improv, sketch and even as a harmonica player,

I wandered into a Vancouver comedy club. Fat sad man had annoyed all his friends with his obnoxious stream of consciousness ramblings that it was decided he should either find an audience of strangers or get new friends... and that is where the story really starts.

AU: Do you have a heckler story?

SK: Oh, man. In the winter of 2010, I was doing a series of corporate shows in Saskatoon with my friend and killer comedian Matt Billon. During the run of six weeks of boring corporate, clean, hour-long shows, we were offered a bar gig miles and miles away in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Eager to do anything that wasn't a tedious "behave yourself" set, we jumped at the chance. Fast-forward six hours of driving and we're in a bar that's split into two: bar and showroom with a dividing wall down the middle, and doors near the stage and at the back of the room leading between the venues. In the showroom, which seats about 100, there was a large contingent of people there to see a comedy show— a comedy show that Matt and I were going to provide. There was also a good amount of people on a raised area at stage-right that were having a drunken Christmas party. As they were friends of the former owner, the staff at the bar was unable to kick them out. But you could tell immediately it would be a problem. So, Matt starts the show, and right away, the people who came for the show are amazing and the people who came to drunkenly hit on the co-worker they've been eyeing all year but couldn't get up the courage without the right amount of rye, are animals. Matt is a great comedian and as

experienced as you can be, but after half an hour of fighting these drunken jerks, it was over. He left the stage short of his 45 minutes and I didn't blame him one bit. So now I'm up and I decide I've had enough of these selfish, drunken idiots. I don't mind if a whole audience is garbage— I do tons of shows a year, so that's just another rough one— but when most of the crowd wants to watch the show and a few people wreck it for them, that's when I lose my patience. After half an hour of trying everything I knew how to do— reasoning with them, threatening them, talking to them, ignoring them, everything— I was about ready to give up. I had never walked offstage before the end of my time in my life, but I was honestly at my wit's end. I had even reasoned with them, pointing out that there was an entire empty bar right next door that they could go be as loud as they wanted to in, but they were having none of it. It was a battle of wills and I was losing. So, there I am: mic back in the stand, about ready to walk for the first time in my life, to admit defeat in the face of an audience. But just then, the server brought a shot onstage and said it was from my "friends." I expected this to be some sort of brutal shot from the loud table just to mess with me. I look over and standing by the door are not only Matt, but two other comics and friends of ours who happen to have been in town for their own shows elsewhere. They'd seen the whole thing and watched me fight this table like it was an angry bear who just got denied a mortgage. They're all grinning like idiots because, of course for them, this was hilarious as there's nothing funnier than watching your friend struggle onstage. (I once watched a comedian bomb so hard he removed everything but his underwear and shuffled off to the sound of his own footsteps and I wept with laughter. Gold.) So, at this point, I decide I'm not going out like that. Not in front of my friends. Not for an audience who mostly wanted a show. I say to the crowd that I'm going to the bar next door



to finish the show and anyone who wants to join me is welcome. So, I walk offstage and roughly 95 people followed me from the showroom to the adjoining bar. I performed without a mic, lights, or stage for another hour-plus and it was one of the best shows I have ever done to one of the most appreciative audiences I have ever played. It was an experience I will never forget. Oh, and the only people left in the showroom were the four worst hecklers closest to the stage now sitting in an abandoned, brightly lit room with no music playing finishing up their beers in silence. I don't think they'll ever forget that show either.

AU: You're recording a show this month in Vancouver, where can we find a stream?

SK: Being that I'm a comedian that is best described as "artisanal, small batch and boutique" I would say probably YouTube. However, follow me on my social media stuff and when it comes out, I'll annoy you so you can see it.

IG: @thisissimonking

Photo by Joan Ulyett Photography





The Ladysmith Skateboard Collective

Interview by Heath Fenton

Absolute Underground: Who am I talking to and what is your history in skateboard culture?

Jesse Manner: My name is Jesse Manner and I've been into skateboarding for most of my life. My parents bought boards for my brothers and I in the late '80s and it's been part of me since.

AU: What do you like best about the skateboard community in Ladysmith?

JM: The skate community in Ladysmith is great. It's a very friendly and very welcoming group to everyone. Watching it grow and meeting so many new friends has been awesome.

AU: Why are you trying to get a new skatepark built in Ladysmith? What is wrong with the current skatepark?

JM: The skatepark in Ladysmith can be a tough one to skate. Local ripper Nevaen Alle-Koopas said it best, "You don't skate this park, you fight it". It opened up in 1999 and had some features added to it in 2011. The concrete is old and rough and the park has lots of dead space between features.

AU: You have been organising a skateboard collective for Ladysmith. Can you tell us what that is about?

JM: Ladysmith Skatepark Collective is just over four years old now. We started our collective to bring attention to the skatepark and get together to try to rebuild it. In the beginning it was only a couple of us and now our collective has grown quite a bit. Our skate jam is on August 9th going on its third year and it's been lots of fun. We get a good turnout of competitors and spectators.

We have lots of support from Samantha at our local skate shop Four One One Apparel and Jonny at Jonny's Barber Shop.

AU: What are some of the obstacles you are facing trying to get the new skatepark built?

JM: The biggest obstacles have been getting support and keeping support from the community. This includes recruiting volunteers for various events for fundraising and awareness of the park. We also don't have any experience doing fundraising, so getting the

information and knowledge on how to start has been a big obstacle.

AU: How are you going about getting through those obstacles?

JM: We have a monthly meeting with our society and we talk about different volunteer opportunities that we need to delegate and we also try to recruit new members by talking to interested people. We are planning to put a call out on our social media to see if there are other interested people.

For learning how to fundraise, we have been talking to a representative at New Line and he has

SHRED SESSION

given us a lot of information on how to start fundraising. We are also learning a lot of this on the fly. I'm doing my best to try to understand the process. We also want to talk to other groups like Qualicum that have just built a

new skatepark to see what they've done.

AU: How can people get involved who want to help with your mission?

JM: If someone wants to get

involved, they can message us on our Facebook or Instagram, come out to the Wednesday night meet-ups at the Ladysmith Skatepark, or send us an email.

AU: Has the city and citizens of Ladysmith been supportive in what you are trying to accomplish?

JM: Yes, Ladysmith has been very supportive. The town council has given money for the skatepark feasibility plan, they have surveyed the site and they have chosen New Line as the skatepark designer/builder. The

town has also given us the go ahead to start fundraising for the project.

AU: Do you have a plan and design for the new skatepark?

JM: We went through two public engagements and had community members come in and choose the features that they wanted. Then New Line looked at the opinions of the public engagement and came up with a design that

matched with people's opinions.

AU: What has been your worst injury while skateboarding?

JM: I've had lots of slams and injuries in my life, but my worst skateboarding injury was a couple of years ago when I broke my scaphoid, and I had to be in a cast for five months. It might not be the biggest injury but it was the biggest pain in the ass.

AU: What has been your best experience while involved with skateboarding?

JM: My favourite thing is the smiles on the faces of the kids and people involved in our skate jams. Also, the community that we have built at our park making new friends and feeling like we belong.

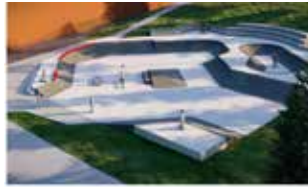
AU: Is there anything else you would like to add?

JM: There's not a lot of options for the youth in Ladysmith where they can go and hang out. We wanted to help create a space where they feel like they belong and be active. Big shout out to all the help along the way. None of this is done by one person. Thanks Tim, Char, Katie, Django, Glenn, Shane, Hailey, Germaine, Samantha at Four One One, Jonny at Jonny's Barbershop, Mike Bradley, Moses at RDS, Ladysmith Skatepark Collective and everyone in our skate communities throughout the island.

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Cartridge Heart

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

Jonathan Sohn: My name is Jonathan Sohn. I run Cartridge Heart records, publish a quarterly zine called Plastic and Wax and sing/play guitar in The Mendozaz.

AU: What got you started and how long have you been doing it for?

JS: I got started with *Dookie* by Green Day at the end of 1994. I've been playing in bands for 20+ years. I started writing music reviews in 2006 for a couple websites and zines. I launched my own website Plastic and Wax in 2014 and started printing my reviews into mini-zines at the end of 2023. I'm pretty opinionated and I enjoy inflicting my taste on other people.

AU: What is Cartridge Heart and what's the origin story?

JS: I started Cartridge Heart in 2017 to release my own music and expanded in 2023 to release material by other bands. I went to over 100 shows the year before and made the joke that I should work in A&R. Now I do. For myself. As for the name, I play a lot of retro Nintendo games, so I appropriated the shape of an NES cart for the logo. The heart comes from a personal motto: "do what you love".

AU: What services do you have to offer?

JS: I'm a hype-man. I run pop-up shows in Toronto and Oshawa. I dabble in graphic design.

AU: What kind of bands have you recorded there?

JS: I'm pretty entrenched in the punk scene, but I also really enjoy metal and '90s alt-rock. Plus any

genre with the word "post-" in front. I dig stuff that's melodic and high-energy.

AU: How can musicians get a hold of you to get more info or book you for recording?

JS: Message me on Instagram. I'm always happy to chat music. Or I can give you tips on how to beat *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* for the original Nintendo. It can be done!

AU: Where can people find your catalogue? (In person or online)

JS: Bandcamp. I have a dotcom website but it all points back to Bandcamp. Or if you're cool and like physical media I always have a box of CDs with me at one of my pop-ups. I'm trying out vinyl in the fall if you're more into inconvenient, expensive, yet-highly-collectible formats.

AU: Where are you located?

JS: Right in the heart of Toronto.

AU: What's the music scene in your city like?

JS: Big. I wouldn't call it a scene. You can literally stumble onto a pocket of completely different bands and people who have no idea that the other pockets exist every night of the week. It's easy to get lost in it all. There's no shortage of bands or places to check out. I roll into Oshawa once a month to host a pop-up at a board game cafe. It's the opposite experience where I see familiar faces every month.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention or promote?

JS: I reissued Joan Smith & the Jane Does' debut EP *Normalize* earlier this year. They're one of



RECORD LABEL PROFILE

the best rock n' roll bands in the Greater Toronto Area and that record is awesome. My annual compilation *Go Kick-Ass!* has its third instalment coming out on September 12. I solicit brand-new tracks from my favourite bands and collect them into one package. I think of it as *Punk-O-Rama* meets *Big Shiny Tunes*. There are release shows Sept 12-14 all over Ontario, so

if you live in Ontario, you should come to a show and buy a CD.

cartridgeheartrecords.bandcamp.com

cartridgeheart.com

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CANNABIS CORNER



Victoria Cannabis Company

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today, and what do you do?

Kyp Rowe: My name is Kyp Rowe and I am the VP of Brand Development and Sales at the Victoria Cannabis Company.

AU: When did you first start growing cannabis?

KR: The VCC brand started in August 2023.

AU: What drew you to the cannabis industry?

KR: I have spent most of my adult life in and around the cannabis industry. What drew me was the culture of cannabis... the people that share a love and devotion of the plant.

AU: What's it like being a licensed producer in BC?

KR: Being a licensed producer in BC is amazing!



There is such a deep rich cannabis culture that the support from the Provincial Buyer (BCLDB) to the end customers is incredible and never-ending.

AU: How have things changed over the years and now that legalization has arrived?

KR: Overall, societal acceptance is the biggest thing. There is less and less stigma attached to being a cannabis consumer now than in the past.

AU: What's the best part of your job?

KR: Creating new cannabis SKUs in the market. Coming up with new flavour profiles that no one has tried yet.

AU: What strains do you currently produce and what makes them unique?

KR: We are currently growing our three mainstays; Pomelo Skunk, G-Wagon and After Eighth. The Pomelo Skunk is from a local Island breeder, Lantville Genetics. The After Eighth is from Canadian breeder, Ryan Lee of Chimera Genetics and the G-Wagon is from Umami Seeds out of the States. All three have very unique flavour profiles not commonly seen in the market. We are constantly looking for new flavours all the time.

AU: What is your most popular strain?

KR: Our most popular cultivar is the G-Wagon (Georgia Pie x Zwish) from Umami seeds.

AU: What are some of your favourite strains? Do you prefer sativas or indicas?

KR: I'm fairly old school and prefer equatorials (sativa). I can sit and puff on a Nevilles Haze all day.

AU: What are some medicinal properties of cannabis that people might not know about?

KR: Each person has their own unique endocannabinoid system. Therefore, how their body reacts to cannabis is truly an individual thing. From stress and pain relief to helping with

sleep and appetite, cannabis can do many things for many people.

AU: Why is it important to support local growers?

KR: Cannabis is local, not global to me. Small local growers are in tune with the wants and proclivities of their local consumers. They are treated as individuals, not numbers on a spreadsheet.

AU: What makes an expert grower, in your opinion?

KR: Being a competent grower is really all about being in tune with the growing environment. Being able to make all the small adjustments to the unique environment that your plants are growing in will lead to a successful harvest.

AU: What are some growing secrets or tips you can share with our readers?

KR: It's way easier to buy finished products, haha. If I had to say one thing: know the parameters of your growing environment and above all, have patience.

AU: Where are your products available?

KR: Our products are available in Ontario, British Columbia, and nationally through Mendo, an



online medical cannabis company. Locally, you can always visit us at 340 Mary St. in Victoria at our Farmgate location that not only carries our own products but also has BC's biggest British Columbia Craft cannabis selection.

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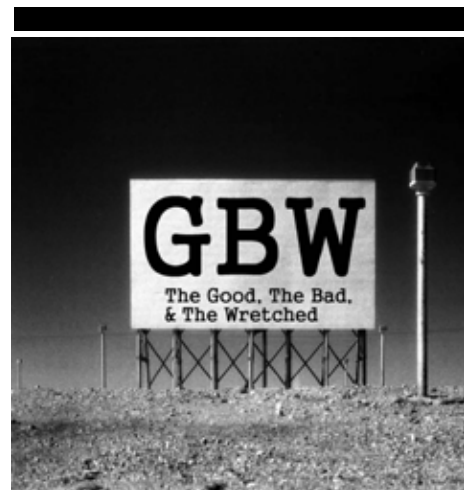
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The Good, The Bad & The Wretched Podcast

By Vince D'Amato

Founded in 2015 by Chris and Josh from The Video Graveyard, this duo has been discussing the world of weirdly wonderful films on their podcast (abbreviated to GBW Podcast) for nearly a full decade now. And they were doing even more before that, too! As Chris from GBW Podcast said, "After doing [the genre movie review site] The Video Graveyard since 1997, a podcast seemed like the logical next step for Josh and me." The move from digital page to audio came with a lot more than the obvious shift in medium and platform, it gave the duo a chance to expand



into in-person guest interviews with local and visiting genre celebs in Vancouver, where the podcast is based and recorded from. "Some of my favourite episodes are the interviews," Chris said, "Todd Masters and Uwe Boll, particularly." Never forgetting their Video Graveyard roots, the majority of the episodes and content circle around discussions of films themselves— oddities, weird films, underrated films, action films, disaster and disastrous films, and even the underrated films of entire decades. That last sub-category also happens to contain some of Chris' favourite episodes; in his own words, continuing his list of favourites, "...[the] Underrated Decade ones, and just talking about movies you won't hear about on most film podcasts."

Josh and Chris have practically made a new subgenre of audio film discussions centered around fun, insightful genre weirdness of sometimes (often) mega-length, like a movie podcast on steroids for the self-proclaimed super-nerdy and the super-curious alike. You just have to look at the descriptions of their recent episodes

to see for yourself: "Lawyer Werewolf" (#248), "You Made it Weird" (#244), and "High Concept's All We Got" (#243).

This summer marks a huge benchmark in achievement for GBW Podcast, as Chris and Josh prepare to record their 250th episode. I am more than a little gobsmacked to say that yours truly has been cordially invited to discuss what promises to be a "Battle Royale" of the best weird and unexpected film favourites. To say I'm excited about this would likely be a severe understatement, I have not been able to join the duo for a podcast

since pre-lockdown; before that, I'd been lucky enough to have been invited for a couple of the "Underrated Decades" ones, and so I know from experience that these mega-podcasts take a huge amount of love and effort to record, and it's pretty amazing that these two have been at it for so long. The podcast's 250th episode is scheduled to go live this August 2025, and I can't wait to see what other craziness they have up their sleeves for the rest of their 10th decade of

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE

recording and celebrating genre films.

To catch (or catch up on) the ongoing/monthly GBW Podcast directly, you can check out:

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darksidereleasing.com



THE DOORS FROM VANCOUVER THE COLLECTORS

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MEMORIAL ARENA

By Clark'Super'Mantei

Yet there's the legend of the July 20th, 1967 show poster by 'Bob Masse' too. That poster doesn't say Blues X Five, yet legend has it they did in fact play.

David Glover: "I was their manager 1967-68. I was managing Blues X Five and got them booked into The Doors concert. Len Benthams, Derek Walsh and myself had a light show company called 'Nerve Centre Lights'. The show promoter wanted us to do a full blown liquid light show as well but we didn't have the time to mount a multi projector show. There were 2 posters released. June 2nd was the handbill. Only 450 Victorians paid \$5 to see the show. The Doors hit it big a month later. Timing as they say is everything. July 20, 1967 was the only concert. The promoter of the Dante's Inferno date called me to book the light show as June was rescheduled. The show at the hockey arena was the 1st concert the Doors ever did outside of the USA. They were promoting their debut LP with Elektra Records. The single "Light My Fire" hit #3 on the Billboard Hot 100 that night, but it was too late for Victoria... more people showed up for The Collectors and Blues X Five than the unknown LA band. Blues X Five had a good showing that night.

The Blues X Five original members were: Ed Wright, lead vocalist and mouth harp. Dave McPherson, rhythm guitar. John Fisher, bass.

Blues X Five had won a contest in Centennial Square on July 1st when they won the best local band contest. As for Painted Ship, all I can add is my friend's dad was the guitarist and he's alive and well. Lastly, The Collectors band eventually changed their name to 'Chilliwick' in 1970.

Let's go forward to 1975.

Dateline 1975: 50 years ago was a time of change. Historically, that year saw the end of the Vietnam war. Microsoft arrives with its first computer. The summer movie blockbuster 'JAWS' hits theaters. Many viewers never swam in the ocean again. Another film that was a sensation was 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest' starring Jack Nicholson. Also, "Live from New York. It's Saturday Night!" Saturday Night Live makes its television debut. Neil Young breaks away from C.S.N.Y. for the 2nd time and graces the cover of the 'Rolling Stone' magazine. Bruce Springsteen hits a home run with his album 'Born To Run.'

In music many groups are making double albums.

Led Zeppelin's 'Physical Graffiti' is a masterpiece showcasing a Moroccan roll with the stellar track "Kashmir" amongst so much more.

Live double albums hit the shelves as 'Frampton Comes Alive' became the greatest live selling records in history. Let's not forget the 1975 rock and roll circus sensation that is the "Hottest band in the land..... KISS"

Kiss indeed became a sensation when KISS fans Bill Starkey and Jay Evans from Terre Haute, Indiana local radio station DJs at WVTS were told that if they didn't play KISS that an army of fans would surround the radio station until KISS was played.

Much to the station's surprise, hundreds of fans did in fact do just that and KISS was played regularly after that. Thus forming the 'KISS ARMY' which became the band's fan club. On September 10th, the "Eddie Kramer" produced double LP 'KISS ALIVE' was released and by October KISS was indeed a phenomenon. October

9th and 10th saw KISS at the Cadillac High Schools homecoming celebration. The football team had used KISS music to practice and coach Jim Neff contacted the band telling them that they've gone from 'Worst to First' KISS arrived to the town and yes indeed the team won the championship. It was a great time to be ALIVE. A parade followed and KISS even rode on their own float.

Dateline August 1985:

Guitarist sensation "Stevie Ray Vaughan" performs in Victoria B.C. at the Royal Theatre. I was invited to check him out and I even found a recording of that very show 40 years ago. Sadly on August 27th 1990 he was killed in a horrible plane crash after performing with his brother Jimmy and

also Eric Clapton and Robert Cray among others. I'll never forget my father telling me he had died. Rest in forever peace.

Dateline 2025: Robby Krieger, the guitarist



all these years. Crazy eh? Even cooler for me is the band Chilliwack, which began in 1966 as

The Collectors, are doing their 'Gone Gone Gone... A Farewell To Friends' Tour which wraps up in my hometown of Victoria this September 23rd at the Royal Theatre. In 1982 on December 17th I missed Chilliwack here at the arena to stay home and watch 'The Who' perform their last ever concert live on T.V. from Toronto.

Funny enough, The Who are actually performing another last tour show in Vancouver this September 23rd also. The same date as Chilliwack? I'm going to Chilliwack instead. I won't get fooled again!

I guess we are near the end. I'd like to add that in June of 1967, the Monterey Pop Festival



happened in California. Acts like Otis Redding and Janis Joplin played. It was also the debut of The Who and Jimi Hendrix in the USA.

Also on the bill was the duet of 'Simon and Garfunkel' with their massive hit "The Sound of Silence" and being that I was born that year I have to add that just this past July 28th and August 3rd, I actually saw Paul Simon perform in Vancouver BC and also Seattle too where Jimi Hendrix was born. And yes he played 'Graceland.' It doesn't get more poetic than that does it? Actually it does. Let's travel back to the beginning.

Dateline July 5th, 1954: Sun Studios Memphis. Elvis Presley records "That's All Right" and Rock and Roll is born.

Dateline July 5th 2025: Back To The Beginning in Birmingham. Ozzy Osbourne and his band Black Sabbath performed one last time as Ozzy celebrated his life in music. Several bands that Black Sabbath influenced performed that day.

ed a set of songs from his solo career earlier in the day. When he sang "Mama, I'm Coming Home" I had actual chills and shed a few tears as I'd seen Ozzy so many times live.

On July 22nd, just 15 days later, Ozzy Osbourne passed away at his home in Birmingham.

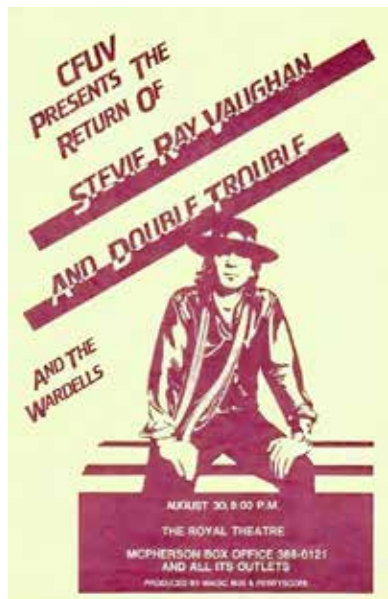
God Bless his spirit and soul.
Rest in Peace.

As Ozzy once said "Stay strong, aim true. Keep heart, the future looks to you."

With that I'll bring this issue to a close.

Always remember folks
Rock out and Rrrrrroll on.

-Clark'Super'Mantei





Love Shack Libations Interview with Jayce Hawkins

Absolute Underground: How long have you been involved in the world of beer?

Jayce Hawkins: My introduction to brewing beer was pretty strange. I grew up in Saudi Arabia where alcohol was illegal, so I started fermenting non-alcoholic Holsten beer with sugar and bread yeast and would bring it to parties. It was awful, but it planted the seed for my love for brewing, and I started to consume every book I could find on the subject. My transition to all-grain brewing was almost immediate when I moved back to Canada in 2008.

AU: How did your brewery get its start?

JH: My brewery was created in 2017 by the

legendary Dave Paul. Like me, he was an avid homebrewer who transitioned into commercial brewing on a nano level. It is a true community-oriented brewery; we have one long table and no TVs or cell reception.

AU: What are some types of beer you brew?

JH: We're all forced to brew a lot of hazy beers these days (sigh), so a lot of time goes into

that. We won gold for our Kolsch at the BC Beer Awards, and it's a mainstay and fan favourite. We usually have a rotating order of about 12 beers, including sours, Belgians, saisons, stouts, California Commons, and a wide variety of other styles. Because our brewery is so small, we really have no limitations on what we want to brew that week, which is very fun. We get to experiment with everything.

AU: What sets your beer apart?

JH: Right now, we bottle condition all our beer! Which is pretty rare in the commercial world. We sell it all in half-litre glass bottles that are hand-bottled on site. We even keg condition our beer, which we serve in-house.

AU: Any unique brewing secrets you can share?

JH: I don't know if it would be a secret, but one thing that I think is important in a craft brewery is that it doesn't always try to do too much. German and Belgian styles, for example, have a long history built on a foundation of balance. Belgians,

especially, were consistently brewed to be paired with specific foods. Sometimes we try too hard to fix something that really isn't broken.

I think sometimes breweries try to do much. I'm all for a cocoa-blueberry sour punch beer, but maybe let's keep them out of our pilsners?

AU: Where are you located? Can people stop by to sample your beer?

JH: We're located in Qualicum Bay, just south of the Dashwood firehall. We're open to the public on Wednesdays 5-9 p.m. and Saturdays from 1-5 p.m. It probably seems weird to be open only twice a week, but being so small that's our sweet spot. It means I can still have a life and we don't run out of beer. Our community is really supportive, and it's often difficult to find seats on tasting days. Our sessions are usually really fun.

AU: Where can your beer currently be found on tap?

JH: We're currently no longer on tap outside of the brewery. Once the new brewhouse is all set up in the next month or so, we'll be on a few full-time taps in and around Qualicum and Parksvillas.

AU: Do you plan to attend any events this summer like the Great Canadian Beer Festival?

JH: For the most part, we only do a few festivals, and that's mostly because we don't have the capacity to do so. We did the North Island Craft Beer Festival, it's really intimate and small. Highly recommend that one.



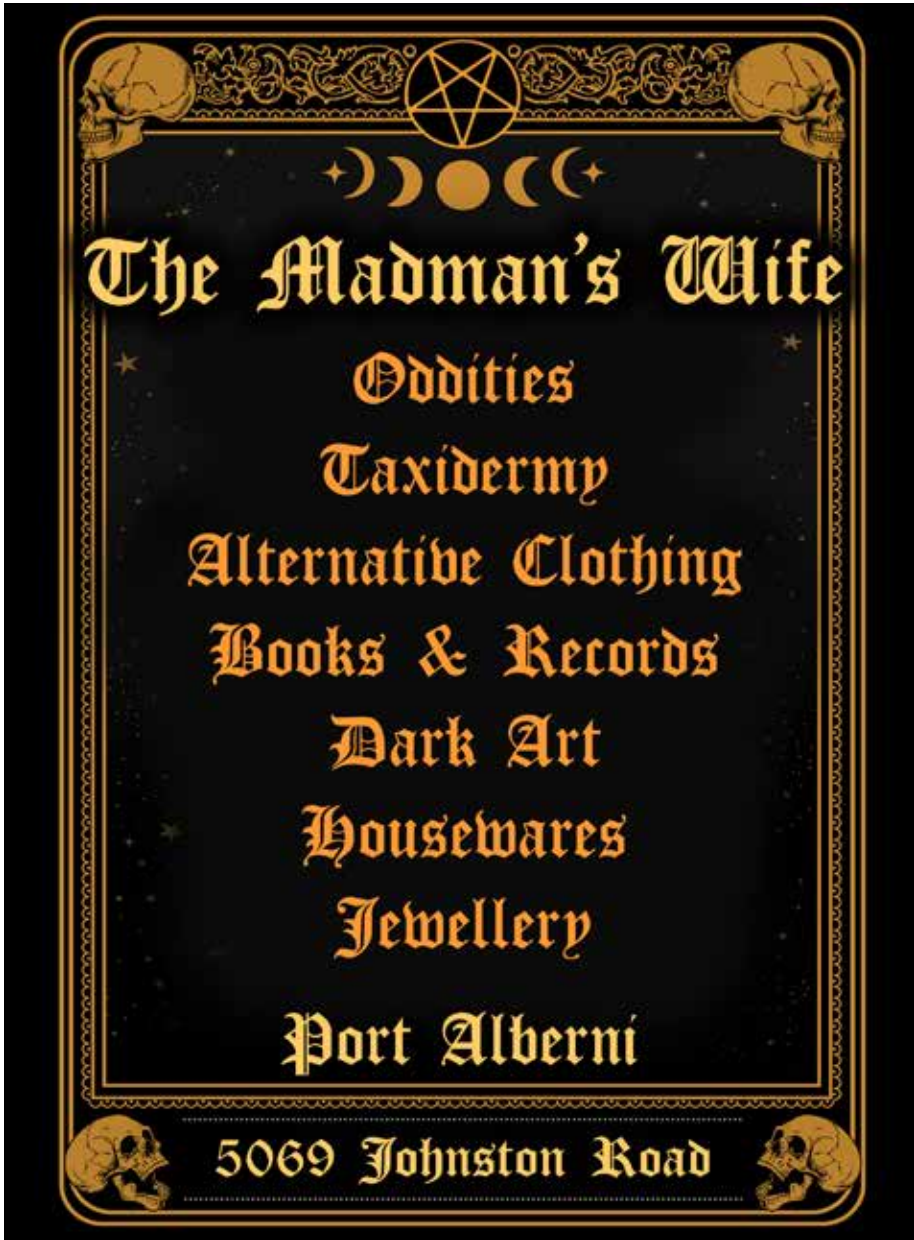
AU: What do you like best about brewing beer?

JH: I was a commercial film-maker in Vancouver for a long time, and brewing has always been my biggest passion, partly because I don't like looking at screens all day and you get to work in a more creative physical space than something

like film editing. There's something beautiful about creating something artistic within a framework of science. There are certain rules you can not break; these are things like yeast health, temperature, and sanitation - but within the science of it all, there are just so many intricate directions you can go with beer. Couple that with the long history, it's such a rad creation with so many possibilities. Brewing really is a blank canvas with an infinite number of potential outcomes.

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Bones Before Fortune

Interview with Author Keith Durocher

By Ray MacKay

Absolute Underground: What started you on your path to becoming an author?

Keith Durocher: I used to do some gaming and music journalism back in the '90s. The first website I wrote reviews for was called Adrenaline Vault, and I stayed in touch with my editor there. Recently, while I was ranting about how good *Between Two Fires* is, he asked me when I was going to write my own novel. As usual, all the standard excuses came bubbling up, so he had me read Stephen King's *On Writing*, which should have a subtitle: "Stephen King Shoots All Your Excuses in the Face". From there, it was about four months of writing to get the first draft together.

AU: Who or what are some of your inspirations?

KD: All of the authors who've been pushing fantasy away from the tropes set in stone by Tolkien; Glen Cook, Steven Erikson, China Mieville, Joe Abercrombie, Brandon Sanderson, and most recently, Christopher Buehlman. Music drives all of my writing as well, especially death metal (for my dark fantasy work) and electro-industrial (for my cyberpunk work).

AU: Tell us about your most recent book, *Bones Before Fortune*?

KD: The building blocks of the story are derived from a 5th Ed D&D campaign I home-brewed. I stripped out most of the higher magic elements, swapping it out for the 'all magic is derived from pain and blood' standard that this world employs. It is a world where a forgotten cataclysm has severed the connection between the higher realms and the material world. This event ripped a massive chasm that belts the world, as well as cut off the gods. What remains is a world that has only just begun to rebuild new empires, and the only arcane power left is rooted in suffering and cruelty.

AU: What details of the story can you share without any spoilers?

KD: The story unfolds around an almost-dead mercenary group called the Warfire Brotherhood. Under the watch of its captain, Setioch, it has dwindled down to just six remaining fighters. They find themselves swept up in violent political upheaval in the last capital of the Old Empire, and are forced to flee- not only the plots that devour the city but the invading armies of Fyrexia, unwitting and unwilling guardians of the key to undo everything.

AU: How did you approach writing this book?

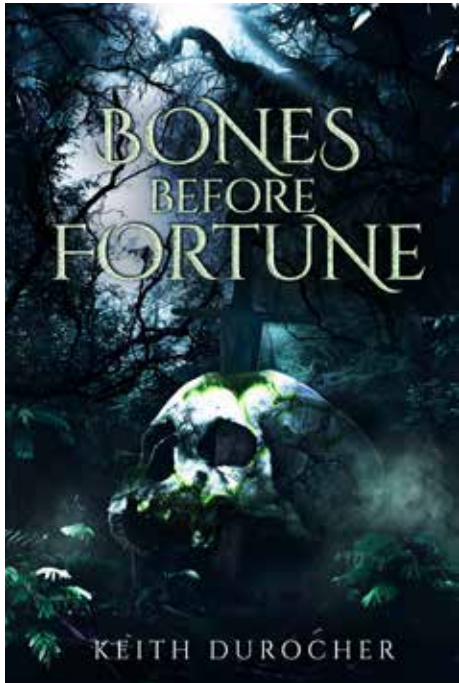
KD: I wanted to write a death metal song as a fantasy tale, so I listened to copious amounts of Conan, Bolt Thrower, Dismember, and King Diamond while really pumping up the violence and gore in what I was writing. I think I've mostly succeeded in my goal. I like to keep the fantastical solidly within the story, but restrained- some grimdark authors strip almost all magic out entirely, while high fantasy wallows in the 'deus-ex-machina' too much. I wanted something in between. So, it's definitely not historical fiction, but it's a far cry from princesses and elves.

AU: *Bones Before Fortune* is book one in the Torn World Trilogy. Tell us about the greater world of your novel; what's after this book?

KD: *Bones* takes place almost entirely within the last province of the Old Empire, Thaudia. The follow-up, *Seven Crowns of Rust*, is set above the Tear (the massive canyon that bisected the world), in the northern regions of Serrania and the Vikkerlands. The third book, as yet untitled, will likely see a return to the lands below the tear and come full circle. I don't have any set plans for this world past the three novels, as I personally think that the 'best before' date for fantasy and science fiction series is three- very rarely do series that run into nine or more novels maintain their quality or energy. So, I want to keep my goals within that target. Once I've wrapped up this trilogy, I'll get back to work on my cyberpunk novel, *A Gleam in the Eye of Nero*.

AU: How do you approach writing a trilogy of stories as opposed to one book?

KD: I employ the writing approach known as 'pantsing' (read as: 'flying by the seat of your pants'). I've found the process of writing to be very much like single-player D&D; I'm just making up stories in my head and recording it



with LibreOffice. Because it's so heavy on world building, I let the stories unfold within the greater world as I develop its lore and history- so while I didn't have a solid structure for a trilogy to start with, it's coming together as the skeleton of the Torn World develops meat.

AU: What genre/style of book would you classify *Bones Before Fortune* if you had to?

KD: It's 100% grimdark/splatterpunk. I hadn't actually heard the term 'splatterpunk' until I sent some sample chapters to my editor, who asked me if I was a big fan of David J. Schow and Brian Keene. I had to look up what the word even meant- only to discover that was precisely what I'd been doing from the outset. I use the tagline 'dark fantasy for death metal fans', as that's the target audience I'm after- readers with the same basic tastes in extremes as I have.

AU: What can you tell us about your publisher?

KD: My book is entirely self-published. These days, with Fiverr and digital publishing, it's never

been easier to self-publish. Getting eyes on the work, that's the real challenge. Still need "the machine" to get the books out into the greater world. I released *Bones Before Fortune* under the Cult Fiction Studios brand, which is a catchall company set up between my wife and myself to cover our various creative endeavours. I just had a short story accepted for this year's *Anthology of Extreme Horror* by Hellbound Books though, and I'm thinking I might see if they would be interested in picking up the Torn World. Would be nice to have an imprint to do all the heavy lifting of PR and distribution.

Check out *Bones Before Fortune*, book one in the Torn World Trilogy!

keithdurocher.ca

COLIN SMITH
takes pics

A photograph of Colin Smith performing on stage. He is wearing a red and black plaid shirt and jeans, playing a white electric guitar. He is in a dynamic pose, with one leg raised. In the background, another musician is visible, playing a guitar. The stage is dimly lit with blue and purple lights.

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A logo for 'Infamous Fuck Records' featuring a stylized, grungy font and a small illustration of a person's head.



Killotine

By Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Magazine, congrats on winning Wacken Metal Battle Canada 2025. Please tell our readers who Killotine is and what you do?

Jesse Luciani: Killotine is a thrash metal band from Hamilton, Ontario. We are the hammer that falls without warning—relentless, unforgiving, and all-consuming. Killotine is made up of lead vocalist/rhythm guitarist Matt Fraser, Bassist and backing vocals James McNeil, drummer James Beck, and lead guitarist Jesse Luciani.

AU: How was the WMBC final this year in Vancouver? What was going through your minds when you were crowned the 2025

WMBC Champions?

JL: The WMBC Finals were an incredible experience. First and foremost, the other finalists were great bands and even better people to hang out with. The event was also organized extremely well. It made our night very enjoyable, since the only thing we had to worry about was performing! We were floored when we heard our name. It's hard to find the words to explain what an honour it will be to perform at Wacken Open Air! There was definitely a lot of jumping up and down and screaming when we found out!

AU: Looking back at all the battles you went through for this competition, what do you think gave Killotine the edge over other bands this year?

JL: We basically just went up there and had fun each time! We did

prepare a lot in the practice room, but when it came to play, we did just that, PLAY!

AU: What does it mean for Killotine to take the stage at the legendary Wacken Open, one of the biggest metal festivals in the world?

JL: It's an absolute honour. We've been dreaming of GOING to Wacken for decades, the fact that we get to play it is unbelievable. To be able to share our music with so many metalheads from around the world is a dream we've had since we were teenagers.

AU: How are you preparing for your Wacken performance, and what can fans expect? Anything special or unexpected from your set?

JL: We have been putting in the hours. Making sure our set is jammed with as much energy as we can muster! Our plan is to deliver an absolutely devastating 20 minutes of heavy metal madness. If anyone wants to headbang and mosh, we will have you covered!

AU: For those unfamiliar with the band, what current releases do you have out? And are you currently working on new material?

JL: We currently have one release out. It's a "live off the floor" recording from Rye Field Studios titled *Live at the Whiskey Pit*. We are working hard on many

new songs, so get ready, they are coming very soon! In fact, two unreleased songs have already made their way into our performances!

AU: Where do you see Killotine heading next—are there bigger goals on the horizon beyond Wacken? Touring Canada?

JL: Our next big goal is to hit the studio by the end of the summer and start releasing all the new music we have been working hard on! As well as making some videos to accompany the music! After that, we plan to expand our performances

around Ontario and into Quebec! If we're lucky, maybe even the West Coast and beyond!

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

JL: We want to say a giant THANK YOU to the people who have given us support. It means the world to us! Stay Metal!

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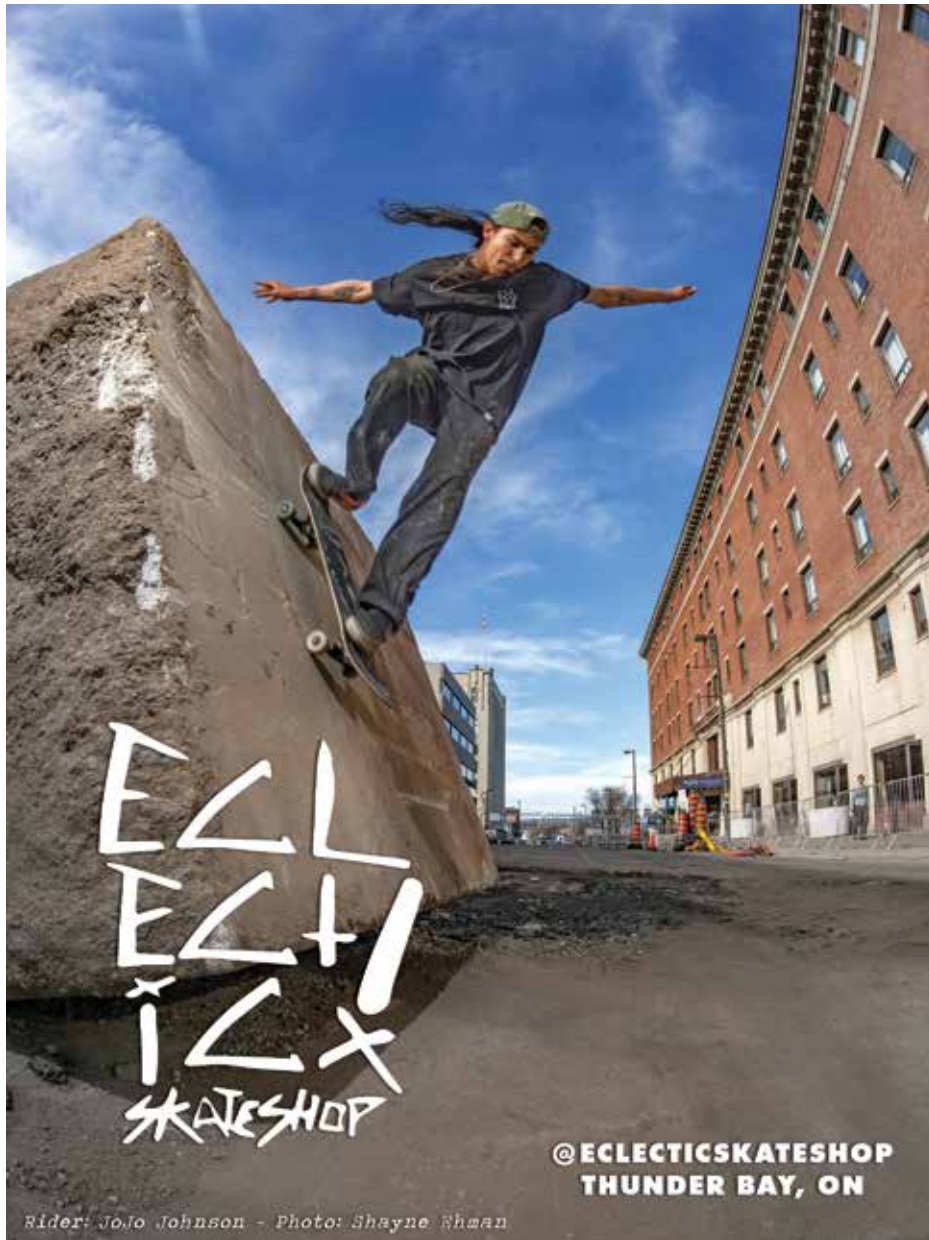


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HOG MEETS FROG

Interview with Bassist, Petz

By Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: For those not familiar with HOG MEETS FROG, who are you, and what do you do?

HMF: "HOG MEETS FROG is a consortium of three not really sane brains, who slip into miscellaneous characters driven by their inner child. So, they mirror the world to itself... and also to themselves." This one can be read on our website. I can't remember why or when it was written, but that's a little

bit weird. In more normal words, I would say that HOG MEETS FROG is just a band from Vienna, Austria, who plays some kind of alternative-prog-rock-metal-jazz-punk-funk which is called SQUEAQUACKmusic by themselves. Of course, it is a well-known fact you may know, that SQUEAQUACKmusic is the fading calls of our fathers, the ancient hogs and frogs mixed with the sick thoughts of a freaky mind, arising, helping HOG MEETS FROG to conquer the listeners' minds, changing them forever.

AU: You recently released your single "The Urbanizer". What inspired this track, and how did the collaboration with the legendary Marco Minnemann come together?

HMF: Yes, we had the great honour to feature Marco Minnemann in "The Urbanizer". Marco is not just a brilliant, outstanding drummer—more importantly, he is a really respectful, reliable, funny, and friendly person who is a pleasure to work with.

Recording with him came about because a mutual friend—Alan Baillargeon, organizer at New England Art Rock Society (NewEARS) and host of the online radio show

NewEARS Prog Show—sent me a message one day telling me that he had just done a show with Marco Minnemann and he said, "By the way, Marco is a beast!"

Alan wanted to bring Marco and me together. But me, I couldn't imagine why someone like Marco Minnemann should play HOG MEETS FROG's music... but okay, I tried and—to cut a long story short—he recorded the song for us.

Lyricaly, the idea for the song was inspired by our society's attitude towards nature. And who better to represent the narrow-minded path to extinction than urbanization personified?

Over the course of several decades, it has become clear that we humans recognized the ecological problem early enough. But unfortunately, it has also become clear that some of us are unwilling to be able—and thus increasingly unable—to get the problem under control. Why? Well, some deny ecological changes out of greed, some out of fear, some because of the ostrich effect, and still others just to show that they're 'against the system'—whatever that means. The character of "The Urbanizer" is a symbol for these people, 'cause like them, he does not understand that his actions

are destroying his own livelihood. What humans are to the urbanizer, is nature to the people. Without humans, there is no urbanization, and without a natural environment, there are no humans. Although he suggests in two places in the song that people are responsible for their own downfall, he himself does not realize that he is doing exactly the same thing to himself. The two passages are: "I can tell you where all the flowers have gone. No young girls, I grab them and rip them out" and "Ask yourself, you know where the flowers have gone!" Musically speaking, there wasn't really any conscious influence. Over some years, I just came up with a few riffs—one after the other—and then, when the lyrics were already finished, I stumbled across Pete Seeger's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" sung in an early recording by Joan Baez. And then it was clear... a few seconds of that (I think it's 15) had to be in the song. How and where, you can surely figure out for yourselves.

AU: The textures in "The Urbanizer" are wild—funk, prog, maybe even a bit of jazz chaos. Did working with Marco push your sound into new territory?

HMF: That's another very nice compliment. Thank you very much! As far as Marcos' influence is concerned, his distinctive playing style definitely

gave the song a beautiful, high-quality polish and a catchy groove. And I would say that he also played an important role in intensifying the 'jazz chaos.' In terms of sound, however, the collaboration hasn't changed us. The person who proactively helps shape our sound is Lukas from LW Sonics—our sound engineer. And... of course... he took Marcos' playing into consideration when mixing the song, which also helped shape the sound. In that sense, you could perhaps say that Marcos' playing indirectly helped mould the sound.

AU: HOG MEETS FROG—That name begs for a backstory. Where did it come from, and does it reflect your musical personalities?

HMF: To be honest, the name doesn't really reflect the musical personalities. It's more a testament to my sarcastic, ironic side. Because the name was a joke I made about the band Dog Eat Dog. That happened at a time when Dog Eat Dog was really well-known and could be heard at every single party.

Since I'm usually skeptical and annoyed when something is hyped up, I started joking about the band's name when my friends were talking about how great the band was and who had already bought the album... blah blah blah. So... I made fun of the name that was constantly being mentioned by coming up with funny, similar-sounding names. That's when my brain came up with HOG MEETS FROG.

But as soon as the name was spoken, I had a story in my head about a pig and a frog having fun with each other (which by the way can also be understood as a kind of anti-racism message) and the band name was born— or better— it happened.

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

HMF: Um... ahhh... yes... oh... no... um. What?!!

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On This Spot:
Everything They Didn't Tell You
About the City You Live In

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Z: I'm Z, and I run the YouTube channel "On This Spot," where I post videos about supernatural occurrences that have happened in Vancouver. I used to be an everyday stoner working in a book store, but then the VPD's Paranormal Squad kicked in my door and tried to arrest me for putting up videos on my channel. I've been on the run since then, living in the city but off the grid with a gang of like-minded individuals who agree that the people of Vancouver deserve to know what's going on.

AU: People have been finding "On This Spot" stickers around Vancouver lately. What can you tell us about that?

Z: There's something happening around here, and nobody wants to talk about it. Pyramids of flesh floating in the sky. Rains of coloured cubes. A red-walled church that appeared in a park for a several days, eating anybody who went into it. Cursed convenience stores. Innocent people experiencing so-called "cerebral mutations". Freaky individuals with surreal abilities, sometimes helping folks, and sometimes preying on us like wolves among sheep.

AU: What inspired you to start this project?

Z: I think it's important to remember that sublimely magical interactions with reality aren't limited to religious temples and psychedelic trips. We're surrounded by invisible worlds every day. The atoms that make up the gutters and the alleys are just as old at the stars, and the people who live in these spaces have lives just as magical and important as any guru or cosmic king.

AU: How do you find out about these stories?

Z: A few months back, an old man in my apartment building went missing, and I found this busted-up laptop he'd been using to make video files about the weird stuff that's been going on in Vancouver over the past 50 years. The files are corrupted and full of weird glitches, so I'm working to salvage what I can. Every time I fix a new one, I locate the spot in the city where it took place, and put up some stickers to mark it. Then I put the video up online so anybody who finds the stickers can learn the whole story.

AU: Where can people find these stickers so far?

Z: They tend to show up in south East Van; the Hastings area and downtown. In parts of the city that aren't being looked after, where a bit of the wild sneaks back in. Abandoned, overlooked spaces, where weeds and graffiti get to grow.

AU: What can people expect to find if they follow the link on the stickers?

Z: It's a horror story that we're all trapped in, but sometimes it's kinda magical, even whimsical. There's parts that I'm sure are supposed to be funny to somebody, but I'm not really in on the joke, since I'm living with the punchlines. It's surreal. Sublime is a word that comes up



sometimes, which I guess is when cosmic horror has a cozy vibe?

AU: Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know about you or this project?

Z: I see people using a lot of weird terms online for the videos. Weirdcore, dreamcore, analogue horror, arg, creepypasta, and unfiction, just to name a few. I have no idea what any of that means, but I think it must sort of communicate the tone of the project. One guy said it's a multimedia narrative experiment, but for me, it's just my life.

AU: Do you smoke grass?

Z: I would not be able to handle this lifestyle if I didn't smoke weed. I suffer from acute anxiety, or at least I'm worried that I do, and weed helps me with getting high, so I don't notice the anxiety as much. Of course, sometimes it backfires and I get super-anxious, but I figure being super-high and super-anxious is still better than just being regular anxious and not high at all.

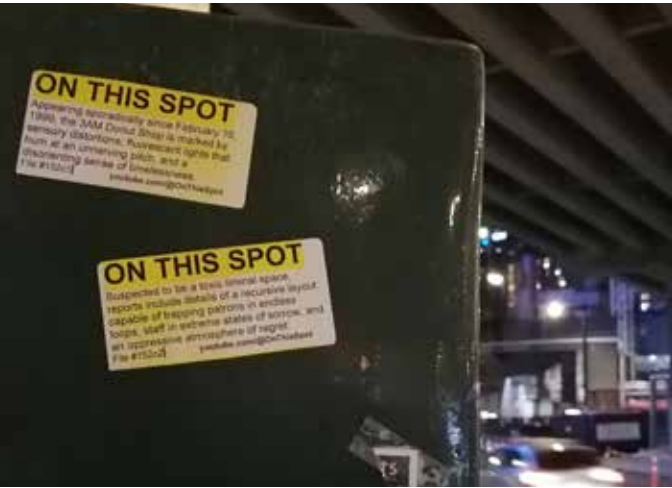
AU: Indica or sativa? Do you have a favourite strain?

Z: Okay, so this is going to sound like crazy conspiracy talk, but one of my teammates, or fellow gang members, her name's Fox Skull and she dresses like that FBI agent from Twin Peaks, and she smokes so much weed it kind of scares me, and she says, the whole thing is just psychosomatic. Indica and Sativa aren't real, it's just a placebo effect, and we've all convinced ourselves. I know it sounds crazy, like some flat-earth shit, but the more she explains it, the more I find myself kinda convinced. However, I do love a good blueberry, especially when you can really taste the berry.

AU: What do you like to do most when you're stoned?

Z: Sometimes, after I smoke up, I'll go out to the places where I know these things have happened, and I try to just imagine what it would be like to have lived through it. Even the awful, scary stuff.

It's like I meditate on the event, and through that, try to understand what it means in the larger sense, and even what it would've felt like. You'll never know exactly what another person experienced, but weed helps with empathy sometimes. And if you're existing on the East Side, you gotta stay empathetic. It's tough times in that region.



AU: Do you think these events might just be the weed talking?

Z: Honestly, that would be great. I'd rather just be a confused stoner, than a confused stoner who's dealing with files that suggest a hostile ultra-terrestrial entity is staging a fascist takeover of all reality on a molecular level.

AU: Famous last words?

Z: I got new video-files on the YouTube every week, set to go up on Tuesday evenings. All we want to do is raise awareness and get eyes on this thing, so any support is greatly appreciated. It's worth checking out if you want to know what's really been going on in Vancouver. Or if you just want to hear some crazy shit while you're getting blazed.

YT: @OnThisSpot

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EAST END RIVALS (MONCTON) covers Birds of Passage

HUNG UP (VICTORIA) covers The Submlauts

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HALF DEAD (EDMONTON) covers Negative Gain

66 ACES (SASKATOON) covers Death Sentence

AVOID THE COMMENT SECTION (WINDSOR) covers Grim Skunk

THE GARY BUSEYS (TIMMINS) covers The Black Halos

MEAN BIKINI (CUMBERLAND) covers Personality Crisis

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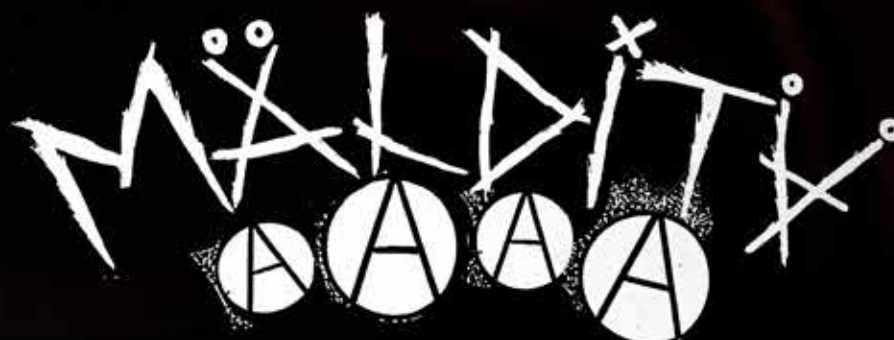
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Ophiolatriy

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: For those who may not know the band, what can you tell us about Ophiolatriy?

Jaime Veron: Talking about Ophiolatriy is diving into a deep, dark, and mysterious conversation. Starting with the name itself, Ophiolatriy means "worship of the serpent." To truly understand where all of this comes from, our drummer Jhorge "Dog" Duarte has a very personal and powerful story that marked the beginning of it all.

Jhorge "Dog" Duarte: "In my childhood, when I was living in the Amazon, I experienced a trauma that would change me forever. I witnessed a horrific act committed against my younger sister. The nightmare ended only due to the intervention of our neighbours, while the attacker fled.

Horried by what had happened, the small fishing community launched a relentless hunt to capture the aggressor. Eventually, he was found near the Machado River. Days later, his remains were discovered miles away, regurgitated on the riverbank by a massive serpent. He had been beheaded and quartered. That moment was burned into my soul. For many, the serpent is a symbol of fear, but for me, it became something

else: justice, a force of nature, an executioner that delivers retribution.

When I shared this story with my bandmate, everyone resonated with its meaning. That is how the name for Ophiolatriy was born in 1998, not just a name, but a concept: the worship of the serpent as an entity of power, vengeance, and balance. Through our music, we channel that relentless energy, ensuring that no act of brutality goes unanswered."

AU: It's been 17 years since your last album, *Transmutation*. You're now back with your new fourth album, *Serpent's Verdict*, out June 6th from WormHoleDeath Records. What can you tell us about this album and the hiatus between releases?

JV: Yeah, it's been 17 years since *Transmutation*, and a lot has happened in that time. Life took us down different paths, some personal, others

musical, but the beast Ophiolatriy was just waiting to strike. It was waiting for the right moment. *Serpent's Verdict* is that moment. This album is heavier, darker, and more focused. It retains our brutal death metal roots, but there's a depth and intention behind each track. The serpent is the symbol of justice, revenge, and rebirth.

AU: You comment that "This album pushes our technical and compositional limits while maintaining the speed and aggression that defines Ophiolatriy. The riffs are intricate but wild, combining relentless blast rhythms with haunting atmospheric passages." Which track has been a personal favourite of the

band to write, and you recommend for metalheads discovering the band for the first time?

JV: Each track on *Serpent's Verdict* has a story to tell, so we recommend that the metalheads who are discovering the band for the first time listen to the album from beginning to end. We also encourage them to check out our earlier albums to understand the full evolution of

Ophiolatriy through the years.

AU: What would you like fans to take away from this record?

JV: This album is full of pure energy, so come and feel it for yourself!

AU: How was it working with the legend Dan Swanö (Dissection, Bathory, Opeth, Dark Funeral) for mastering the album?

JV: Extremely professional, very easy to work with ... and with incredible energy.

AU: Your music videos for "Death Tour" and

"Jesus Complex" are absolutely visually stunning and an earworm of death metal brutality. Who did you work with for these amazing mini movies?

JV: The creation of this video was a true collaborative effort involving many incredible artists who dedicated their time to making it a total success. It was filmed in two different locations in Curitiba, Brazil, and Vancouver, Canada. The production in Curitiba was handled by Black Flame Pictures, while the VFX work was done by RCS (Real Cool Shit) Studios in Vancouver.

AU: You are signed to the renowned management company Extreme Management Group Inc. (EMG), known for representing bands such as Suffocation, Atheist, Cryptopsy, and more. How has it been working with them?

JV: With EMG, we learned a lot. They were with us like another member of the band, guiding us through our professional growth in the music industry.

AU: How's the metal scene in Brazil these days? Any bands our readers should keep an ear out for?

JV: In Brazil, we have a strong scene. There are many incredible bands that have left their mark, like Sepultura, Sarcófago, Krisiun... and others that are making history in metal today, like Nervosa, Crypta, and many more.

AU: Will the band be touring in South America and beyond this year? And who is the band you'd like to hit the road with right now?

JV: We're actually working on that right now; we want to focus on promoting the new album. Ophiolatriy is always open to hitting the road and touring with any band.

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

JV: First of all, huge thanks to Absolute Underground Magazine for giving us this space, it was a lot of fun doing this interview. And to all the readers out there, keep supporting metal. Without your support, none of this would be possible.

ophiolatriy.com.br



Richard Hell/First Punk/Some Thoughts on Television

By Jamo Lorswal

CBGB's. A club originally intended for its name, though it did include OMFUG as an official title standing for "and other music." Country, Bluegrass, Blues was founded to showcase those genres. In the two-bit ghetto of the Bowery section of New York, the seedy domino-playing sidewalk culture, the rush-rush of city life, chaotic thoughts merge into lyrics, music.

Marquee Moon, Television's few hits, none of which were intended for radio yet for the conscious direction to album. It's offbeat, off-timing, Television would experiment with timings, bringing not dystopia yet rather emotional content to their songs, emotions that could not truly be understood, feelings about the world, existence, the blunt sunlit reality of the now... It's off-timing, punk would oft-times be referred to as "offbeat"—as well as a million other epithets, over the years in journalism and media.

As I watched the 1984 capture of live Television doing the moon song on television "La Edad de Oro" an Espanola show, the first comment on YouTube's algorithm read "They're playing it too fast"—as if the group that made it famous could play it wrong, especially not if they're famous for

off-timings, being offbeat.

Punk is offbeat—it's disappear/reappear hard play, it's deconstructionist, without a way of knowing it is, or itself, post-modern enmeshed in modernity, post-structuralist within a revolutionary tribe. It's kinda not there, commentless, void. Voivoid. Devo. It's Devo. For the reason it is de-evolution.

Richard Hell was always kinda not there... he is still kinda not there, mostly doing interviews for the proud book *I Dreamed I was A Very Clean Tramp* an incredible journey of a memoir—of the life less trodden, a musical artist who led the new wave/alternative (eventually giving birth to alternative). A musical artist mostly dodging around twilit corners in search of the next gig, the next chance with what to play, the quincunx of the youth flight into a Peanuts world where there were no adults to condemn day-to-day life, a dividing, separate cultures... "Turn on the television."

Gritty dirty punky nights. CBGB's or a hundred tiny clubs and bars you could enter the myths of the night, the corridors and labyrinths of the carnivalesque the carnelian lower east of Manhattan was separated- super variant from the rest of Manhattan, a "village" of kids, *a lord of the flies*.

Even if one argues that punk subculture was born in London, also a schizophrenic alchemy of fashion, a punk is a kid... a snarly drowsy rambunctious of unspecified will, nerves, an Andy Warhol noir, some kids of which were now bands and could raise the sceptre of a black-outed reality, fanclub merging for the bands were of them, born of the frenzy of television/(possibly radio) of main stream culture that had a blind universe selling reality that had no idea it would forge in the fire an anti-thesis and though decadence personified it was

the epitome of New York culture, intellectually superior chasing art, artistic expression in multi-faceted ways. Born in the sea of television depicting its fading empire of wars. For the hippies were early, totally unfit, they had rejected all of television's bombasts, often forsaken the



city itself for communes, they left pop culture behind... punks would pick it up, look it over as a rag, "I could wear it," for I don't have anything else to wear, "I'll play anything, paint anything, express my innermost feelings?" No these were thinking alive kids, but kids after all.



John Lennon would discuss in a revealing quote in a famous Playboy interview that the CIA had handled LSD for a weapon, never realizing the hippies would turn it into a weapon against mass culture—a nightmarish Nietzschean "wipe-away-the-horizon" in its way, of both sides. John Lennon would know. His best New York friend was lovingly known as the "King of Punk" and the "Unofficial Mayor of New York City" whom history has crowned the craftsman of protopunk- acoustic frenzy, rhythm, Lo-Fi attitude, living loud instead of retreating, a funky group David Peel and the

Lower East Side. A sort of bird flip to the dominant culture.

Television was there at the right time, yet there as the unheralded unbeknownst to themselves in the center of CBGB's having been transformed into a punk hang out, a punk club and of course the canteen record store where you could drink and drool at and buy records and tapes. Blondie, Iggy and the Stooges, Joan Jett, The Dictators, The Cramps, The Misfits.

David Byrne admits in his fine memoir *MUSIC* an incredible tome of thoughtful exploratory self-meditation on his life as rock star that one evening he approached Richard Hell after a Voivoid show and mumbled "We're really influenced by you guys, you know, in our music. Thanks, man, for great music," whom the proverbial king, especially when passing the baton, would utter back "Huh," smile and walk out the back.

Never really there, Joe Cool in the twilit corners of Tinseltown, spanning futures in the palm of his hand life in a song that is encapsulated energy, therefore magic, magic out of control of the magician's palms.

Short where the average person's understanding of song was just a tad bit more structured and long, sultry yet haunting hinting at the edge of the night, the unknown. Audience leaving seating as a poor attempt to instruct order into the chaos of life lived, lived authentically as the German existentialists might have it.

A punk believes life is only as good as the song, only as rebellious as a wild boar, only as sacred to be defended. An art show writ across the stars "What intelligent way to live but to laugh at it?" - Richard Lester Meyers



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AHEE • Mary Droppinz • Mat The Alien • Pigeon Hole

Abstrakt Sonance • Prayer Handz • Dust Cwaine • ZEYDA

Lafflandia Max Bank-Jaffie • Paola Beneras • James Boyle • Morgan Cranny

Alex Forman • Rosa Graham • Bo Jagger Essery • Henok Meresa • Evan Mumford

Shane Priestley • Elyott Ryan • Dylan Williams

Fri
Sept 12

Public Enemy

Descendents • The Funk Hunters feat. Chali 2na

Shakey Graves • Macy Gray

WHIPPED CREAM • Hollow Coves • ProbCause ^{DJ} Set

OMBIGIZI • Handsome Tiger • Thomas Anthony

Return Of The Jaded • Canadian Beauty • Sekawnee

Lafflandia Rob Bebenek • Shirley Gnome • Chris Gordon

Katie-ellen Humphries • Efthimios Nasiopoulos

Sat
Sept 13

NxWorries (Anderson .Paak & Knxwledge)

Sleater-Kinney • The Dead South • JP Saxe

Billianne • Phibes • TVBOO • Fort Knox Five • A.Skillz

Mood Swing & Chevy Bass • Wyatt C. Louis • Control Room

Westwood In The Dome • The Choirs YYJ does David Bowie • Frog Eyes

Stund • Naturalist • T3MPR • S@M I @M b2b Steph Tsunami • Ryael

Lafflandia Dino Archie • Ivan Decker • Marito Lopez

Randee Neumeyer • Jane Stanton

Sun
Sept 14

Alessia Cara

Charlotte Cardin • Walk Off The Earth

William Prince • Taiki Nulight

Dirtwire • Honeycomb • Hoang

Jake Vaadeland & The Sturgeon River Boys • Cadence Weapon ^{DJ} Set

Armchair Cynics • The Choirs YYJ does Divas • oncor • GRIIMM

DJ Boitano • DJ Dabbler • DATGUYRY • DJ Lion • Trouble On The Outskirts

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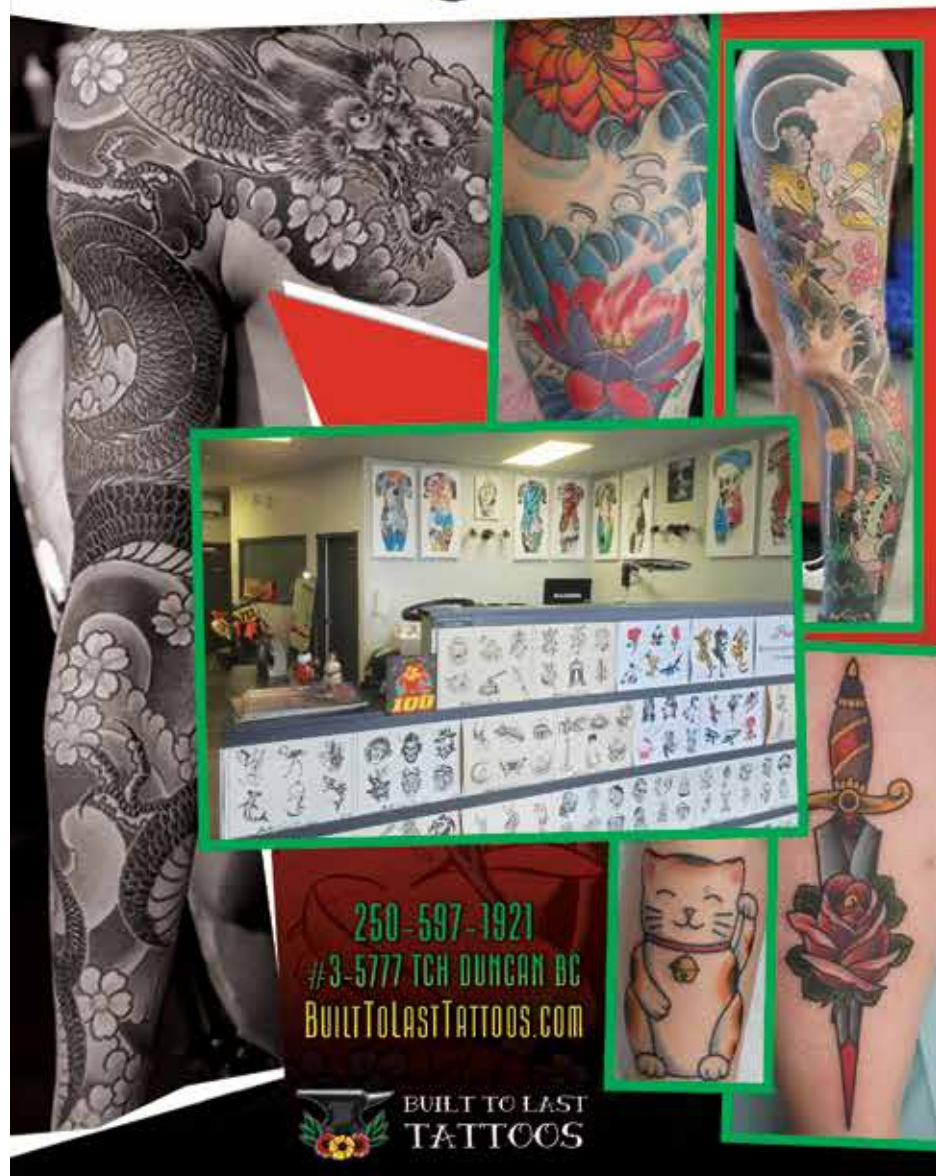
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Syrinx

Interview by Ray MacKay

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

Syrinx: Hello this is Graham McGee the spark that sent SYRINX ablaze!

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

Syrinx: Oh boy, this goes back over 10 years ago... JP and I met for the first time on night one of a near 30-date Canadian tour! He drove out from Michigan non-stop with a van to join our band Funeral Circle. It was nuts, we had an amazing first gig and instantly knew there was some magic happening. That band folded shortly after; I wanted to get away from the overly dark gothic occult themes my other band was doing at the time. So was birthed SYRINX. At that time, JP was still living in Michigan and I at my band house in Vancouver. JP would drive out and stay for months on end, we'd work on what was the first Syrinx release. Plagued by bass player issues held us back from touring or playing live 'til now. We locked in this AMAZING bass player who's been flying out from New Jersey to play with us here in Vancouver. Funny thing is JP is currently living in Denver. So, we are being very focused and diligent with our limited time physically together.

AU: What kind of music does Syrinx perform?

Syrinx: Heavy moods, hard grooves! Heavy

metal/hard rock with a progressive flare! We use and record on mostly analogue gear.

AU: Tell us about the creative process behind your new album (out this fall)?

Syrinx: Seth (the drummer) and I would meet up at his home studio in Mission to rehearse and record pre-production of the nine songs. Then we had JP fly in for a couple jams with vocals. We work so well together it came together rather quickly despite all being so far apart. Yet again our bass player backed out right before recording... at first we were bummed but then I connected with Bobby Shock out in New Jersey and it just clicked. He is THE bass/synth player of SYRINX. Him and I both play Moog Taurus pedals, so our live sound is massive. This album I also brought in my amazingly talented wife

Lady Chanelle to sing backing vocals. Her voice compliments JP's perfectly!

AU: Any music videos coming out?

Syrinx: We have a couple of super cool music videos coming/ out now in support of the album release!

AU: What are some major musical influences?

Syrinx: Church to us is Rush, Genesis, Fates Warning, Judas Priest, King Diamond

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? What don't you want your family members to know?

Syrinx: Our family members are our backbone! We put it to them for supporting us with this endeavour. As you know, running a band isn't easy, especially when the members are international.

Photo Credit: @outofstepproductions
priestsyrinx.bandcamp.com



Shores of Null

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar, who are you, and what do you do?

Davide: I'm Davide Straccione, singer of Rome-based metal band Shores of Null. We're known for our melancholic and atmospheric blend of heavy music. Our sound draws influences from both gothic/doom and melodic black/death metal, creating an emotionally charged experience for the listeners. Formed in 2013, we've released four full-length albums to date, played over 200 shows, and we have our fifth album currently in the works.

AU: How's the metal scene in Italy these days?

Davide: I'd say the Italian metal scene is in excellent shape, probably better than ever. More and more Italian bands are finally getting the recognition they deserve, and I've noticed a growing interest in our scene from people abroad. What's interesting is that this attention spans across all metal subgenres: from Fleshgod Apocalypse to Messa, from Master Boot Record to Fulci and Wind Rose, just to mention some of the most hyped bands at the moment. It seems like people have suddenly realized that this funny country at the bottom of Europe isn't just good at making pizza. On top of that, live shows are once again packed with young people, which is clearly a good sign. It's nothing compared to other places, but it's definitely a good moment for metal in Italy.

AU: You have a live album, *Beauty Over Europe* being released in May. What can you tell us

about this album?

Davide: *Beauty Over Europe* is a celebration of one of the most intense and meaningful experiences in our life as a band so far. It captures the essence of our 2023 European tour with Swallow the Sun, Draconian, and Avatarium, a monumental journey across 18 countries and 35 shows, where we had the chance to bring our music to larger audiences night after night. The album features a selection of live recordings from cities like Munich, Leipzig, Aschaffenburg, Budapest, and Belfast. It will be released on May 9th, 2025, exactly two years after that tour, as a tribute to the connection we built with audiences and to the lasting impact those nights had on us. Sulphur Music/Masked Dead Records will take care of the CD release.



AU: What made you decide to make a live album?

Davide: Having the opportunity to play so many shows in a row, we decided to record as much as possible, capturing our live performances almost every night and occasionally filming video content as well. Initially, we did it for ourselves, with the idea of releasing a few live videos. But when we came back home and listened to the whole thing, we realized we had gathered enough good-quality material to create a proper live album.

So, why not?

AU: What was your favourite part of that 2023 European tour with Swallow the Sun,



Draconian, and Avatarium that your live album is from?

Davide: Seeing people filling the venues right from the start and realizing that we weren't just the opening band, but a true part of the lineup that people cared about and came early to see. That kind of support meant a lot to us.

AU: Your fourth album, *The Loss of Beauty*, was an incredible listen. For those unfamiliar, what can you tell us about it? Is their follow-up album in the works?

Davide: *The Loss of Beauty* continues our exploration of dark, melancholic atmospheres, drawing influences that will resonate with fans of bands like Paradise Lost, Katatonia, Sentenced, Swallow the Sun, Insomnium, and Borknagar. Lyrically, the album celebrates the beauty in imperfection and transience, encouraging listeners to seek meaning in the fleeting moments of life. We're currently working on the follow-up album, as well as a split release to come before that. We'll be heading into the studio in just a few days to begin recording both.

AU: What North American doom metal would you love to be touring with?

Davide: We've played shows with Novembers Doom and Evoken in the past, and we loved it. There are many other bands I like, though, so I wouldn't limit myself to just doom metal in the strictest sense. For example, I'd love to tour with Unto Others, but also Wayfarer, Pallbearer and Khemmis, just to name a few. And Agalloch, too.

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

Davide: Keep supporting underground music and never stop being curious. Thank you for taking the time to check us out.

shoresofnull.com

info@shoresofnull.com

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Photo by Arianna Savo



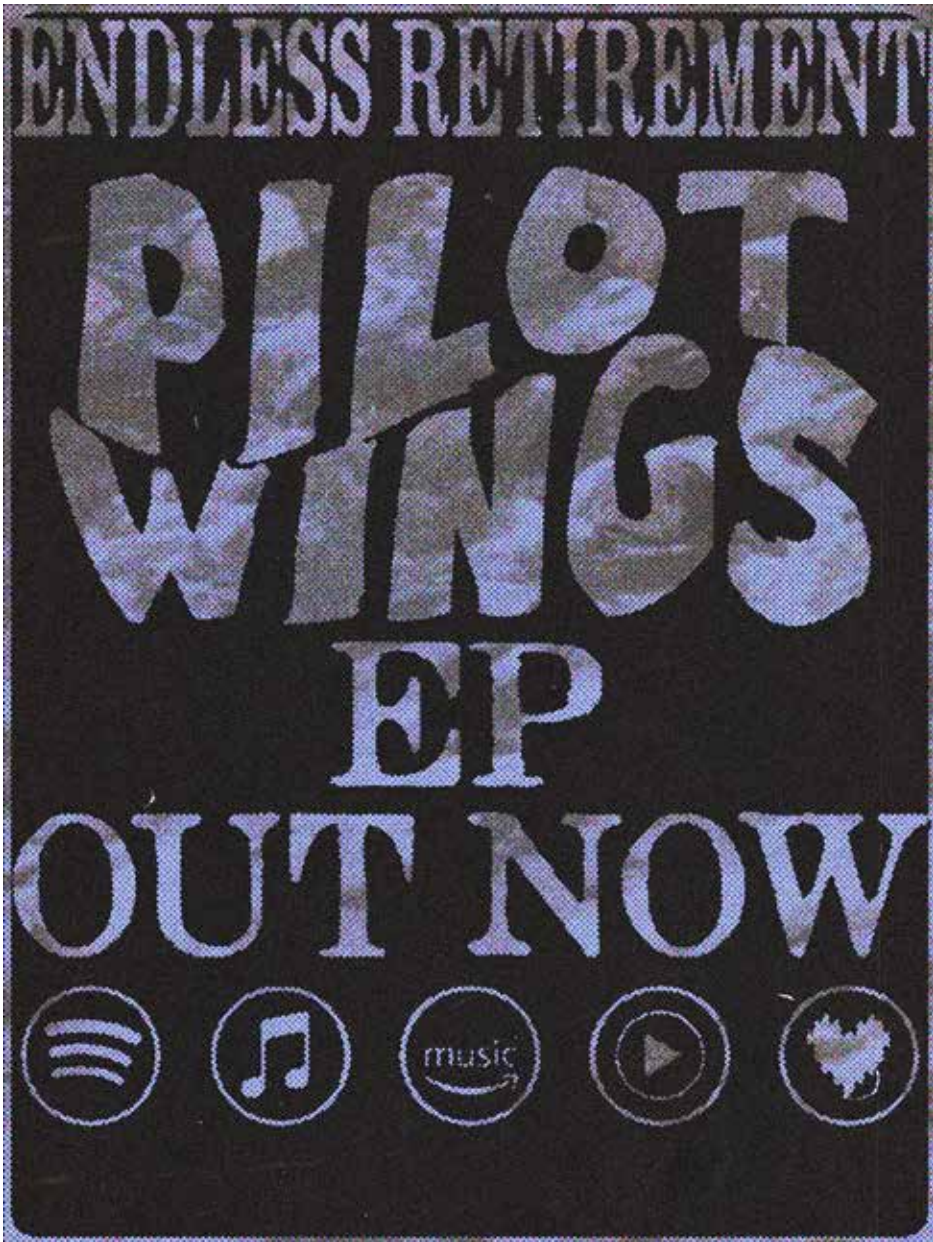
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Vortex

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Last we spoke, you released 2023's *The Future Remains in Oblivion*, and you now have released your latest concept EP *Alien Realms* back in April. What can you tell us about this record?

Vortex: The concept behind *Alien Realms* revolves around humanity venturing into space in search of intelligent life. However, they don't find exactly what they anticipated, and this sense of unexpected discovery is reflected in the artwork. *Alien Realms* is a blackened death EP that blends massive orchestral elements, soaring epic melodies, and relentless, aggressive riffing.

AU: What has the band been up to in between records?

Vortex: We played a few festivals and toured two times in Eastern Canada, a total of about 50 shows in two years. We toured with Aeternam and the other time with Strigampire. Also, we worked a lot

on the new songs, it took six to eight months to write the EP and another six to eight months to produce it.

AU: What made you decide on an EP for a follow-up instead of another full-length?

Vortex: We wanted some new material out before touring Canada and Europe with Xaon in 2025 and we were short of time for a full-length when we learned about the opportunity.

AU: You teamed up with Chris Kells of The Agonist to do your music video for "Haunting the Abyss"? How did you decide on him directing? And what can you tell us about a couple of the scenes where band members are naked on a frozen lake in the snow and shooting those images bare-naked in January at -10C?

Vortex: Chris did the music video for "The Future Remains in Oblivion" and, when it was done, we knew the next one would also be with Chris and his teams. Chris is very professional and fun to work with. Also, Chris is creative and willing to work on a story, and this is important to us; we

like a music video to have more than just a band performance. The naked scenes were tough to shoot because of the cold and the snow, but the way we planned everything helped, and no one froze to death. We only had socks attached to our genitals to hide and protect them from the snow. Some people were passing by, walking or skiing while we were shooting, they had big question marks on their face. It seems like aliens don't really care where and how they drop you off after the abduction...

AU: You have European tour dates with XAON in October and November. How did you end up teaming with XAON?

Vortex: Four years ago, Vortex was supposed to tour Europe, but it didn't work because of Covid. I had known Xaon for a while; I had many of their songs in my playlist, so when the project for Vortex to go to Europe was back on track, I proposed we work with them. Xaon's music fits ours; they are well known in Europe, and Vortex has a following in Canada, so I thought it was a good match. After a few Zoom meetings, we got along very well and agreed to tour Canada and Europe together.

AU: How does the band manage to keep on top of joining other metal scenes being based in a remote area of Quebec in Rimouski? What's a small metal scene like?

Vortex: Metal is embedded in Rimouski's culture, and its history goes way back in the past. There even was a time when Rimouski was considered Canada's death metal capital. In the '80s, bands like Metallica and Mötley Crüe played in Rimouski, and in the '90s all the major death metal bands played Rimouski along with Montreal and Quebec City when they came to

Quebec. For example, I had the chance to see Death in Rimouski along with 1500 other fans for their Symbolic tour. I guess what I'm saying is that we live in a remote area and the city has only 60,000 citizens but it's a good metal city, we are lucky in that sense. The problem is the distance we have to drive whenever we play a show, it is costly and takes a lot of our time. For example, for the Symphony for the Dead tour with Xaon, we will be about 60 hours on the road for a total of 5,000 km in 11 days. I'm not sure the Europeans are ready for this...

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

Vortex: We are a bunch of passionate metal musicians, and all we ask for is that, in this era of music over-saturation, you give us a chance and show up to our live shows. Thanks again for talking to us.

vortexband.bandcamp.com



SINISTER SYNDICATE

By Ray MacKay

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

Sinister Syndicate: You're talking to Sinister Syndicate, a Brazilian collective of seasoned and restless musicians who are steadily carving out their place in the global scene. We're known for our heavy, atmospheric sound and thought-provoking lyrics that dive into existential, philosophical, and darker themes— not to mention our intense and visually striking music videos. More than just a band, Sinister Syndicate is a project born to provoke, challenge, and leave sonic scars wherever we go. Whether on stage or across digital platforms, we're making our mark through raw authenticity, full-throttle energy, and a visual aesthetic that demands attention.

AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

Sinister: We're from Brazil— a country where the metal scene has always thrived in the underground and is now gaining new strength and visibility. In our region, a few key venues have been reigniting the flame, giving space to original bands, embracing heavy music, and helping rebuild the local scene. The audience is passionate and deeply engaged, and there's a new generation of artists and producers keeping the spirit of metal alive, raw, and vibrant. We're living through a resurgence— and Sinister Syndicate is proud to be part of this movement.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band; who's in Sinister Syndicate and what are you all about?

Sinister: Sinister Syndicate was born from the union of experienced musicians in the scene who came together with a clear goal: to build a project with a unique identity, real intensity, and a commanding presence. What started as a creative initiative quickly evolved into a band with a solid and ambitious vision. Our mission is to bring our original compositions to life, exploring intense and dark themes, blending influences from the past— from classic metal

to the underground— with modern elements in production, aesthetics, and performance. Each member brings their own background and perspective into the mix, and it's this creative diversity that shapes our sound: brutal, melodic, and deeply atmospheric.

AU: You have a new music video out, "Mater". Tell us about the song and the video!

Sinister: "Mater" began with an instrumental idea brought in by our guitar master, Régis. From there, each member contributed creatively, shaping and expanding the composition until the full structure took form. The lyrical concept emerged when Marcelo proposed addressing the bond between nature and destruction— not as contradictions, but as coexisting forces. That idea evolved into something deeper, drawing inspiration from "De Rerum Natura" by Lucretius, a philosophical poem that explores the origins of matter, life, and the natural world. The result is a track that combines raw heaviness with deep reflection, and that duality is reflected in the visuals of the music video. The "Mater" video was designed as a symbolic and visceral experience. It blends performance shots with abstract, ritualistic imagery that evokes both reverence and decay. The visual narrative represents a mourning Earth— bleeding, resisting, transforming— surrounded by industrial ruins and ancestral echoes. We wanted the video to feel like a dark invocation, something that lingers in the



subconscious. It's not a linear story, but rather a sequence of powerful symbols that reinforce the song's core message: creation and destruction are one and the same.

AU: Any plans to release an album in the near future? If so, tell us all about it!

Sinister: Yes— we're currently deep in the production of our debut album, and the energy surrounding this project is intense. Each track is being crafted with great attention to detail, aiming not only for sonic quality but also for a strong identity that fuses heaviness, aggression, and immersive atmospheres. We're exploring new textures and concepts, staying true to metal while embracing modern and unconventional elements. The goal is to deliver something beyond expectations— a fierce, conceptual, and fully immersive experience. This album marks a new chapter for Sinister Syndicate, and we can't wait to share it with the world.

AU: Anything else to promote? Any upcoming tours or shows we should look out for?

Sinister: Right now, our main focus is promoting

our work, which is already available on all major digital platforms. We're very excited about the upcoming release of our debut album, and we're preparing to announce tour dates and shows very soon. Stay tuned— big things are coming!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Sinister: We encourage everyone to seek out new bands and fresh music— there are exceptional musicians all around the world creating amazing work that deserves to be discovered. By supporting the independent scene, liking videos, commenting, buying merch, and most importantly, engaging in conversations and sharing ideas, we strengthen this community that belongs to all of us. Here at Sinister Syndicate, we're always open to hearing from you— whether through chat, email, or social media. Our syndicate's doors are wide open: everyone is welcome to join us on this sonic journey and help create something unique together.

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Everything Electric

Interview with Founder and Actor Robert Llewellyn

By Electric Ira

Absolute Underground: You are probably most famous for your portrayal of the character Kryten in the BBC TV series *Red Dwarf*, yet today you are an icon for the environmental and clean technology movements. When did you decide to shift from acting to the movement to decarbonize our planet?

Robert Llewellyn: I think it may be the other way around. I was always fascinated by engineering, I loved big machines as a kid, diggers, trucks, trains, ships etc. Thanks to my big brother, I also loved racing cars (he went on to have a career in motor racing engineering) but I was a shallow show-off so eventually, after a slightly misspent adolescence, I

ended up on a stage. That eventually led into TV work. I worked on *Red Dwarf* for 10 years and then started working on a completely different type of TV show. An engineering challenge show in the UK called *Scrapheap Challenge*, in the USA it was

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titled *Junkyard Wars*. I worked on that show for another 10 years until 2008. It was during that time, especially when I was working in California, that I became aware that electric vehicles could become a realistic alternative to diesel and petrol.

I kept meeting engineers (many who had worked in Silicon Valley) who were developing battery packs, electric drive trains and the

software that controls both. It didn't make much sense at first, but I slowly became fascinated not only with the technology, but what it might mean for us humans and in particular the less than perfect reputation of the oil and gas industry.

Weirdly, *Red Dwarf* kept going through much of that period, we last made a series in 2020, so we've been hopeless space bums for a very long time. I love doing both jobs, but my true passion is engineering and trying to make complex technologies and huge complex energy systems understandable.

AU: You seem to be extremely knowledgeable about engineering and electrical energy. Has this always been a passion?

RL: You are too kind, thankfully I know people who are extremely knowledgeable so I can ask them, but it has always been something I'm fascinated by—machines and the people who created them. My interest in electric vehicles is relatively recent. Big Victorian steam engines were my first big passion, and very loud cars, and massive diggers, and huge ships, and big bridges. All large engineering projects fascinated me. How did people start to think about them? How did they come up with solutions to incredibly challenging problems? It took me a while to realise I might be interested in such topics, but I did lack the ability to actually design things and make them work. It was only as an adult that I discovered, while trying to help my son, that I have a fairly mild case of what's referred to as dyscalculia. Essentially, the same thing as dyslexia only it affects numbers not letters.

Before cell phones appeared, like everyone else I had to use a circular dial on an old phone, or just as confusing, buttons. My life was a misery of repeatedly misdialled numbers; I would use the right numbers but not in the right order. It's the most disconcerting experience to have this demonstrated to you, but it does make calculating vitally important measurements fraught with an extra layer of difficulty.

AU: What primary motivation pushed you towards this work?

RL: It was all down to one relatively short journey. I had been driving electric vehicles for maybe 18 months; I liked them, but I was very aware of the multiple drawbacks. I was lucky to be able to charge a car at home but that was it. Out on the road in 2011, there was virtually nowhere to plug them in. One day, I drove my still very new Nissan Leaf to a converted Saxon watermill in Dorset, about 60 miles from my house. I had solar panels on my roof, so before I set off, I had charged the car over two days using only the sun. After the modest journey, I plugged the car into the building that housed a 55-kiloWatt water turbine. I spent the day with the people who owned the mill, and eventually, when the battery was charged enough, I drove him.

A 120-mile journey that required no fuel extraction, shipping, pumping, refining, distribution, and burning. It felt like a really important step; the first time I had travelled that far knowing firsthand the source of the energy that moved me. This made me more determined than ever to push the technologies that made this possible. Wind, solar, water, batteries, and electric ground transport.

AU: The Everything Electric YouTube Channel (formerly known as Fully Charged) is quite a success. What do you attribute this to?

RL: I put this down to dogged determination and time. We've been going for over 15 years now, the first five years were quiet and slow, then we saw a gradual increase in episodes and the quality we were able to produce. Since we've been running live events, this has improved and we've seen really impressive growth. At time of writing, we have 1,103,717 subscribers and around 220 million views. We have now organised over 20 live events all over the globe, it's fascinating to

see the different approaches to renewables in our homes, to attitudes to electric transport and the energy transition in general. The events are very public facing; the talks and interviews are incredibly popular and of course the test drives are a very big draw. We have now facilitated over 120,000 test drives at our live events. That boggles my old brain.

AU: We've heard rumours about a new series you're putting together called *Zapheap*. What can you tell us about it?

RL: I don't want to give too much away, but we have just finished filming two pilot episodes of

The Zapheap. It is obviously based on *Scrapheap Challenge*, and we are working alongside many of the people involved with the original series. The big difference is the motive power. We always used combustion engines to power the machines the teams built back in the '90s and '00s, The *Zapheap* is a bit different. We issue the teams with a battery pack and electric motors; they have to build a machine we have stipulated in a very specific 10 hours. I'm delighted to report that the teams succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. We will now test these insane contraptions in front of a large live audience at our Everything Electric

event in Farnborough on the 11th and 12th of October this year.

AU: How can our readers get early access to *Zapheap* and when will it be available?

RL: *Zapheap* will be available on YouTube later in the year. If any readers are in the UK in October, we will be filming the finale at our Everything Electric Expo in Farnborough on October 11th and 12th and attendees will be the first to see the episode.

AU: About the massive show, Everything Electric is returning to the Vancouver Convention Centre this summer. What should our readers know about the event and why might they be interested in taking part?

RL: This will be our third year in Vancouver and the expo has gone from strength to strength. It's the perfect place to test drive a range of different EVs, attend live theatres sessions and bring their home energy questions for advice from experts. There will be EVs of all shapes and sizes on display, from electric bikes and skateboards to huge trucks and other commercial vehicles. Not only can visitors see these vehicles, but we'll have thousands of electric test drives and rides available for people to try these vehicles for themselves. Plus lots for families, and kids under 15 can attend for free.

AU: Where can readers find more information about Everything Electric and get involved?

RL: All details can be found on the website, and your readers can get 20% off tickets using the code **AU20**.

ca.everythingelectric.show



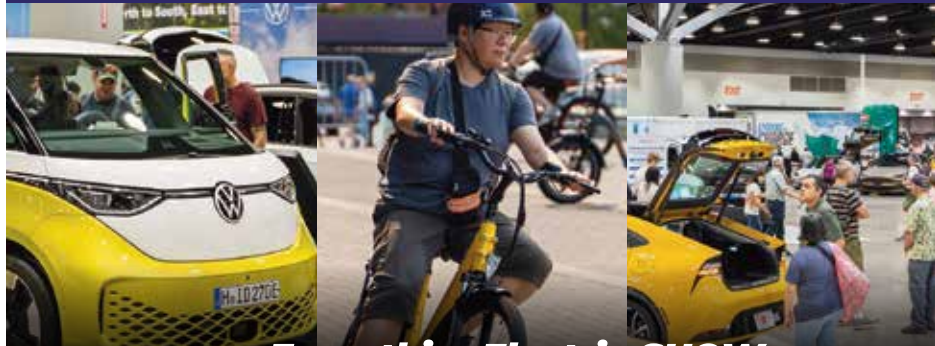
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Ten Days Late

Interview by Ray MacKay

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

Renee Poirier (singer): I'm infamous for going from a whisper to a scream.

Lana Ryma (drummer): When I'm not running Lanalou's, I'm usually pounding skins and breaking hearts.

Kim Mah (lead guitar): For playing wicked guitar licks. I always try to break my strings during a show.

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

RP: We started in 1992 as an all-girl band when the riot girl movement was very prevalent and we as women musicians really had something to prove. So we had to play as good as the guys or better, and you can tell by some of our songs that we made them as complicated as **.

KM: Yeah, I deliberately did that to throw people off who tried to play our songs, so there's a lot of stuff that you can't hear that nobody knows about. Only I know what I'm playing there.

RP: We played all five of us together, Renee, Lana, Kim, Ang and Kara we broke up in 1998. We broke up almost at our highest point, when we could have really gone further, due to teenage angst. Then there was the reunion in 2014, and Kara opted out at that point. This current reunion we owe to the fabulous Red Bridge Festival in Pont-Rouge, Quebec. We played that in June with Propagandi, Goldfinger, and a whole bunch of other great bands. The current lineup is Lana, myself, Terra Chaplin on lead guitar. Lisa Lloyd on bass and Lisa Moore on rhythm.

AU: What are some of the highlights of your careers/tours over the decades?

KM: We played with Annihilator in Thunder Bay!

RP: We played Snow Jam for many years.

KM: Some of the bands we toured or played with were Blink 182, Ten Foot Pole, Body Jar, Bouncing Souls, so many. 54-40, Rancid, Bif Naked, Down By Law, Good Riddance, SNFU, and Descendents!

AU: What's the wildest thing that's happened at a show of yours?

RP: Blink-182 running naked across the stage as we were playing. We toured across Canada with them on their first Canadian tour. Those guys couldn't keep their clothes on. They would run across the stage in their underwear and moon

people. So mooning became a thing that we did on that tour— we'd drive by each other's vans with our butts hanging out the windows. Mooning became a way of saying hello! Then there was the Australian ass. We even learned how to identify the Bodyjar Australian ass!

LR: Weirdo foot massage guy. I used to play barefoot and he starts the interview while I'm trying to put my shoes back on, and he's like, do you mind if I give you a foot massage? This is in the middle of the bar. I said, "Nooo, I just finished playing, there's grease from my kick pedal!" I'm trying to make up an excuse, and he says, "I don't know what your fucking problem is, it's just your fucking feet!" This guy just took *American Psycho* and went with it. Then I said, "You know what, you should do this interview with our singer Renee. She's right over there." Then the next thing I know we're driving away, and Renee's like "What's up with Vinnie and the foot fetish?!" Just a lot of weirdos you meet, but that one stood out.

AU: What song means the most to you?

LR: I don't really write the lyrics, so it's hard from a drummer point of view, but I think "Soap" has a really cool vibe, and I like "Getaway" because we did a really fun video for it.

KM: I can tell you what songs are the most fun for me to play. "Getaway", "Bender", and "Outta Tune".

RP: Yeah, "Outta Tune" is right up there. "Outta Tune" is an underestimated little ditty we wrote. I'm struggling with the words I'm trying to say because the topic is so sensitive today. Back in the '90s, we were more gender flexible and we didn't really label the preferences.

LR: Yeah, as long as no one was bullied and it

was consensual, it was all good. We didn't have to label the way people were. We just accepted people in our social circle. We were never a political band.

RP: I think "Outta Tune" is my favourite because it's really catchy and fun to sing.

LR: And you can sing it out of tune because no one will care— that's what it's called!

AU: Any plans to release an album in the near future? If so, tell us all about it!

RP: I would like to re-release "Outta Tune".

LR: I would love to do a bunch of songs that never made it on an album.

RP: We've got about six songs that were never recorded that should have been. The album will come out right on time for the big tour that nobody has asked us to play yet in 2026!

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

KM: It was way harder back then for all girl bands. Yeah, remember that time at the Rock Cellar when those guys were screaming "Get off the stage, my hard on's over"?

RP: We used that phrase forever after that.

AU: Anything else to promote? Any upcoming tours or shows we should look out for?

RP: We are opening for Teenage Bottlerocket on August 17th at the Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver and we are playing The Rogue Festival on the Sunshine Coast on the 16th.

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Turning Back the (Atomic) Clock

Gene Hoglan talks Dark Angel, the Rigors of the Road, and the Importance of Unflagging Determination

By Ferdy Belland

"I am really zooming— we're all so stoked!" says legendary superhuman metal drummer Gene Hoglan, he of Dark Angel/Devin Townsend/Strapping Young Lad/Fear Factory/Dethklok/Testament/Whoever-He-Chooses-To-Play-With fame, and this time he's gushing about Dark Angel— the groundbreaking thrash-metal engine that emerged from the original Bay Area scene in the early 1980s, and who have deservedly received the spotlight of praise and respect that usually illuminated the more well-publicized San Francisco bands they cut their unresolved-tritone teeth with.

And did we mention that their astounding return-to-form fifth album *Extinction Level Event* should be released to the public by the time you read this? You heard it here first!

And now, here's Gene:

"We have a new album coming out, a new tour coming along, and the Dark Angel world is moving according to some plan or another! We're really excited to be at this direct juncture right here. Hopefully this all leads to a lot more kickass things from Dark Angel, so we're going to strike while the iron's hot - releasing new material, hitting the road, all of it. Take advantage of as much of it as we can, maintain ourselves as much as we can for the next year or two."

Hoglan gives insight into the creativity that melded *Extinction Level Event*, and touches on the sadness of losing guitarist Jim Durkin during the process. "The new Dark Angel album came together very, very quickly in a number of short bursts. When we returned to the scene a dozen years back, we played a bunch of shows and got good slots on really killer festival bills, and all the initial international nostalgia-novelty excitement carried on for quite a bit. Jim Durkin played me



Photo Credit: Chris A. Photography

some awesome material he was working on, so I shared with him some Dark Angel stuff that'd been in the can since the early 1990s. And he got excited about that! So, I started going around, yelling about how there'd be a new Dark Angel album out soon, but life got really busy, as it does. My schedule is usually pretty bumping and jumping, so it took a while for Jim and I to actually get working on the record. So, I kept plugging away at new material, with Jim's influence colouring my writing style. And then Jim started getting really hard to get a hold of. Nobody was alarmed by that. Jim would go missing from text threads or emails or phone conversations a number of times in the past, so when I couldn't reach him, I didn't think much about it... not at first."

Gene Hoglan's drive and energy is the stuff of legend. Not only is he revered as one of the most technically brilliant, musically savvy, and metronomically precise drummers to specialize in metal forms (his endearing nickname is "the Atomic Clock"), but even at the age of 57 he still mops the blastbeat floor with most of the cocky metal-hotshot drummers half his age. And if he ever feels gasping and exhausted, he certainly doesn't show it in public.

"Do I still love the road?" Hoglan asks himself. "Yes. Do I still love playing live? Yes. This is the only life I've ever known, ever since I was 16. I've pretty much always been on the road, except for the times when you have to come off it to get a new album together, or prepare for the next pile of everything. Living out of a suitcase, living out of hotels, sitting in planes and buses, and just bouncing all over the planet! I'm pretty easy-going with it all. I will admit, especially these days, some of the travel is a bit more challenging due to modern circumstances. You used to be able to fly more easily here and there. Flights are now harder to book, harder to sit through... shrinkflation has hit the airline industry hard. Less planes flying the same number of routes, so if there's delays or cancellations... look out!"

Hoglan has well-deserved insight into maintaining his whirlwind live-performance career. "The logistics of post-pandemic travel has altered quite a bit. But there are smart ways to travel. It can be pulled off. Tours don't need to be cancelled. You might need an alternate Plan B, C, or D, but there's always a way to hit the road and play your music for your fans. Is it ball-crushingly expensive? Absolutely. But you ask yourself: why are we in this in the first place? Are we dedicated to the music? Are we dedicated to the fans? Are we live entertainers by trade and by soul? All of those answers are: YES. You have to be flexible, and fortunately in my musical worlds I'm surrounded by other flexible folks who rise to the occasion. We manage to stay on the road in situations that other bands might find unworkable. We figure it out. We make it happen."

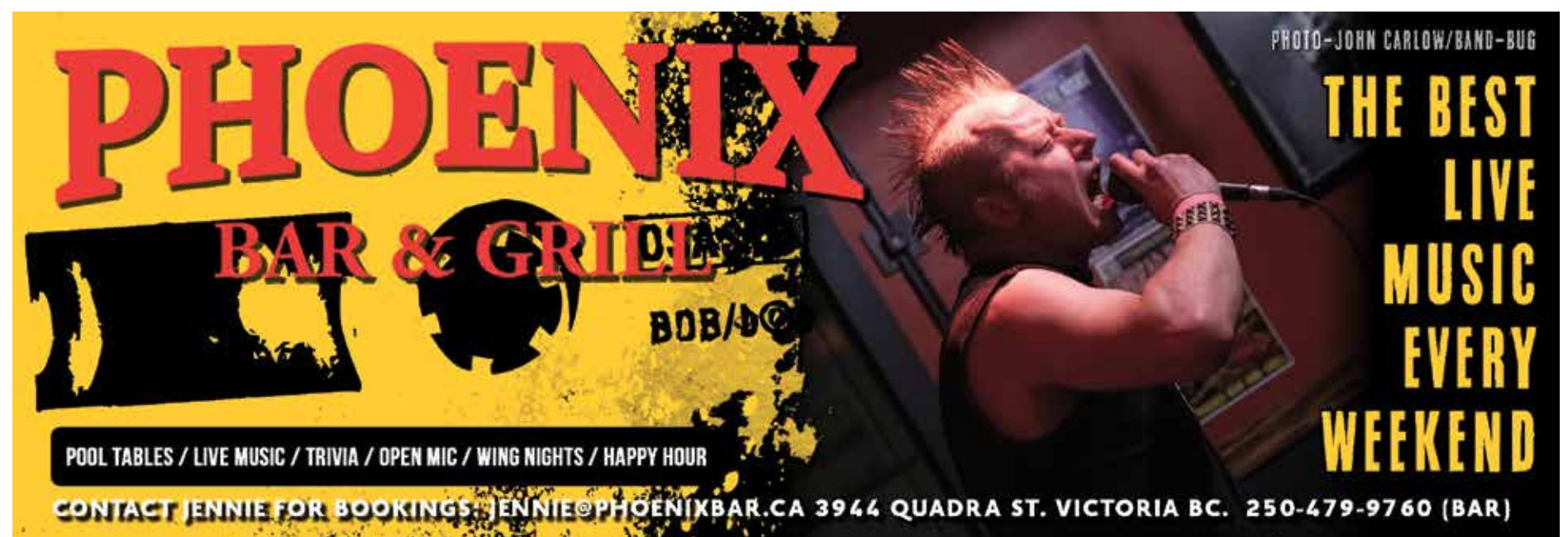
"We're hoping to add more Canadian shows to the tour," says Hoglan. "Our booking agent is certainly trying. It's not that we're avoiding the Prairies. We'd love to play Alberta: the home of the legendary Smalls, who, to this day, are still one of my favourite and most listened-to bands!"

Hoglan's youthful exuberance is infectious, to say the least, and one can only hope that the Atomic Clock can keep the double-kick pulse of Metal's heartbeat fluttering away at 338bpm for many years to come. "There's tons of other stuff coming up for me directly after this upcoming tour concludes," says Hoglan. "Now that the Dark Angel announcements are all together, we'll definitely be going over to Europe, and playing the big festivals next summer. There'll be a lot of activity in 2026 with Dethklok, Death to All, and Dark Angel. I'll be putting in the miles on all of my projects. That's why I've always said: come onnnnn, CLONING TECHNOLOGY! I can assign all my clones to go everywhere!"

genehoglan.com

[@darkangelthrash](https://twitter.com/darkangelthrash)

reversedrecords.com

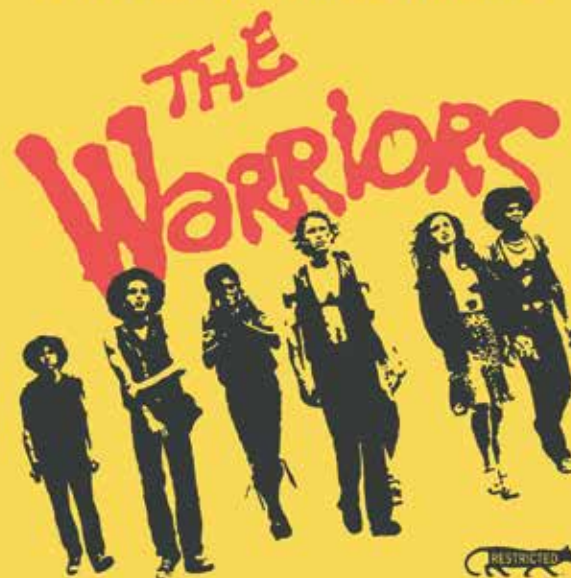


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Prince of Darkness, Patron of the Future: Ozzy Osbourne — The Curator and Catalyst of Metal’s Evolution

By Ryan Dyer

On July 5, 2025, Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath took the stage for what would be their final performance — Back to the Beginning at Villa Park in Birmingham, England. Sitting in a large black chair, visibly affected by Parkinson’s disease yet commanding the moment, Ozzy’s tears revealed the profound emotion of closing a chapter that defined heavy metal history.

The concert was more than a farewell — it was a living tribute to Ozzy’s decades-spanning influence. Bands from across generations performed Sabbath and Ozzy songs, including Pantera, Slayer, Metallica, Mastodon, and Ghost’s Tobias Forge. This powerful gathering showed how Ozzy’s legacy bridged the old guard, peers, and the new wave of metal, underscoring his role as both an icon and a guiding force for the genre.

The Blueprint: Forging Heavy Metal in the 1970s

Ozzy Osbourne’s journey began as the haunting voice of Black Sabbath, a band that forged the blueprint for heavy metal in the early 1970s. The



band’s doom-laden riffs, dark themes, and Ozzy’s emotive vocals created a new musical language that would ripple through generations.

Black Sabbath’s tours were crucibles for future legends. In 1978, Van Halen opened for Sabbath on their Never Say Die! tour, marking a pivotal moment for the fledgling band that would soon reshape rock music. Other luminaries like AC/DC, Blue Öyster Cult, Ted Nugent, Kiss, and Aerosmith also shared bills with Sabbath, learning the ropes and absorbing lessons in stagecraft, performance, and the power of presence.

These tours planted seeds of influence far beyond the 1970s, setting Ozzy on a path as not only a frontman but a cultivator of talent and a builder of metal’s foundation.

Solo Career and Early Mentorship:

The 1980s and 1990s

Following his departure from Black Sabbath, Ozzy launched a solo career that would not only establish him as a formidable artist in his own right but also become a launchpad for future stars. The release of Blizzard of Ozz in 1980 introduced the world to Ozzy’s distinctive voice backed by virtuoso guitarist Randy

Rhoads, but his tours were equally important for the bands that opened for him.

In the 1980s, Metallica opened for Ozzy, gaining exposure that helped catapult thrash metal into the mainstream. Mötley Crüe, Queensrÿche, and Anthrax were among the bands who benefited from Ozzy’s willingness to share his stage, proving that his influence extended beyond his own performances.



By the 1990s and early 2000s, Ozzy’s tours helped launch bands that would define the nu-metal and alternative metal scenes. Bands such as Korn and Deftones opened for Ozzy before they became household names, gaining invaluable exposure on his

stages.

Tribute and Transition: Nativity in Black in the 1990s and 2000s

The 1990s saw Ozzy and Black Sabbath’s influence celebrated through *Nativity in Black: A Tribute to Black Sabbath* (1994) and its sequel (2000). Featuring covers by Faith No More, Sepultura, Megadeth, Type O Negative, and Soulfly, these albums were more than tributes — they were gateways introducing a new generation to the sounds and spirit Ozzy helped birth.

These tribute albums reflected Ozzy’s broader role as a curator of metal heritage, connecting past and present while encouraging innovation within the genre.

Ozzfest: Building a Metal Kingdom and Shaping Metal’s Future

In 1995, Sharon Osbourne tried to secure a spot for Ozzy Osbourne on the Lollapalooza tour, but was told Ozzy was considered “uncool” and not relevant to the festival’s direction. This rejection came at a pivotal moment: the following year, Lollapalooza’s 1996 lineup featured Metallica, a band that had opened for Ozzy in the 1980s, highlighting an ironic

twist in the shifting rock landscape.

Refusing to accept this, Sharon Osbourne created Ozzfest in 1996, a festival dedicated entirely to heavy music and Ozzy’s legacy. What began as a platform to showcase Ozzy quickly became one of metal’s most influential festivals, launching the careers of Coal Chamber, Powerman 5000, Slipknot, Limp Bizkit, and many more.

Ozzfest became a home for emerging nu-metal and metalcore acts such as Static-X, System of a Down, Killswitch Engage, and Lamb of God, while also providing critical exposure to European bands like Dimmu Borgir, Soilwork, and Meshuggah, helping them break into the North American market.

Ozzfest’s influence went beyond exposure: it fostered community among fans and bands,

bridged generational gaps, and showcased metal’s diversity and evolution. The festival’s long run helped keep metal vibrant and relevant through shifting musical landscapes.

Ozzfest and Knotfest: Forging the Future of Metal Festivals

Ozzfest’s creation in 1996 revolutionized how metal music was celebrated, offering a dedicated festival where legends and newcomers could share the stage. This blueprint inspired Slipknot to launch Knotfest in 2012, a festival that carries forward Ozzfest’s spirit by blending veteran acts with rising stars.

Having gained exposure through Ozzfest early in their career, Slipknot drew clear inspiration from Ozzy Osbourne’s festival. Knotfest stands as a spiritual sibling and continuation of the community and energy Ozzfest fostered, proving Ozzy’s influence extends beyond music to shaping metal culture itself.

Beyond Ozzfest: Ozzy’s Broader Festival Impact

While Ozzfest remains Ozzy Osbourne’s most famous festival legacy, his influence extends beyond its banner. Ozzy has been a key figure in other major festivals like Monsters of Rock in Calgary, which showcased a diverse lineup including Judas Priest, Cavalera Conspiracy, Serj Tankian, and Ozzy himself.

These events underscore Ozzy’s ongoing role as a unifier and ambassador for heavy music across various platforms, continuously bringing together iconic acts and rising talents alike. His presence at such festivals further cemented his status as a living bridge connecting metal’s past, present, and future — always championing the genre’s growth and diversity outside of the Ozzfest brand.

Classic Metal Reunions and Metalcore Explosion: Mid-2000s

Ozzfest wasn’t just a launchpad for new bands; it also became a stage for metal royalty. Judas Priest reunited with Rob Halford for Ozzfest 2004, while Iron Maiden co-headlined in 2005, reinforcing the festival’s role as a bridge between metal’s past and present.

Simultaneously, the metalcore movement found a home on Ozzfest’s stages with bands like Hatebreed, Unearth, and Atreyu taking centre stage. MTV’s Battle for Ozzfest further democratized the process, giving unsigned bands like A Dozen Furies a shot at the spotlight.

Collaborations: Ozzy as Connector

Ozzy’s role as an influencer extended into collaborations that showcased his openness to metal’s evolving forms. He recorded duets and tracks with Lita Ford, Rob Zombie, Coal Chamber, and even Post Malone, blending styles and generations. These partnerships highlighted his willingness to both honour metal’s roots and embrace its future.

The Final Show and Full-Circle Moments

Ozzy’s final concert was a microcosm of his career as a unifier and mentor. With performances



by Metallica, Pantera, Slayer, Tool and various supergroups, the event showcased the broad spectrum of metal he influenced.

The presence of Steven Tyler was especially symbolic. Aerosmith had shared festival bills with Black Sabbath in the 1970s, and Tyler’s appearance in 2025 was a poignant unification of rock’s past and future.

Jack Osbourne: The Tastemaker Behind the Curtain

Behind the scenes, Jack Osbourne quietly extended the family legacy. As shown on *The Osbournes* reality show, Jack championed bands like Meshuggah and played a crucial role in curating Ozzfest lineups, helping keep the festival relevant amid metal’s many subgenres. His work bridged underground scenes and mainstream audiences, ensuring that the Osbourne influence persisted beyond Ozzy’s own stage presence.

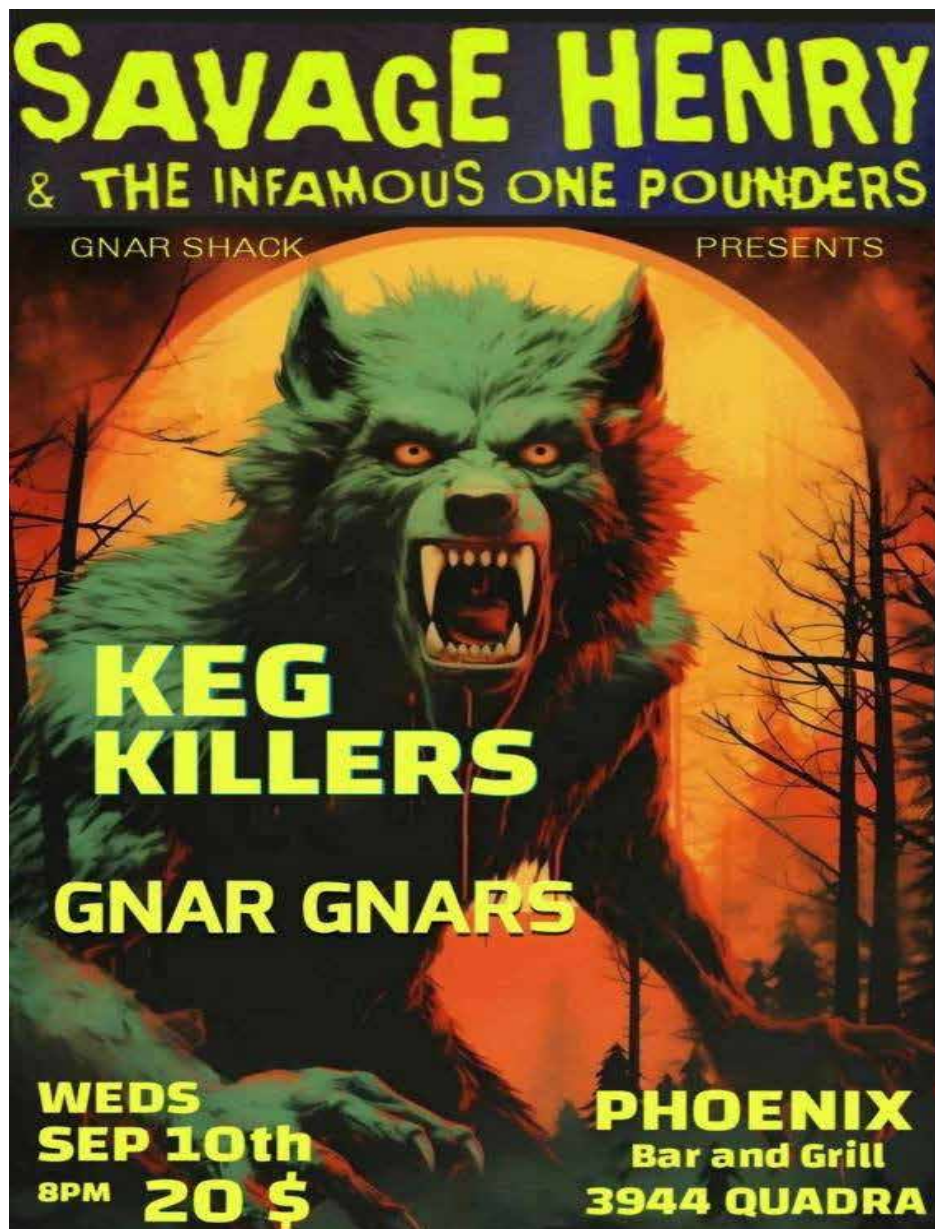


The Legacy of Ozzy

Ozzy Osbourne’s legacy is far more than a collection of iconic songs or a singular voice. It is a tapestry woven from decades of mentorship, curation, and cultural leadership. From the pioneering riffs of Black Sabbath to the launchpads of Ozzfest and countless collaborations, Ozzy shaped the metal landscape both in the spotlight and behind the scenes.

His final show was not just a goodbye—it was a celebration of a legacy that built metal’s kingdom and passed the torch to future legends.

Ozzy Photo Credits Jen Warnock & Brydon Parker



Ozzy Osbourne Tribute

By Steve Earles

I've seen a vast number of tributes to Ozzy since his passing, most of them covering the same well-trodden ground, so you don't need me to tell you about bats and Sabbath, if you're reading this you already know. Instead, I'll tell you a story you don't know.

After work one evening some years ago, my late Dad drew my attention to an interview with Sharon and Ozzy on *The Late Late Show* (a long-running Irish chat show), and it was typically hilarious, and Sharon announced Ozzy would be signing copies of his autobiography in Stephen's Green Shopping Centre in Dublin the following day. I decided I would set out and get a signed copy of Ozzy's book.

On reaching Dublin I made my way to Stephen's Green, except there was a long long line of metallers waiting to meet their hero; the line was a mile long stretching back into Grafton Street. Good thing I'd had neither Guinness nor coffee that day.

Beside me were two Auld Wans (Irish equivalent of Old Dears, like Mrs. Doyle in *Father Ted*). They had just gotten a signed copy of Bertie Ahearn's autobiography (former Irish PM), and one Auld Wan says to the other. "Bertie hardly had anyone by comparison to this!" "Indeed," replied the other. "But sure Ozzy is famous!"

Then I was approached by a chap selling a book. He had been homeless and addicted but had turned his life around and was selling a book of his poetry, and would I buy one to support him. Indeed I would. I read the book, and was touched by what this man had been through and come out the other side, there was a parallel with Ozzy.

Eventually, hours later, I met Ozzy. I told him how much I loved his music and in flash of



inspiration I gave him the book of poetry I'd bought, explaining the context. He read a poem and was visibly touched. That is the Ozzy I remember, a kind man who felt things deeply.

Ozzy Photo Credits Jen Warnock & Brydon Parker



Ozzy Osbourne– Two-Time Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame Inductee

Duality 'n opposites/study in contradictions: Why are we so affected by Ozzy's loss? Another rock legend has fallen... what's different this time? We all connected so much with Ozzy over his unique human frailty and personal re-invention... We all saw some of hint of ourselves in his **bold story**.

He was a factory worker, industrial Birmingham. **Wanted out of the grind**. Loved The Beatles' melodies and singing (inspired him to begin). **Started a band**, Black Sabbath, started musical genres (little did they know at the time). Explored dark, risky, lyrical themes and imagery. Wrote hit records. Travelled the world. **Did too many drugs/the wrong drugs** (similar arc to Lemmy w/Hawkwind and forming Motörhead) – and **was fired**. Turns out, when the dust settled, **management/lawyers took the profits** and he was **broke again**. Sabbath continued with other singers... **we are all replaceable**.

Found himself in a one-way, **deep depression**. Either change; or **self-erasure**. Got by with a little help from his friends: a new manager/muse/**second wife** (Sharon) and fresh bandmates. **New**

ideas. New songs. **Started over. Rebirth**. A new energy, a new updated image. **Had children**. **Became a loving father**. Had ups and downs of life. **Chased passions** (both female and bottled/powdered). Lived honestly as a **hard-partying rocker**, cementing and endearing his character and **building his reputation** (good and bad). He was interviewed, guest appearances, in commercials, voicing children's cartoons and video games... yet it was always him, always seemingly in character – **the cheeky boy**.

Promoted music with the Ozzfest project, touring across America/Europe with a new generation of cutting-edge heavy bands. **Leading the next generation** of heavy artists. **Sobering up, then relapsing** multiple times along the way.

After years solo, **reunited with his old band**. Got known to the rest of the world via *The Osbournes* and the reality TV world. They let the world see him with his guard down, as a **familyman** – not in stage clothes and not a rehearsed act. **Dealing with tough life issues**. It humanized someone who'd been **demonized by the media** previously. "The Satanic Panic" was solved with a good burrito feed.

A few more hit records. **Bad health scares**. Parkinson's. It ended where it started in Birmingham, with the last monumental **sold-out show**. Black Sabbath and guests... "Back To The Beginning".

Proceeds from the event totalled into millions and will be **donated to charities** Acorns Children's Hospice, Birmingham Children's Hospital, and Cure Parkinson's.

"**Prince Of Darkness**" was his nickname, yes. But perhaps another interpretation is "face darkness like a prince." For darkness is inevitable.

He lived a loving, passionate life – and urges you to do the same! **Live boldly!**

He leaves a million bands in his wake...

Love you Ozzy – travel safe.

- Erik Lindholm

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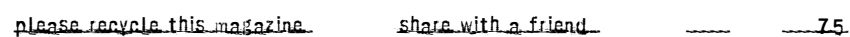
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Memorial Tribute To Ozzy Mac Sabbath

Drive Thru Metal

Interview by Ira "Supersize" Hunter

AU: Who are we talking to today?

My name is **Mike Odd** I have the difficult duty of being the manager of these mutated mascot weirdos known as "Mac Sabbath"

AU: Who are the members of the band and what does it say on their dating profiles?

Grimalice is the big purple gumdrop looking beast on bass.

Cat Burglar on is on the drums aka Peter Criss Cut Fries.

Slayer MacCheeze has a giant hamburger for a head, and well he is the guitar player.

Ronald Osbourne is the deranged time traveling

front clown.

The technology of these 70's time continuum food god's has not caught up to dating apps as such. But if it does, I would be more worried about Grub Hub!

AU: What brought forth Mac Sabbath?

Imagine these characters slaving away at some terrible corporate fast food chain while coated in grease and shackled to fryers and death machines brainwashed into poisoning the masses mindlessly as cogs in the evil factory of doom. Then one day inspired by the music of Black Sabbath they break free from the spell and pick up instruments of rock instead of implements of death and hit the road of time and space to warn the world about the evils of fast food and bring the people back to a time when food and music were more organic in nature.

AU: Can you tell us how Ozzy Osbourne influenced the formation of the band and his importance to the world of music.

Ozzy has always been the embodiment of a free wild spirit that was a little too much for this world to take in. I think that people from all over the planet have been inspired to think outside of the box, push the envelope, drop their brainwashed puritan instincts and go against the grain inside and out of music. Mac carries on the spirit of this in a very specific way but nonetheless. I'm hardly dealing with

conventional mindsets here!

AU: What's the vegan alternative for biting off a bat's head?

Well I've never seen Ronald eat any meat, but he does bite the head off a Bat Burger every night, so I can only assume it's made of mushrooms or something? He is Kinda spacey.

AU: What's the legend of when Ozzy first watched a Mac Sabbath music video?

I don't know if he watched a video but we did put on a private show for him that Jack set up. It was a surprise. He had no idea what he was walking into. The results are super comical and changed the course of the band for life. Also Rolling Stone

covered it! So please look it up. The proof is in the poutine!

AU: This isn't a traditional cover band.

Yeah, it's really its own thing. It's a band, it's a magic show, it's a rock opera, It's a comedy show, it's family friendly but also Kinda scary and has an important social message. It's like an Arena size theatrical rock show packed on to a club size stage and who else is gonna flip burgers on a smoking grill while they sing "Sweet Beef"?

AU: Is the band's message ever political or is it solely based on health and the food pyramid?

I mean when you start in on the "food pyramid scheme" Is there really time to talk about anything else?

AU: What's new and exciting in the Mac Sabbath camp?

The band is super excited to be doing a west coast tour for the first time with the Schizophonics! One of the highest energy live rock bands ever, also from the annals of the acid rock daze but packs a punch you will not believe! Our old tour mates from Guadalajara are coming back for this one as well. The sci-fi Sexy space rock show called Descartes a Kant ! Also we are playing the 20th anniversary of Riot Fest in Chicago this year where Weird Al Yankovic is curtailing our stage with the Sparks, Camper Van Beethoven, Puddles Pity Party and Shonen Knife! A huge festival with The Pogues, Blink 182, Weezer, Green Day and even GWAR!

AU: Do other restaurant gang members ever make appearances at the live shows?

There is quite the cast of characters that dip in and out of the show, Mac Tomorrow Morning, The Grouper, The frying guy, and The lizard to name a few!

AU: Now that Ozzy has passed on, what is his legacy for future generations in your opinion?



Never in the history of the world has any celebrity had a Woodstock proportion world renowned festival dedicated to them at the end of their life. I think that the world has become so overwhelmed with the emotion of this incident combined with the global success of the concert that his legacy and spirit will live on in a way that the youth will be more inspired by him then ever before. After much grief and pondering I could not be more positive about this outcome.

AU: When traveling across these fast food nations, how do you find good slow food to eat? There's a good vegan place called MeeT to check out.

The world is changing fast and healthier options are popping up like crazy. It's up to you to make the choice. Delve into the Mac Sabbath lyrics and Ronald will show you the way.

AU: Favourite Ozzy solo album or song.

The early Randy Rhoads stuff is what I was brought up on but so many strange surprises all along the way.

AU: Were you able to make it to his last performance in Birmingham? Thoughts

I was there. It was mind blowing and emotional. I felt like my whole life lead me to that musical moment.

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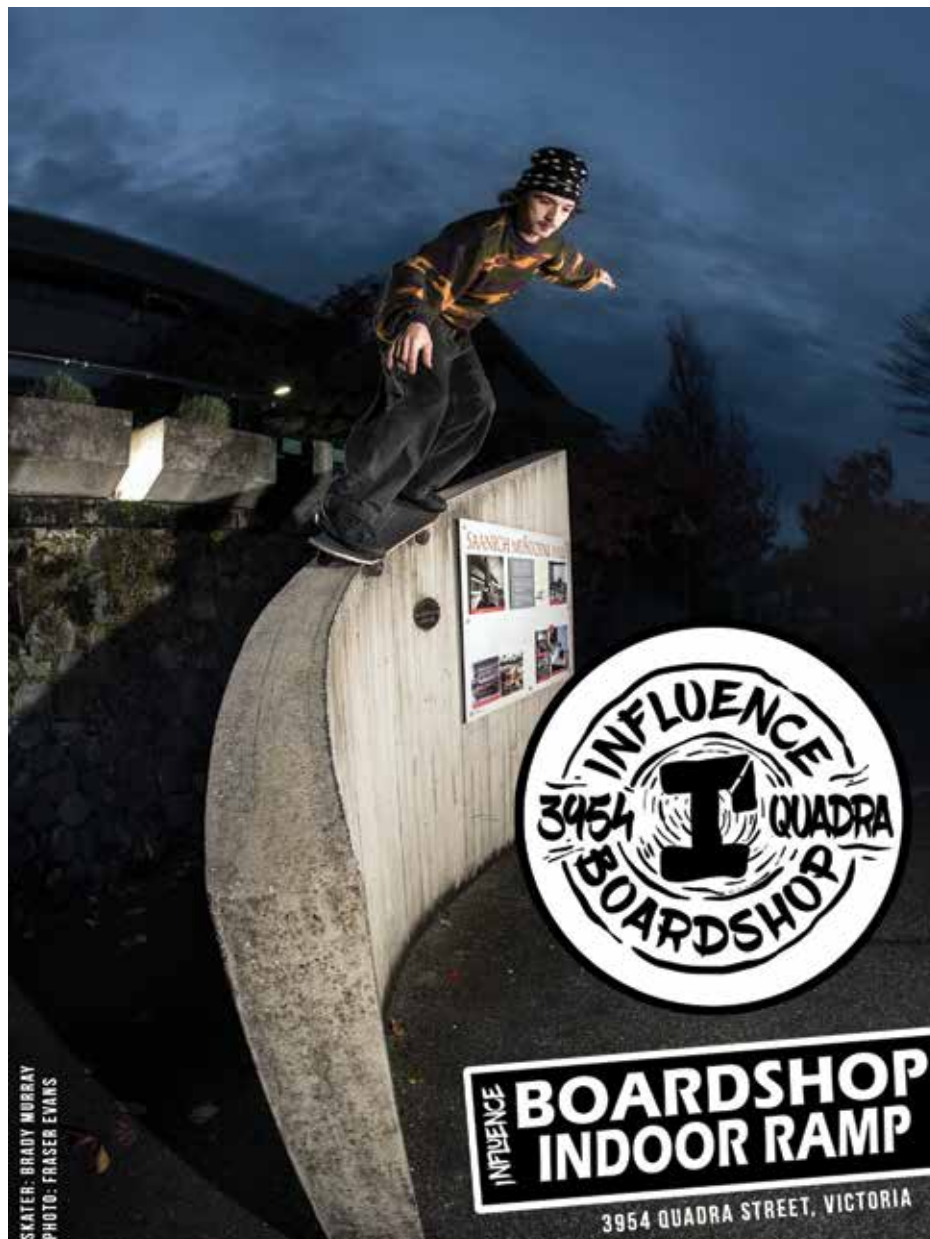
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Photo by Jen Warnock



"We imposed a tight deadline: dropping an album within two years," McGachy explains. "It was a cram session! The writing started while we were touring with Death to All last May, and Chris (Christian Donaldson, guitarist) always records ideas on his phone. He's inspired by weird found sounds: an air conditioner's hum, a dishwasher's rumble, the chiming tone when he clinked a

pair of wineglasses together. When Chris' father was passing away, he'd visit him in the hospital and find himself focusing on the rhythms and tones of the life-support machines. We didn't whittle down a big bank of songs for the album—we aimed directly for a certain amount of songs. Chris is a musical savant. He studied music, and his kid's the same—I hang out with his kid, who has perfect pitch, so it runs in the family. He's one of those people who just has it."

No one accuses Cryptopsy of slacking: if anything, they operate with an almost military precision that most metal bands would kill for.

"The recording process was very intense," says McGachy, "We had no choice due to our Great Deadline. We wrote on the road during the Death to All tour, but that was difficult—there weren't very many days off. We'd play, then board the tour bus, set up the little recorders to capture riffs and ideas. It was hard to do both the live mindset and the songwriting mindset back-to-back in the same day. When we were on tour last fall, we had five days off, so while all the other bands were resting in the hotel, we dragged in our recorders and got writing."

No rest for the wicked, indeed. "After that tour concluded," McGachy continues, "Flo (Mounier,

drummer) and Chris went into the studio to finalize the song structures. Flo laid down the drums and completed a song every day. Then I went into the studio and did the vocals. I lived at Chris' house. I brought my children along, and we all hung out. The kids would play during the day; I would track in the morning and hang out with the family afterwards. Everything went very smoothly; vocals done in four days! Then Olivier (Pinard, bassist) went in and tracked his bass extremely quickly. And Chris laid down his solos and finalized the mix."

McGachy is candid about the ups and downs of maintaining Cryptopsy's professional pace. "I usually don't enjoy the studio," McGachy admits. "It's often tortuous. I don't even like walking into the room, honestly. It's the back-and-forth between me and Chris; he's great, obviously, and he's a genius, but he's very hard on us, in the nicest way. It isn't something I necessarily love to do, but I'm proud of the results. And I'm happy that everybody's resonating positively to the record. But we were so close to the creative process, that we had all the hesitations in the world! Halfway through, Chris said: 'Are people gonna like it? Is it as good as *Gomorrah*?' We're constantly self-doubting, which only pushes us further."

McGachy remarks on Cryptopsy's youthful energy and stamina. "Flo's in great shape—I can only aspire to that! He's like an Olympic Athlete. What he does is so physical... but there comes a time when you can no longer qualify for the Olympics. We push ourselves because we do foresee Cryptopsy's end. We want to release more great music. We'll keep feeding our fanbase, and we have so much more to give! To accomplish that, we have to discipline ourselves. I don't think we can slow down anymore. Our fans are so voracious. And these days, it's crazy—even though *Violence* has only been out since June, I already get the vibe that it's old news. And that's scary! I know that's not really true; it's my own knee-jerk reaction. On the digital

platforms, everything's old instantly. If it's out, it's old. And that's very different from when I joined the band, back during the Myspace era! A band used to drop a record and tour it for a bit, but nowadays you need to keep feeding the machine in order to stay noticed."

Cryptopsy are true Canadian legends, pioneering the early days of Northern Death Metal and carving their way into and through the 21st Century with strength and confidence. They've risen from the grimy underground through sheer determination and grim-focused dedication, and with the current lineup solidified since 2012 (their longest-running incarnation, and possibly the most consistent), Cryptopsy have earned their ever-growing international following, and long may they run.



"We're constantly trying to live up to what happened back in the 1990s," says McGachy. "We're always striving to honour the legacy, to keep up with it, to remain relevant, to still please old-school fans... it's a heavy, daunting weight that's always over us. It's important to keep that in mind. Without *Blasphemy Made Flesh* or *None So Vile*, we just wouldn't be here now. We're placed on a much higher expectation pedestal than if we'd started back in 2010. So, these deadlines we instil on ourselves all remain in place... while we plan for the next album!"

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The Inner Mounting Flame Helloween Drummer Dani Löble Expounds Upon New Album From Rejuvenated Power-Metal stalwarts

By Ferdy Belland

"The new album came together really fast," says Daniel 'Dani' Löble, the Swiss-German drummer of Germany's almighty power-metal pioneers Helloween since 2005.

"During the previous tour, the boys were already gathering ideas for songwriting. Andi (Andreas Deris, lead vocalist) is a monster— he's always writing lyrics, day by day— he never stops! So, when the time came to work on the album, we had 30 songs-in-progress to work with, which we sifted through; we refined them further and recorded about just over half of them."

And this time, the creative process was radically— and excitedly— different.

"I've been with the band for over 20 years now,"

says Löble, "and this was the first time that any particular songwriter in Helloween allowed other bandmates to contribute ideas across. When Andi came up with the album's opening track "Giants on the Run", Kai (Hansen, lead guitarist) came up with this mid-song breakdown, and I thought things were going to get a little interesting— but Andi welcomed the input and suggested Kai sing lead over the part; everyone was open-minded and well-behaved! It was a big change for the band. Which ignited a truly-felt fire in us all for the entire writing and recording process. I certainly squeezed my balls to get my drums done right! We were so in sync with each other. And we captured that on *Giants & Monsters*. It was a joy."

A joy no doubt, as Helloween tracked much of the album at Deris's personal recording facilities at Mi Sueno Studios on the breathtaking tourist's paradise of Tenerife, in the Canary Islands (where Deris has happily resided since 1996), with other work done in the stately German city of Nuremberg and in Carpathian wilds of Slovakia. And good on Helloween for having the luxury to Euro-trot: virtually the entire power metal genre owes its very existence (and most of its ongoing blueprint) to these Teutonic

titans, who have proudly waved their tattered and bloody musical banner high and wide since bursting out of Hamburg's metal underground in 1984 and nailing their world-famous names into the ironbound pages of metal history with their two-part double-album classic *Keeper of the Seven Keys*. And they've been slaying supernatural creatures and necromantic fiends (and dull-ass boring music) through cutting-edge power metal ever since, and show no signs of slowing down. "Certain reviewers have pointed out that *Giants & Monsters* sounds a bit different from our other albums," says Löble, "but that's only because everyone let their guards down and put their egos aside and let everyone come together— that great inner fire! We just focused on what we love doing. If we just followed the same formulas over and over again, it all gets lame and tedious."



Giants & Monsters is set for worldwide release on August 29th, and after that the Helloween engine blasts off like a Soyuz rocket. "We tour Europe in October and November," Löble explains, "then we get a week off, then we go to Asia for a few shows, then we rest for two months. We're aiming to play North America in Spring 2026, then off to Japan— that'll keep us busy until the summer festival season! We're working on hitting South America after that, and then we're into 2027! And you can always rely on us to play Canadian shows. I really like

playing Canada— as a citizen of Switzerland, our two countries have a lot in common, culturally and physically. The snow, the air, the mountains— I'm always reminded of home!"

Dani Löble himself has been a professionally active drummer since boyhood, and before

joining forces with Helloween he laid down the traps for Höllenhunden, Element 58, and Rawhead Rexx. *Giants & Monsters* will be his eleventh official release with Helloween, and he wouldn't be anywhere else. "If I had to pick a favorite song on the new album," muses Löble, "I'd have to say "Universe (Gravity

for Hearts)", since all the Helloween trademarks are found within it. I think it's the most diverse— and one of the fastest— songs on *Giants & Monsters*. It's a killer. It's a neckbreaker. It's a more refined show-off Helloween song."

It's startling to reflect that Helloween has been an ongoing concern for 40 years, and the notable anniversary means the world to Löble and his beloved bandmates.

"The band changes with the times, but we're still Helloween," Löble concludes. "We're more mature now. The egos are gone. The dragon's finally killed. Now, it's not about me, me, me— it's about us. It's not seven rebels anymore. It's seven mature men enjoying each other's company and each other's talents. It feels like the youthful spark that kicked it all off has come back. And we can focus on what we really love doing— making Helloween music and going on tour. It's a wonderful place to be."

helloween.org

Photos by Mathias Bothor



Metal Meltdown Dave Lombardo Part 1

**Calgary Horror Con Panel
moderated by Trevor Lawrence Reid**

DL: Welcome everyone. I'm Dave Lombardo. I really don't know where to start. Usually I'll start with a drum solo. So any questions you guys may have, don't be shy, your mother wasn't. That's an Eric Peterson from Testament joke.

AU: How much do you practice drums?

Dave Lombardo: Not enough. When I first started I used to come home from school and lock myself in my room, crank up the music, two speakers facing my drum set and just play along. Then I started getting into bands and started forming bands. Then when I got into Slayer, things were like we're practicing Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and we got a show Friday. I didn't have time to practice by myself. From that point forward it was just practicing with the band. The development was creating music and being creative with your imagination and what you wanted to do. What you heard from bands like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest we took it to another level. There was a lot of creativity involved, we weren't just copying what other musicians were doing. We were trying to develop our own style. It's funny because now what happens is we'll write an album for example, if you guys are familiar with Dead Cross. Michael Crain and I will sit in a rehearsal room not a studio. Studio sounds really fancy. This is like a shack. We're in there, we get creative, we write the parts and then we go into the studio to record everything. Performing those songs doesn't happen until the album's done and we go on tour. Then when we go on tour we've got to learn this music. So that's when I go home and I'll sit at my little electronic drum set with the headphones on and I start. Okay what is this part? And this part? Get all the sections down. All the changes and all the transitions. From that point then we play live. That's the magic part. I think live is where you really develop yourself as an artist and a musician. Rehearsing at home yeah you get your chops down. But live is where the songs start blossoming.

AU: Who were your influences when starting?

DL: Remember, I started very young. I got in my first band when I was probably 15-16. I was playing in the school yard. Slayer played at my high school, right before I graduated. You'll see very young pictures of us Tom (Araya) with his little rainbow shorts, Hanneman I think he had red spandex pants. Very early on I was listening to music on my own. I remember listening to Creedence Clearwater Revival, Bachman-Turner Overdrive, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Molly Hatchet and The Doors. There was a record store down the street and I used to be able to buy 45s for 50 cents. Two songs for 50 cents, we really got a deal back then. Then I got into AC DC, Judas Priest, Deep Purple. Iron Maiden was another big for me. Clive Burr was a big influence. Philthy (Phil

Taylor) the drummer for Motörhead was a big influence. Then Hanneman brings a bunch of records to our rehearsal room, they were a bunch of punk records and he had shaved his head. He had long blonde hair before. He said, "Forget it! I'm punk, dude!" "What happened to your hair?" "Fuck you I'm punk." Then I got into Dead Kennedys, Circle Jerks, 45 Grave, and Christian Death. But in between all that, I was raised in a Cuban household, I came to the U.S. when I was two. My mom and dad listened to Latin jazz, so that music was in my mind. Also West African drum rhythms, a lot of Afro Cuban drum rhythms, because it was very connected with Cuban culture.



AU: Years ago, I interviewed Gene Hoglan and he told me a story about how he was hanging out with Slayer one time when they were practicing and he literally had to physically hold the drum kit down to get the recording just right. Can you talk about that raw experience of those early days and get this on tape and get the record straight.

DL: That was the very first album Show No Mercy and Gene was basically like a tech for the band. It's true that he had to hold my bass drum. I didn't have a drum carpet... it was rough. Double bass was very new to me at that time. I believe I was recording either Captor of Sin or the song Haunting the Chapel. One of those two songs. I remember him telling me, "Dude, just focus on your left foot". Somehow that evolved into, "I taught Dave Lombardo how to play drums." Haha. The truth is, to set the record straight, I taught myself. I developed my style playing in Slayer as a unit, as a band. We grew together.

AU: Your drumming has gotten so progressively better for every Slayer album and then for everything else you've done.

With age, how do you challenge yourself as a drummer? Do you look back at your legacy and feel pressure to keep upping the ante?

DL: No, leave the classic records there, I've done that. So I really don't need to put any pressure on myself. That is common for artists that have written a masterpiece. How are we going to follow this up? It doesn't matter. You've already done it. Just move on and keep creating. I do have a love and a passion for hardcore music so I'm not going to stop playing that style of music until somebody pulls the plug on me.

AU: Have a Slayer story from the road to share?

DL: In Slayer there were so many. Jeff finding me in a toilet stall in Toronto at Larry's Hideaway because I had too much to drink. Then I woke up the next day on the floor with a little pillow of pancakes and with pancakes in my pocket.

To Be Continued Next Issue.

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Sawborg Destructo

By Erik “Gor Gor Food” Lindholm

Loyal soldier in the Master’s Army. This Scumdog was built on Scumdogia by another Destructo. After several Destructos failed their mission to find the Scumdogs known as GWAR. SawBorg was sent to Earth to complete that mission and bring GWAR back to the Master.

Absolute Underground: Good day, sir. How are you? And is there anything in your cup?

Sawborg Destructo: Well, listen, first of all, my name’s Sawborg Destructo, and I’m the enemy of GWAR. I tracked down GWAR all over this planet, all times and space, and now it’s just infuriating because they seem to be killing you people en masse! But anyway, Yes, that’s me. And what’s in my cup? I think it’s iced green tea with lemonade.

AU: We have understood that some people don’t know what GWAR is and haven’t heard of the band and the project. Can you broadly explain what it is, and maybe why you’re trying to stop it?

SD: Well, I mean, primarily, I’m not trying to stop anything other than the space aliens known as GWAR who were banished here millions of years ago, and are responsible for the creation of your pathetic human race anyways! Because they wouldn’t have sex with the Scumdogian women. They would have sex with the eggs that made you guys, and then you guys ran amok on this planet and screwed it all up. And now we’re here to just thin out the herd. That’s what, that’s what the primary goal is right now.

But I’m here to kick their ass off this planet, because they’re supposed to go back to work in the outer space and serve The Master in his ginormous galactic army. That’s what they’re supposed to be doing, not being rock n’ roll assholes on this planet.

AU: Isn’t it strange that that throughout the universe rock n’ roll people are sometimes assholes. Why is that?

SD: You get into the doing too many drugs, eating too many people. Wait, no, I mean, drugs, rock n’ roll, sex, all that good stuff. There’s just too much decadence in it! And that’s where they just run amok! They’re like little spoiled children that don’t want to leave because they’re having too much fun here.

AU: We understand there’s a new audio recording from GWAR talking about the return of a wonderful pet, the dinosaur Gor Gor. Can you help us understand, where has Gor Gor been lately, and how is he doing now?

SD: Well, apparently, if I’m getting this correct, because this has been transmitted straight to the data chip in my brain... was that the original Gor Gor had passed away several times. At one point, Techno put a V8 engine and turned him into a cyborg version of himself called Gore Borg. And then they killed that one, and that turned into a zombie dinosaur that was running amok for, I don’t know, decades. Now, this particular dinosaur is from another dimension, so it’s an inter-dimensional version of Gor Gor. So, it’s a brand new Gor Gor, one we can ruin in all kinds of

fun ways.

AU: We understand that some of the Gor Gor lore has been captured in a book as well with this release, so you could learn more about the dinosaur situation.

SD: That’s right, *The Return of Gor Gor* is an EP–well, let me rephrase that– it’s a multimedia release and it’s got a comic book attached to it. It explains some of the other things that have been happening with Gor Gor, and also for three new songs and three remastered live songs from the last tour.

AU: Awesome! A multi-dimensional multimedia package. Something we are curious about, looking on the GWAR electronic site, was a mention of the GWAR coin and currency. So can you tell us what sort of purchases should you make with a GWAR coin? Or how does the coin work?

SD: Mostly giant dildos is what you buy with GWAR coin on the *gwar.net* site. Yes, the perk for all the true bohabs out there, when they go to buy all their goodies, they get some GWAR coin that they can stack up and get some ultimate, cool stuff that no one else gets! So, I guess that’s a perk, right?

AU: That sounds like a great perk. On the topic of “the electronic age”. We have this electronic currency; is there a way you think people should find themselves in the electronic age? We’re all kind of watching the news, and all the phones. How do you stay true to yourself or find yourself in a spiritual way?

SD: Yes, you people have already given your souls over to the AI. They’ve already talked about that in the fictional movie *The Terminator*, like “that’s one that’s not gonna happen.” Oh yes, it is! I see you people walking around with your phone stuck to your freaking face. It’s already won. The machines have already won. They’ve already got you enslaved!

AU: Augh! How do we break out? What do we do?

SD: Touch grass bro!

AU: It’s all about the grass-touching. We understand that soon you’ll be travelling around North America with The Dwarves. Dwarves are a very small underground creature, so how would they get onto the tour bus? Did you have to go to their ancient lair to tempt them to travel with you? How do you get these small dwarves onto the tour bus?

SD: They don’t ride in the tour bus! What we’re doing is we have a catapult, and we stuff them in the catapult and launch them from gig to gig. They just fly! And if they hit a building or two on the way, I’m sure they can pick up a drummer somewhere!

AU: Drummers are durable. The Dwarves will get some airtime. On the topic of dwarves, and tool craftsmanship, we understand you have a very strong saw blade. We are curious, do you have a favourite type of saw or power tool?

SD: I mean, I like to be open to all kinds of attachments and accoutrements. I don’t stick in one lane. If it’s a reciprocating or a chop saw.

I don’t know. I love it all. I’ll put it on there. Play around with it, see what’s going on. I’m a crazy, wacky guy like that!

AU: Any saw is a good saw. Well, we have a dog. She’s an Irish Wheaten terrier, not quite dinosaur-sized. Do you have a dog, or any other pets? Is Gor Gor the only animal familiar in your world right now?

SD: He’s our big pet dinosaur. You know, you guys have man’s best friend is dog and Scum Dogs have dinosaurs. They want to eat you and you have to walk that tightrope between getting them enough stuff to eat, where they’re content with you hanging around them, or, you know, you end up as their meal. So, it’s definitely a “love, love, and sudden hate” kind of relationship.

AU: It sounds like a delicious relationship, and would hope Gor Gor gets lots to eat while out on tour. Do you think some audience members should be worried with Gor Gor coming back hungry for the tour?

SD: Most definitely, any of the quote, unquote “survivors” that GWAR doesn’t get to. He’s definitely lapping them up, you know, because, especially when they’re missing a leg or an arm or something, and they’re crying and complaining, he’s just gonna come up and eat.

AU: We’re watching the news lately, maybe more than we should, given all this electronic stuff you mentioned. Can’t spell GWAR without “war”, and we just seen the USA bomb Iran with some gigantic triangle planes. How do you think this will go? It seems like some possible material. Also, just a new live song on the album called “America Must Be Destroyed”. Timely news reporting from GWAR. Any thoughts on what’s going on right now with all this?

SD: That’s an older song. It’s just the re-release of it. It’s an order! And it’s actually, yes, it’s always very timely, because, again, you people love shooting bombs at each other, and it’s to our amusement, because you’re doing some of the work for us! It is kind of a little bit of a cheat, because we want to kill you ourselves! And you’re around killing each other. You should probably slow down on that till we get there. We’ll get

there. Be patient. Be patient.

AU: This is going to be the solution to world conflict, GWAR, because they’re going to bring the heat.

SD: You guys don’t need to kill each other. We’ll do it for you!

AU: Is there a part of this tour, the upcoming travels, that you’re excited about? Is there a place on this strange earth that you’re excited to visit, like a geographic thing or something?

SD: Detroit! It’s on fire, and people are shooting guns in every direction. It’s an amazing, apocalyptic, Third World, crazy time down there. No, I’m just kidding. I’m looking forward to going to Canada, where you guys are at, for a bunch of days. You know, looting, pillaging, destroying.

AU: Detroit’s got a Robocop statue down there, so they’ve got a lot of problems to deal with.

SD: You’re picking up what I was laying down.

AU: Is there something that you wish human beings would be more aware of?

SD: Hmmmm I don’t know. That’s a good question. Let’s see, more than just themselves or the entire universe that surrounds them?

AU: We have a saying in Canada that Toronto is the “Center of the Universe”, because that’s how they behave. Toronto is the central problem for us.

SD: As an alien from another planet, I will let you know that this is the most insignificant mud ball in the entire universe. You guys are not special.

AU: Well, I feel special. We look forward to Vancouver show and potentially getting eaten by a dinosaur! And I wish to ask you; do you have last words to the heathen warriors across this forest-fired wasteland that is Canada?

SD: We’ll get ready, because GWAR is coming this fall on the Return of Gor Gor Tour, and we’re going to kick the crap out of Canada!

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gwar.net





Beefcake the Mighty

By Stan of Broken Neck Radio

When the universe needs crushing basslines and catastrophic bloodshed, only one intergalactic warlord answers the call— Beefcake the Mighty of GWAR. Their brutal new single “The Great Circus Train Disaster” and the monstrous Return of Gor Gor are dropping July 25th on Pit Records and 22 Comics. Beefcake is here to spill cosmic secrets and remind us why GWAR remains Earth’s most dangerous band.

Absolute Underground: How did you join GWAR? Drafted or dragged in by Oderus?

Beefcake: Oh yeah, I was drafted, enlisted, Shanghai’d— really, we were out drinking, it sounded like a good idea. So, I said, “Yeah, I’ll do it. Let’s go ravage the universe... maybe play some music.”

AU: What’s the hardest part of being the mightiest Beefcake— armour, the smell, or the intergalactic slaughter?

BC: It’s them tasty bass licks, brother. Nah, it’s all good fun— killing, maiming, raping, rocking, puking, drinking... not in that order. I’m big on gluttony.

AU: Which planet has the tastiest groupies?

BC: Earth’s pretty good. Other planets, the selection’s narrow. Earth, there’s a wide variety; lots of flavours, lots of spices.

AU: Do you ever get tired of constantly battling humans who don’t appreciate the genius that is GWAR?

BC: Constantly. That’s why we have to kill them. We kill the ones that don’t get it. The ones that

really get it and fall before us and lavish us with praise and gifts, we let them slip through the cracks sp they’ll come back next time and buy more stuff. You never get tired of murder and mayhem.

AU: GWAR shows are legendary for chaos. Has there ever been a show where things got too crazy even for the mighty beefcake?

BC: Oh man, there’s been there’s been such a vast array of insanity at GWAR shows. We’ve had fire batons thrown into ceiling spaces. We’ve had fans get their teeth knocked out because they got on stage and got too close to my knee, so I had to put the boot in. We’ve had security details quit before the show started, so we had to get the audience to calm down a little bit, not kill each other and let us do the killing and monitor their own broken barricades. It goes on and on and on and on and on. There’s very rarely a sane GWAR show.

AU: You’ve seen a lot of lineups. What keeps GWAR going strong?

BC: We can’t escape. What else can we do? We do this because someone’s got to do it. GWAR’s the dirty end of the spectrum and proud of it. And we just absolutely love doing this. It’s the coolest thing there is. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.

AU: How do you keep your bass chops sharp under all that armour?

BC: I’m just that good. People say there’s no such thing as natural talent... but come on. I play all the time. We tour three or four times a year, always working. I’ve been doing it a long time.

AU: “The Great Circus Train Disaster” is one hell of a title. What inspired that tale?

BC: It’s a true story. Gor Gor, our pet Tyrannosaurus Rex, his mother tried to fight a circus train that was actually chasing her and she lost her life, but she left behind this egg. Everyone’s after this egg. Well, the egg turns out to be baby Gor Gor, and Gor Gor is chaos incarnate. We try to raise him. The circus people try to get him back. The government people try to get him. The ring master tries to pimp him out and makes zero money off him, and in the end, he’s a giant T-Rex. You can’t tame this beast. So, “The Great Circus Train Disaster” is the first chapter of the retelling of the Gor Gor story. It’s a trilogy.

AU: Musically, how does this single push GWAR’s sound?

BC: We just push it around in the abyss. There’s no walls in the abyss, there’s no direction. We came to the table with empty heads and left with three great songs.

AU: What’s your favourite part about performing “The Great Circus Train Disaster” live— or what do you expect it to be?

BC: I’m sure I’m sure the murder of thousands of Gwar fans before me every night will probably be up there on the list, but we haven’t we haven’t performed that one live yet, so it’s yet to be seen.

AU: The Return of Gor Gor drops July 25th. What can fans expect?

BC: At the end of the day, we’re just a hardworking rock band and we liks writing cool stuff— and most of the time, it works. The ideas come naturally. When you’re dressed like this and do the things we do, that stuff just writes itself. When you live in this particular country right now, a lot of it just writes itself.

AU: GWAR’s always had insane visuals. How does the comic push that legacy even further?

BC: It makes us have to strive to be more comical. A lot of times comic books are written and then and you go, how are we going to do that now? And then we just figure out a way to do it or to pretend to do it or to fool everybody into thinking that we’re doing on stage what we drew in the comics. There’s a lot of mind control involved. But it’s life imitating art, imitating life, imitating

fantasy, imitating Monty Python, imitating Conan the Barbarian, imitating 1980s MTV, imitating, you know, something else. I don’t know, with some KISS and Alice Cooper thrown in there.

AU: What was it like resurrecting Gor Gor?

BC: There’s a lot of lot of hoodoo hoodoo weirdo stuff going on that I don’t like messing around with. There were Ouija boards. There was some weirdo girl saying a bunch of babbling nonsense. Sounds like witchcraft to me, but I don’t dabble in those things, I’m a man of the sword and the axe. If I don’t understand something, I just destroy it. But there was some metaphysical mumbo jumbo involved and somehow Gor Gor is resurrected.

AU: After you destroy the universe, what’s next for Beefcake? Is it retirement on a beach planet?

BC:I would think not. I would think it’ just be on to the next universe. What else am I going to do at my age? I spent a lot of time doing this. I don’t know what else I would do with myself but putter around the house, play some golf. I just don’t think I could live that way. Let me die on the battlefield or on stage or after the show backstage or in bed when I’m like 104, you know?

AU: Well folks, The Return of Gor Gor drops July 25th. It’s got three brand new GWAR tracks, plus live versions. Add it to your Spotify, spin it on repeat. Beefcake the Mighty, thank you.

BC: Thanks for having me. Break all the necks because that’s apparently what your show is all about– breaking necks, right?

AU: That’s right.

BC: We’re going on tour in the fall and we’ll kill all the survivors, so don’t you guys worry about a thing. We’ll be back for you soon.

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COLD SLITHER

Hail Cobra!

Interview with Gus Rios codename: Zartan

by Dan "Dreadnok" Brown

There are action figures of all 4 founding members of Cold Slither—the Dreadnoks: Zartan, Ripper, Buzzer, and Torch—who rocketed to the top of the charts with their eponymous hit. From Dreadnok to hard rock, every member of this Band of Vipers is music personified. These aren't just some average Joes.



AU: Who are you and what are you best known for? What's the origin story of Cold Slither?

My name is **Gus Rios** and most people would know me from bands like Gruesome, Left to Die, and Malevolent Creation. CS was originally Gerardo Martinez of RPM's idea. He's been wanting to do this for the last 10 years. He and I are both massive GI Joe fans — he's a record label guy and I'm a musician. We just needed Hasbro to come on board with the idea. With the success of the new Classified Series line of action figures, the time was finally right.

AU: Who's in the band?

Matt Harvey (Exhumed, Gruesome, Left to Die), **Ross Sewage** (Exhumed, Impaled, Ghoul), and **Andy Selway** (KMFDM). I chose them because:

- 1: They're all accomplished touring pro musicians
- 2: They're my friends.

- 3: Matt and Ross are both GI Joe and comic book nerds like me.
- 4: Andy literally looks and talks like Buzzer!

AU: How would you describe the band's sound?

Traditional heavy metal with modern metal/hard rock influences.

AU: Can you explain what happens in the episode of G.I. Joe from December 5, 1985 where Zartan and the Dreadnoks start a band?



Cobra is running out of money, so they hire the Dreadnoks to start a heavy metal band called Cold Slither. They add subliminal messages in the song to take over the minds of the masses, but GI Joe finds a way to beat them... ear plugs! Haha!

AU: My two favorite things — G.I. Joe and KMFDM — together. What are your first memories of G.I. Joe or Cobra?

When I was a kid, times were tough, but I found escape and solace with cartoons like GI Joe and Transformers. I loved the cartoons and toys so much. As an adult, I recognize the impact GI Joe had on me, and my reverence and gratitude have only gotten deeper.



AU: How was the live show down at San Diego Comic-Con this year? What did people miss?

It was an amazing sold-out celebration of GI Joe. Cold Slither live in person for the first time, and we had special guest Britta Phillips, the voice of Jem and the Holograms, come up and play their theme song together.



AU: What other Cold Slither events happened down at Comic-Con?

We did an almost two-hour signing session at the RPM booth and took pictures with not only fans but with the Hasbro team as well. Amazing experience!

AU: Tell us about the Cold Slither toys that were released by Hasbro and Super7?

Hasbro released a boxed set in the Classified Series, and Super7 had color variants of their 3.75" scale figure.

AU: Considering all the band members have been in well-known bands, what made them want to form a cartoon band 40 years on?

Like I said, we're all friends. For Matt and Ross, being big Joe fans, it was an honor — but I think after Andy saw how the fans reacted to this band and GI Joe in general, he quickly understood and developed his own appreciation and gratitude for being a part of this.

AU: How did you decide who would be who? Obviously Andy Selway is a perfect Buzzer, because of his trademark sleeveless denim vest.

Exactly! Andy lives near me, is a good friend, and we play locally together all the time in cover bands for extra money. Matt and I play together in Gruesome and Left to Die, so that was an easy choice. Ross plays with Matt in Exhumed and is an equally massive Joe fan as I am.

AU: Tell us all about the Cold Slither album released on RPM (Reigning Phoenix Music).

I wanted to write a GOOD album — not just a GI Joe album, if that makes sense. I wanted it to stand on its own two feet regardless of

the subject matter. I felt that if it was too gimmicky, it would be forgotten immediately after release. So I tried to write good songs with adult-like lyrics about all things Cobra and Dreadnoks.

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

Personally, I really like *Thunder Machine*, *Snakes on the Bayou*, and *The Ballad of Buzzer* — but obviously, I feel and hope that every song is strong and memorable.

AU: If you could only have one action figure and one vehicle, what would they be?

Action figure: Storm Shadow

Vehicle: 1986 Cobra Night Raven

Thankfully, I do have them both in my collection!

AU: Is Cold Slither just a one-off? I certainly hope not, but it's not up to me. I hear talks of a show in October, though. I hope this turns into a full-on touring band!

AU: Anything else you want to mention?



I mostly want the fans to know that this was NOT a simple marketing scheme by Hasbro. This was very carefully and lovingly put together by lifelong GI Joe fans FOR GI Joe fans and fans of metal. Cold Slither is LEGIT!

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NOMEANSNO & MUDHONEY

PART THREE

From Obscurity to On Bookshelves Everywhere

This book signing and author panel featured the bands NoMeansNo and Mudhoney. Showcasing the release of the books *NoMeansNo: From Obscurity to Oblivion* by Victoria's cause célèbre, Jason Lamb alongside the co-authors of *Mud Ride: A Messy Trip Through the Grunge Explosion*. This event was moderated by Lamb who spoke with Steve Turner (guitarist and founding member of Mudhoney), Adem Tepedelen (co-author of *Mud Ride*) and John Wright of NoMeansNo.

Jason Lamb: Any other questions?

Audience Member: Steve, you are an insane guitar inspiration for me. I went down to LA to see you and watching you rip a solo while breaking your strings was absolutely fucking phenomenal. I just wanted to know if you had any new projects coming up or if you and Mudhoney are working on anything new?

Steve Turner: Well, thanks. You know, I'm not supposed to be breaking strings, I should point that out. Sometimes, things go wrong and you improvise from there. Mudhoney? We put out a new record last spring and we toured Australia and the States. In August, we're going to go to Europe for a little over a month. We still haven't quite figured out how to proceed with things like recording because our bass player Guy Maddison



lives in Melbourne, Australia now. So, that puts a bit of a wrinkle on some things. But we figured it out for the last record and we'll figure it out again.

JL: We'd like to get you to Victoria at some point.

ST: That would be great. I think we've only played here twice.

JL: Then you strangely played Nanaimo, but not Victoria. What was that all about?

ST: Nanaimo was the best. They loved our show so much. It was quite a curious place. It was great. It was so fun. It was such a weird group of people that were there when we showed up because it was open mic night. I think maybe Nanaimo gets some odd people out. It was one of the most fun nights ever, because it just seemed ridiculous.

JL: Sounds about right. What about solo stuff Steve? Are you still doing that stuff? I know you did Steve Turner And His Bad Ideas.

ST: For some of these book readings, I've been doing some acoustic songs and stuff before doing readings and whatnot. That's kind of got me back into it a little bit. I'm doing another one of those in Boise for Treefort, The Storyfort part of that festival there. So, I still do that a little bit but it's kind of weird. I did three records in like three years and then the music just left. I feel like that was all the songs I had in me for actual lyrics. Anytime I write lyrics now,

I hate them. It's like, "I'm not going to make a song out of that. That's terrible."

Audience Member: Beyond all the obvious accolades for all you have done, how is it that you appear to still have your hearing?

John Wright: Actually, it's funny that you should mention that. I went and spent another \$320 on my musicians plugs. It's like, well I can't be out there destroying my hearing and after nine shows I've lost them. So I spent another \$310 to replace them. Early on, it might have been I think Ken Kempster, who might be hiding here somewhere possibly, it was him that directed me towards the

molded musicians plugs. But yes, a lot of drum pounding a lot of noise. NoMeansNo was a four-piece for a while, a three-piece mostly. Three loud noisemakers and now Dead Bob is five all very loud noisemakers. So it's a pertinent question. I still can hear.

ST: I would point out that I've been wearing earplugs since 1989. So I've got pretty good hearing still, but two members of Mudhoney have hearing aids.

Audience Memeber We know now that NoMeansNo is your favourite band. Do you have favourite song?

JL: Oh god, it depends on my mood. NoMeansNo is a hard band to have a favourite song of. Probably "The World Wasn't Built In A Day" off the *Dance of the Headless Bourgeoisie* record or "Madness and Death". I like that one too. Actually, you know what I really like, is the song "Revenge" on *Sex Mad*. That might have to do with my separation. But anyway.

Audience Member: Should we be expecting a Nardwuar interview tomorrow?

JL: There are rumors. Yes, I do believe Nardwuar will be there tomorrow. I think he's going to do the whole Nardwuar thing on these two guys too. One more [question], who we got? Oh the kid, oh yes. Okay, come on up here.

Audience Member: I was wondering about the pub you had. Did you ever play shows as NoMeansNo there?

JW: No, I never played shows there as NoMeansNo. Our last show that NoMeansNo played officially was here in Victoria 2014. I think I bought the pub in 2017. It was the Red Lion in Powell River and had to close it because we wanted to renovate it and change the name. I did play there with Colin MacRae in a band called God's Ball's and it was an awesome show.

JL: NoMeansNo did play up the road from there. Closer to where they lived back in the day, close to the end of their career, at an outdoor gazebo.

JW: Yes, in Lund there is the gazebo which is a wonderful place to play and a wonderful place to see a band as well. They still do music up there. They have raves and stuff and other stuff happens. But yes, we did play up there. The most memorable show— we played there a couple of times— was with an insane band from Italy called Zu. Which were, at first listen, just really noise. Until you saw them more than once and realized it was the exact same noise, played exactly the same way every single time. Then you realize "Oh my God, these are incredible musicians." They were here because they were invited by the Vancouver Jazz Festival. This was in about 2004 and they said yes but we want NoMeansNo to play with us. So we played at the Commodore Ballroom for the Jazz Fest. There's a very famous trumpet player named Miles Davis who did a song called "Bitches Brew". My brother was a very big

Miles Davis fan in the '70s and probably still is. He took it upon himself to arrange this jazz piece, but he wrote his own words for it because it was just music. It was entirely his project and it ended up on an album called NoMeansNo *One*. The one time that we thought, "Okay, we've got to perform this," was at the Jazz Festival. One of the players making all the noise in Zu was a baritone sax player. So we got him to come up and do the solo and play with us. It was a wonderful show and a wonderful rendition.

JL: There's a photo of that moment in new the new book called *NoMeansNo: From Obscurity to Oblivion*. Available now. Steve, do you have any memories of like the weirdest place that Mudhoney ever played? Is there one that sticks out?

ST: Well, we started touring in 1988 and things weren't quite as established as they got to be very quickly. One of the funniest places was Columbus, Ohio. We played sort of in the basketball court inside at the university there. But we were in this little tiny cinder block room where they stored the bleachers. It was literally the size of a closet.

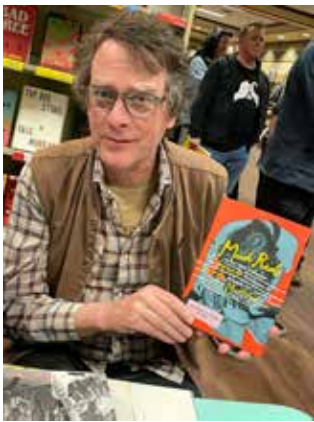
Cinder block, it was atrocious sounding, and all 20 people in there are probably deaf now.

JL: It's really like a testament to gumption and passion that you would even keep going after that.

ST: There are always interesting places. In Bologna, Italy we played a punk rock squat in 1989. It was in the basement of some 300-year-old house, or some kind of building.

It was a dirt floor and they were feeding us there too, and it's like, these people lived in the dirt basement. They were covered in dirt, everybody down there. But they were Italian women, so they are beautiful. So we just called them the city of the dirty women. They're were literally covered in dirt and cooking us food and hanging out at the show and stuff but it was like everything was dirt.

JL: Amazing. Thank you everyone. Thank you for coming



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Transcription assists to Kevin Close and Stevinator

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SIKPHUXZ - PUNK IS SHIT!

Interview by Jason Flower

Lesley Watson – lead vocals

Murray Acton – guitar / lead & backing vocals

Trevor Hagen – bass & backing vocals

Fred Weyerman – drums & backing vocals

Murray: Airborne was my first band. We formed in 1976 and played mostly covers of '70s songs by Rush, UFO, and the like. Brian Whitehead (later Jesus Bonehead) was the singer; we tried to get him to play drums, but there was this other guy Eddie who was better than him. We played one show in December 1977 at the Dominion Hall on Esquimalt Rd. After about our fifth song or so, a fight broke out and the gig got shut down.

On Christmas Day that year, I fell off an approximately 70-ft cliff in the town of Esquimalt,

which left me pretty fucked up for about a year. We reformed with a couple of new members and played mostly original songs that had a jazz fusion thing going on. Airborne just faded on its own. I had a few jams at my parents' place with Brian on drums and Trevor Hagen on bass, and the SIKPHUXZ formed out of that. Lesley Watson seemed to want to sing in a punk band, but Bonehead didn't want to play drums, so we were looking for members and just fucking around. I managed to talk Ben Henry into playing drums for us. He was a jazz drummer who had quite a bit of experience playing around town so we worked on a set list and managed to swing our first legit gig at the OAP Hall backing up a rock cover band.

Trevor: The early shows, well, let's just say we weren't really taken very well. I mean, it was new to Victoria. Nobody really knew anything about punk rock or new wave. So, the first couple of shows we got were with cover bands, and that didn't really go over that well, but we could play first and then get the fuck out of there pretty quick afterwards.

Murray: Our first gig was an epic disaster with Ben Henry on drums. It was a packed rocker show and punk was not popular then, so we talked a friend into starting our set by playing Van Halen's "Eruption". Halfway through, Trevor's brother shot him with a blank gun and dragged him off the stage to the horror of the audience and we started playing punk rock. The place immediately erupted in a total riot and we were dragged off the stage. We played a couple of other shows with early Victoria bands like Automatic Shock and the Keys. Things were starting to turn into a scene.

Fred: My second employee knew Murray and said that he needed a drummer, hence the introduction. At the time, John Mears had been

playing second guitar with Murray and Trevor and Ben Henry was trying to drum but he was "too good" technically. Gigs were probably the most fun I had playing in any band. Punk audiences (especially early ones) were very enthusiastic, which motivates a band.

Murray: Lesley was the front person/singer and sang at least three-quarters of the songs. I couldn't sing for shit and was very self-conscious about it. My sense of humour was very coarse and Lesley wasn't happy with the content of the songs I was writing. She wrote a couple of songs that I thought were weak and I kept writing harsher stuff that she refused to sing.

Fred: There seemed to be too many alphas in the band, especially as time progressed.

Murray: It was nearly our last show when we played at the Smilin' Buddha in Vancouver with the Bludgeoned Pigs. It was intimidating but pretty fun; we met a lot of new friends there and were given a case of dayglo-brand spraypaint as payment for the show.

Fred: I bought a mixer and a couple of 4-tracks with the intention of recording an EP, which someone was going to pay to get pressed. I did my bit, that's as far as it got.

Trevor: Fred basically had a 4-track studio set up at his place, so it was easy enough to record there. We had planned on recording a little better at some other place and putting out something. But let's just say the shelf life of that band wasn't really long enough to do that.

Murray: The band broke up soon after that and I had some new songs that were heavier than the stuff the SIKPHUXZ were playing and that is when the Dayglo Abortions were born.



THE SIKPHUXZ BIRTH DAYGLO ABORTIONS

Fred: The SIKPHUXZ seemed to end (I think I'll get the order right) when Lesley fired Murray who in turn fired Lesley. Trevor quit, leaving me the sole remaining member. I think (not modestly here) that the SIKPHUXZ could have continued had we got more gigs steadily, although Lesley's direction seemed less hardcore than Murray and Trevor's.

Trevor: Comparing SIKPHUXZ songs to the Dayglo Abortions songs, I think the styles were totally different.

Murray: In retrospect, having a collection of SIKPHUXZ songs with Trevor on bass and me playing guitar and singing lead vocals, represents the earliest steps that were carried forward for decades by the Dayglo Abortions.

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Photo by Judy Attrill

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WITCHKILLER

Return of the Saxons

Interview by Jason Flower

AU: Tell us about your earliest bands.

Kurt: Gord Kirchin (later of Piledriver) and I were close friends and that kind of got us to playing together. Eventually, we had a line-up called Voyage that had me on guitar, Gord on guitar and vocals, Rick Stirling on drums, Wayne Bartlett on bass and two keyboard players who also sang; Ron Oslund and Mike Smith, rehearsing in the downstairs lunchroom at Confederation High School in Ottawa. This morphed into a different band called Chaser that was Gord on guitar and vocals, Marshall Robinson on bass and vocals, me, and Rick Stirling as the drummer.

AU: When did Witchkiller first form?

Kurt: The Witchkiller story starts in 1981-ish when my friend, Bob Moffatt, told me this drummer and bass player were looking for a guitar player. I auditioned for Steve Batky (drums) and John Meharey (bass) and joined them as a trio. We rehearsed in a warehouse way out by the Ottawa airport.

Once we connected, we were sure we had something worth pursuing and as time went on, we found a singer, Joey Turrene, and another guitar player, Bruce Goodman. Our mutual love of creating music and a desire to be a part of the music scene in our own way, with our own music, in whatever shape that took, was our motivation. The band became the first incarnation of Witchkiller. Eventually we realized we were going to need a different frontman to sing the songs we were now writing. Bruce was such a great guitar player, but he moved on to join another band.

AU: Tell us about Acieum.

Kurt: We saw Acieum in a club in the Ottawa/Hull area. They were a really great band, and their singer Doug was exactly the kind of singer we wanted to have. We approached him to throw in with us and he did.

AU: Give us an overview of the rock and metal landscape in Ottawa during the Witchkiller era.

Kurt: Ottawa always had a great live music scene and right across the river bridge is a town called Hull, a 10-minute drive at most. Between those two places there were a LOT of great places for hard rock/metal bands to play. Ottawa closed down at 1:00 am, Hull stayed open until 2:00 or 3:00 am.

Although we were definitely in there with Exciter, albeit at a lower level, other bands like Baron, Havoc, and Druids kept playing a mixture of covers and original metal/hard rock material. Galleon was a top-draw band although they were a lot of covers and more hard rock, but still had an influence. As well, there was a really great progressive rock band called Avalon.



AU: Tell us about your demos and how they led to the interest of Metal Blade.

Kurt: I believe that all of the demos were done with Ross Freeman at his home studio in the basement of his parents' home. A dude named Metal Mike Arwine heard one of our demo tapes and thought the songs were killer. Mike knew Brian Slagel, owner of Metal Blade Records (still the owner 40+ years on!) and got one of our demo tapes to him. Brian loved the demo and offered us a contract. Of course we went for it, not really believing our great fortune so soon in our career.

AU: Tell us about releasing your 12" EP and the critical acclaim both local and abroad.

Kurt: There is no real way to explain the thrill of holding an album in your hands that was music you were responsible for being a part of creating. By the time the album was actually released on March 1, 1984 Doug and Todd were both gone from the band and Steve and I had not yet had our severing, so that was a pretty amazing experience as we had written all the material. Although it has been a bit of a tough slog to get an accurate number of album sales, I believe it has sold at least between 40,000-60,000 units on CD and vinyl format. Even over 40 years later, the album is still selling in various formats around the world, so I'm feeling pretty proud of being a part that body of work.

AU: Tell us about Witchkiller splintering and your move to LA.

Kurt: The album was recorded in July 1983 at Phase One Studios in Toronto. Immediately after finishing the recording, Doug moved back to Toronto and joined a band called Reckless. We auditioned Mark Fretz, a vocalist we tracked



down, and man, could he sing! That didn't pan out, Todd went to Toronto to join Doug, leaving just Steve and I. At that point, it became clear to me that Steve and I had radically different ideas of where Witchkiller was going to go stylistically and that caused a huge fracture between Steve and myself. After I departed, Steve recruited John back, added Domenic and Kevin and went the way that they did which was in no way what I was envisioning Witchkiller to be.

On a recommendation from Brian Slagel to Chris Logue, I left to join Metal Blade labelmates Savage

Grace in Los Angeles. I got to play great gigs in Los Angeles including opening for Slayer at The Country Club. I will always remember driving in downtown Los Angeles as we pulled up to a red light the car beside us had the rock station KLOS on and the DJ announced the next song... "from a band called Witchkiller, title track of their

new album, *Day of the Saxons*." I can't tell you what an amazing thing it was to hear the track blasting out of a convertible in downtown Los Angeles with the dude headbanging along with the song! I then returned to Canada when I knew that Savage Grace was not the style of music I truly loved.

AU: You returned to the West Coast of Canada and formed Ace Koden.

Kurt: I moved to Victoria and quickly got connected with Tony Melizza on drums and Duane Chaos (Nickull, current Witchkiller bass player) who both really loved the catalogue of songs I had started prior to my departure from Witchkiller. We had Doug Simpson sing with us at rehearsal because he liked the songs as well, but wasn't interested in joining the band full-time. We also had the opportunity to have Chrissy Southern (later Chrissy Steele) for a short while until she moved to Vancouver to join Reform School replacing Tom Vermeulen who became Ace Koden's permanent singer. Eventually we relocated to Vancouver with Tom (Tommy Gunns!) and added a second guitar player, Greg Lowe, really a fantastic player, but we were unable to continue due to a bunch of circumstances. The band ended on a good note between everyone and I am still in sporadic contact with everyone else.

AU: Tell us about Warhag, as well as anything leading up to that group.

Kurt: In 1991, I ended up in Kelowna after leaving the Lower Mainland. I was fortunate to have some really talented folks come alongside in Warhag and bring it to life. Special shout-out to vocalist Dawn Hatchard for being the awesome bandmate one could ever have! Warhag did a bunch of shows, won a 'Metal Band of The Year' award in 2006 from Okanagan Music Award and, along with some other bands, played the awards show to a sold-out crowd of 750 people at the Vernon Arts Centre.

AU: Tell us about the new reformed version of Witchkiller.

Kurt: In 2022, I saw a post on Facebook from James Delbridge, a young singer guitarist from an Ottawa band called Lycanthro. He reminded me so much of myself when I was that age that I had to hit him up to congratulate him on the release of his album *Mark of the Wolf*. He recognized my name immediately

and things went forward from there. James is extremely familiar with the *Day of the Saxons* EP, as it was a formative part of the music he listened to when he was starting to play.

James and I embarked on a crusade to resurrect Witchkiller. It was vital to me to have players that were local so we could get together and play as a band in the same room. Although James is in Ottawa, we send music to him on a regular basis. He lays down a vocal track and sends it back and we work things out that way.

Duane was already part of forging the earlier post-EP material, written during my time in Witchkiller, and refined along with him, so it was such a natural choice to offer him the bass slot. Mike is an incredibly gifted and powerful drummer also steeped in the N.W.O.B.H.M. catalogue and, like all of us, this style of music is the music of his youth.

AU: Witchkiller can easily be defined as a Canadian first wave '80s heavy metal group. What can you say about the legacy of the group and being reactivated?

Kurt: I have always felt so incredibly fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time for the music that Witchkiller was part of creating in the early '80s,



definitely the sound of the N.W.O.B.H.M. brought to Canada. We were just kids making a noise that we loved making, did some of the heavy lifting in terms of getting out there to play and our sheer ignorance of the journey so brilliantly elucidated in Spinal Tap... how that works, I can't say but I'm delighted it did!

We just finished up a three-gig run— July 19 at the Cobalt in Vancouver, July 26 in Germany at Headbangers Open Air and finishing up here at home in Victoria sponsored by Supreme Echo along with Cavity. We got such amazingly positive feedback at all gigs. So, we feel that we are on the right path and have a launchpad to go to the next level of our journey with more shows and more never-yet-heard material that is in the cooker!

As to how it feels to be activated again, truly a dream come true that was never given up on throughout the challenges of doing so. Gord Kirchin was one of my closest friends all my life and a musical compatriot. He and I were working on a song together before he passed away. Knowing the details of my struggles to make the band happen, he had told me to 'never, ever fucking give up, EVER!'

Jason.... thank you so much again for your time and for all the work you do archiving music and releasing small batch runs and keeping things alive that others wouldn't take the time to. What a great pleasure to chat! Take good care!

PHOTO CREDITS:

"Day of the Saxons" and black & white photo with axe: Peter Wyslouzil, 1983.

New band photo: Susan Kerr.

FB: Witchkiller





Fly the Insect

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: What are you most infamous for?

Fly the Insect: Fast, hard, West Coast style skate rock.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who's all involved and what are you all about?

FTI: Starting back in the '90s as Superfly, we played tons of shows in Vancouver and on the Island with great bands such as DOA, SNFU, The Smalls, and The Wheatchiefs. Harpos, The Limit, and Wastelands being some of the venues. We love playing live, and the band members are Tom Garrow, Kent Kynaston, and Terry Orr.

AU: You were in hibernation for quite awhile, what made Fly the Insect decide to start making music again?

FTI: I got bored not playing music and got a hold of my old buddy and bandmate Kent K. One quick jam and a couple of beers later, we had a full set

list and took off looking for a bass player. It came together fast after that and we fell back into the groove and started playing again.

AU: How do you feel about the music scene in Victoria? How has it changed since you first started?

FTI: There are a lot less good venues then there used to be. People don't seem as interested in live music as they used to be. Jam spots are harder to find, but the scene is alive and well just smaller. In the old days Marcus Pollard used to book awesome shows at Harpos and get all the local bands involved. Now you have to build your own shows and rent a venue to get things happening.

AU: Describe your sound, if possible.

FTI: We love playing loud, fast, and slow as possible with lots of hooks and melodic old school punk style breakdowns.

AU: Who or what are some of the inspirations you draw on while writing your music?

FTI: Old punk and grunge, classic bands like The Adolescence, The Clash, Black Flag, The Circle

Jerks, Motorhead, and The Descendants.

AU: How do you approach writing music? Music or lyrics first?

FTI: Usually the music first, then the vocal ideas fall into place. Sometimes a catching saying or phrase will start the song writing process.

AU: Who is the best skateboarder in the band?

FTI: That's the big guy Terry Orr, he's a total shredder. Me and Kent are just classic grinders and carvers of the street and the bowls.

AU: Do you have any new music in the works? What can we expect to hear and when will it be released?

FTI: We are always writing new songs. Our set list is now 50/50 new and old songs. Again, fast and loud with lots of breakdowns. We are in the process of recording all of the new stuff, soon to be uploaded to our social platforms by late fall.

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

FTI: A lot of social commentary about the crazy times we live in, how we survived and still have fun trying to stay young.

AU: Any current songs in the making that you're stoked on?

FTI: Yes, for sure! We are stoked for two new songs called "People We Knew" and "Never Enough". The newest song that we haven't played live yet is called "We Are Broken" and is sure to be an awesome thrasher.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours?

FTI: We have lots of fun stuff coming up this summer. A couple of outdoor private shows in June and an upcoming show August 15 at The Terminal in Nanaimo. We are looking for shows for the fall to fill our roster. Watch our socials for upcoming gigs.

AU: This will be our 420 issue. What do you like to do while you're stoned? Favourite munchies?

FTI: We like to chill and listen to some good old

punk like NOFX, Poison Idea, and of course Bob Marley. Favourite munchies are definitely chips, chips, chips.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention or promote?

FTI: Yes, we have merch and are looking for shows. Reach out to us through our socials for T-shirts, stickers, and bookings.

AU: Famous last words?

FTI: It's Never Never Never Enough.

AU: Where can we find you online?

FTI: IG, Bandcamp, YouTube, Facebook, and we'd love to send a shoutout to Stu Dobel for the awesome artwork, posters and communications.

flytheinsect.bandcamp.com

[flytheinsect](https://flytheinsect.com)



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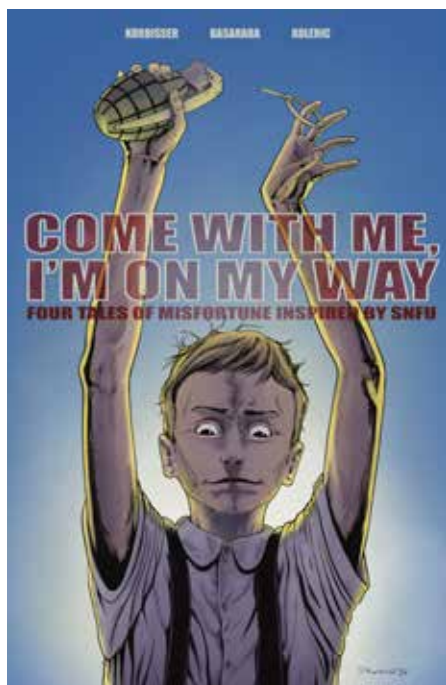
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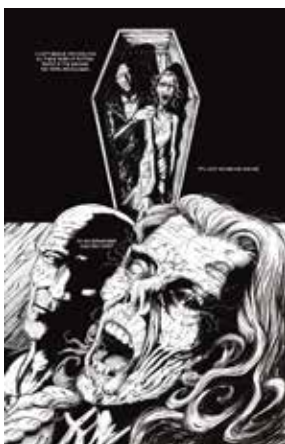
**COME WITH ME,
I'M ON MY WAY**

**Four Horrific Tales of Ghastly Misfortune
Inspired by Canadian Punk Legends, SNFU**

COME WITH ME, I'M ON MY WAY is a 28-page comic book that will consist of four horror short stories that are directly inspired by Canadian Punk icons, SNFU. Each story is based off a song from the band's 1984 debut album *...And No One Else Wanted to Play*. Every story will be seven pages long to give further nod to SNFU history as each of their albums had a seven word title. All artwork in this diabolical hellspawn of a comic is drawn by the unholy of unholiness, Dillon Korbisser (Metal Head Samurai). Stories by Kristian Basaraba (Dad Religion), Dillon Korbisser (Metal Head Samurai) and Adrieen Koleric (Trakovi, The Sitter) So grab our hand and come with us into a

world of torture,
pain and
excruciating
heartache!

SNFU was a pioneering Canadian punk rock band formed in 1981 in Edmonton, Alberta, by vocalist Ken Chinn (a.k.a. Mr. Chi Pig) and brothers Marc and Brent Belke. Known for their high-energy performances, sharp humor, and socially conscious lyrics, SNFU became one of Canada's most influential punk bands. Their 1985 debut album, *...And No One Else Wanted to Play*, is considered a classic in the punk scene, earning them international recognition. Throughout their career, they released numerous albums on labels like Epitaph Records, blending melodic hardcore with satirical and introspective themes. Despite lineup changes and personal struggles, SNFU remained a staple in the punk community, influencing countless bands. Following Chinn's passing in 2020, the band's legacy endures, cemented by their impact on punk music and culture. Their music continues to resonate with fans, capturing the raw energy and



spirit of underground punk.

A portion of all proceeds will be donated to the Mr. Chi Pig Memorial Scholarship (for Excellence within any Branch of Arts). Family and friends of Mr. Chi Pig (Ken S. Chinn) wish to preserve his legacy in the international music community while inspiring future artists and musicians to create and celebrate their uniqueness and individuality. Mr. Chi Pig was a legendary frontman, a talented artist, writer and proud alumnus of Victoria School of the Arts. Victoria students are encouraged to explore the history, impact and legacy of Mr. Chi Pig in the music, arts and LGBTQ2S2 communities of Edmonton, Vancouver, Canada and globally.

Get ready to experience *COME WITH ME, I'M ON*

MY WAY in a whole new way! The exclusive 7" vinyl record features Dad Religion and special guests delivering blistering covers of the four iconic SNFU tracks that inspired the comic's four horror stories. Who are the special guests you ask? Why none other than Marc Belke, Brent Belke and Jimmy Schmitz; the first time playing together in almost 40 years! ...and that's not all, we also have Jesse Zaraska from Misery Signals singing "Cannibal Cafe".

The comic and corresponding 7" will be released early August, 2025. People can find it through our Instagram. We are planning a comic/7" release show on August 23 in Edmonton.

IG: snfu.tales





DIY: The Raw, Rebellious, and Relentless Story of Punk Rock Hits the Big Screen

DIY: The Rise and Fall and Rise of Punk Rock is a deep dive into the legacy of punk rock — from its gritty beginnings in 1980s Southern California garages to the genre's ongoing influence on music, fashion, and culture today. What started as a small project documenting the Austrian punk rock label SBAM at its festivals in Europe quickly grew into something bigger. Filmmakers, along with SBAM's Stefan Beham and co-producers Joel Herrera

and Rolo Cantu, realized they weren't just telling the story of European punk — they were capturing a global movement, seen through the eyes of the people who lived it.

So, what's *DIY* all about? *DIY* explores the roots of punk rock and its defining "Do It Yourself" spirit, as told by the bands and individuals who helped shape the movement. It covers punk's underground rise, its rebellious ethos, and its eventual clash with — and infiltration of — the mainstream.

The film features legendary voices like Bad Religion, NOFX, and the Circle Jerks, alongside never-before-seen interviews with icons such as Fat Mike, Laura Jane Grace, Kevin Lyman, John Feldmann, Brett Gurewitz, Rick DeVoe (Blink-182's manager), Steve Caballero, Campino (Die Toten Hosen), Frank Turner, Moby, and actors like Wil Wheaton, Fred Armisen, John Ross Bowie, Wotan Wilke Möhring, and more. You'll also hear from members of Bowling For Soup, Goldfinger, Destroy Boys, Lagwagon, Mad Caddies, Pulley, and a whole lot more.

DIY doesn't just celebrate punk's highest highs — it also takes a hard look at the struggles the genre faced in the mainstream media and music industry. The rise of punk festivals, especially those run by SBAM, plays a

central role in the story, showing how the scene has evolved and stayed true to its roots.

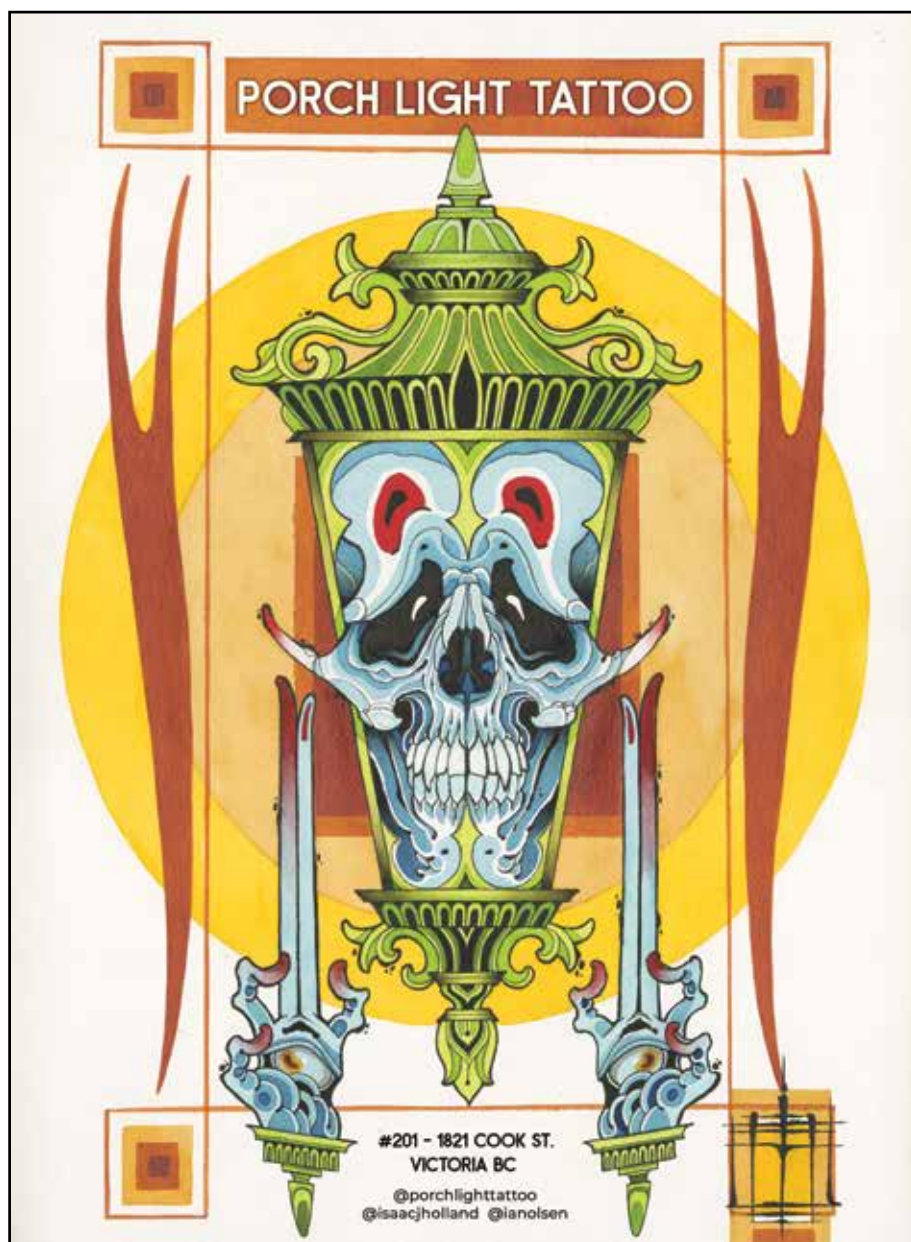
Watch the teaser trailer here:

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Cartridge Heart Plots Province-Spanning Party, Double Disc Compilation of All-New Tunes

Go Kick-Ass! 3 is Cartridge Heart's carefully-curated, region-spanning, annual compilation. It comes from a love for physical media, an appreciation of the art of preparing mix CDs and years of being entrenched in independent music. The 2025 edition - *Go Kick-Ass! 3* - is a massive double-disc set. It features all-new songs from 40 bands from southern Ontario plus one from Montreal and one from Australia. Release day is September 12 with 10 release shows planned over that weekend:

Friday September 12

Glass Planets, Streets To Ourselves, Alert The Audience, Sega Saturn The Console – The Union (Kitchener, ON) Doors 7PM. \$15. Licensed/all ages. Free CD with entry (while supplies last).

Set Go Go!, Sixteen Scandals, Mip Power Trio –

Palasod Socialbowl (London, ON). Doors 9PM. \$5. Licensed/all ages.

The Mendozaz, Lovers, Whine Problem, Lip Crunch – Camp Cataract (Niagara Falls, ON) Doors 7PM. \$15/PWYC. Licensed/all ages. Free CD with entry (while supplies last).

Kevin Murphy's Murder, Three Impotent Males, The Mightabins, Old Mountain Low – See Scape (Toronto, ON) Doors 7PM. \$15. Licensed/all ages. Free CD with entry (while supplies last).

Saturday September 13

Lucid Smog Disorder, The Supervoids, Terrible and the Horribles – Ooey Gooney's (Hamilton, ON) Doors 8PM. \$15. 19+. Free CD with entry (while supplies last).

Bilious, Frank Dux, Big Evil, Papa Reuben – Ten Gallon (Newmarket, ON) Doors 8PM. \$15. 19+ Free CD

with entry (while supplies last).

The Mendozaz, Lovers, Starship Experience, Kevin Murphy – Brew Wizards (Oshawa, ON) Doors 8PM. 19+ No cover.

The McBains, Whine Problem, The Slimetones – Paddy's Underground (Tillsonburg) Doors 8PM. \$15. Licensed/all ages. Free CD with entry (while supplies last).

Pioneer Anomaly, Sixteen Scandals, LYFE SKILLZ, Volatile Youth – Cameron House (Toronto, ON) Doors 9PM. \$15. 19+. Free CD with entry (while supplies last).

Sunday September 14

The Mendozaz, The McBains, Mip Power Trio – Dead Dog Records (Toronto, ON) Doors 2PM. No cover. All ages.

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TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH



Angie Edwards

By Mike "The Fix is In" Croy

It's officially the dog days of summer and we'll be chatting with a person who has a very different perspective on professional wrestling. This person captures all the hard-hitting action up close and live at ringside. She has dodged body slams and wild kicks; she's been hit with broken glass and chains. She's the person behind the camera at wrestling shows, with a viral video clip with over three million views to her credit! It's the one and only Angie Edwards AKA Laycee Larchwood.

Absolute Underground:
What are you best known for?

Angie Edwards: Being present without being noticed. If a wrestler asks, "Wait, there was a camera person that night?" then I know that I did a great job. Camera work has always kind of been reserved as grunt duty for training wrestlers, but what makes my role unique is that this is my main gig with 365 Pro Wrestling, and I think that having that dedicated role really adds to the production value of our shows.

AU: How did you get involved in pro wrestling?

AE: I checked out a wrestling show at the Esquimalt Legion several years ago with a group of friends and found it incredibly entertaining.

A few years ago, I moved to James Bay, Victoria, and started attending 365 Pro Wrestling shows at the White Eagle Polish Hall a few blocks from my home. I was hooked! I showed up early to a show on a whim to offer a hand in production, and Ramone Carlton himself handed me a video camera and said, "Congratulations, you're our new camera girl!" And thus, I was born into a misfit wrestling family.

AU: How long have you been involved in wrestling?

AE: Aside from being a lifelong fan, I have been involved with the 365 Production team for almost two years.

AU: What's your favourite thing about filming wrestling?

AE: I have the best seat in the house! Being up close and personal with the talent in the ring has brought wrestling into a new light for me.

AU: Who inspires you the most?

AE: Ronnie James Dio. He was a hard worker and took his craft seriously, never settled for bullshit, and pushed through physical and figurative

adversities to keep doing what he loved most. In times of struggle, I ask myself, "What would Ronnie do?" Although some considered him "difficult" to work with, he respected his fans most of all and I think that showed true showmanship



in his industry.

AU: What's the craziest match you've filmed?

AE: I would say I have a Mount Rushmore of craziest matches filmed in my time with 365 Pro Wrestling... the Night of Violence was by far the craziest with the sheer chaos happening during a 10-person scramble. There was also a No Ropes Barred match which felt especially up close and personal, as well as a Dog Collar match between Devon Shooter and Elliott Tyler. The chain from the dog collar was heavy and deadly if you got

tangled in it, so I really had to watch all my peripherals to stay safe.

AU: Who's your favourite wrestler to film?

AE: Thelonious Jovinius Harlequin is always pure theatrical comedy of course, but I feel there are some wrestlers who play to the camera more than others and that's what makes them so much fun to film. Josh Cadwell and Sawyer Stein are two wrestlers that stand out to me for that reason.

Wrestlers like Inferno who brave the high-flying stunts are always a thrill to film as well and lately, I have enjoyed Malik Melo because that guy can do some impressive acrobatics for a heavyweight. Being in the right place at the right time to catch a spot perfectly in frame is such a great feeling.

AU: What's the funniest thing you've seen happen at a show?

AE: During a Fans Bring the Weapons match... someone brought a plunger as a weapon, and it was stuck onto the ribs of one of the wrestlers. The suction noise it made when it was ripped off, followed by the swelling, followed by the giant hickey it left behind was pure comedy! It was like something out of a cartoon.

AU: In your opinion, what makes for a great match?

AE: Audience participation. A wrestler could have the greatest match of their career but it doesn't mean much without an audience giving heat or pops. When a solid chant gets the momentum going, the finisher just hits differently and that's something that sticks with the fans.

AU: Do you have any recommendations for people interested in getting involved in pro wrestling?

AE: Just get in there and do it! I have done some ring training as well, and it's tough, but it's very rewarding. The thing about wrestling is that you

have to be self-motivated because no one is going to hold your hand or do it for you. Showing up is important and your greatest ability can be your availability.

AU: How do you define success?

AE: It's not about what you have, but how you feel about the things you have in life. You may not be where you are now where you thought you would be, but if you can look back on the path



that got you there with no regrets, then I feel like that's a win.

AU: What can we expect from Angie Edwards in 2025 and beyond?

AE: A lot of music, more wrestling shows, and genuinely kicking a lot of ass.

AU: What has being involved in wrestling taught you?

AE: Duct tape literally fixes everything, and safety third!

AU: As we wrap things up here, is there anything else you'd like our readers to know?

AE: Everyone gets "imposter syndrome" so don't sell yourself short, and don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone.

Check out Angie's work @365 Pro Wrestling on YouTube.

BRENDAN + CHERYL

brendanandcheryl.bandcamp.com





By Abelardo Mayoral

Absolute Underground: Who are you and why should we care?

Octopoulpe: I'm Octopoulpe, a naked creature born in a fish tank in South Korea. I play interactive live music, and you should care because you should come to my show. You'd see one of the most entertaining shows of your life.

AU: Your visual work is very distinctive— what themes or emotions do you try to express through your art?

Octopoulpe: So basically, everything is very personal, so there's a lot of themes that are things from my youth, very personal things, things like anime or shit like that. But also, a lot of political things because I'm definitely political. So, yeah, that's the thing. When I create a song, it depends on the moment. It can be a joke, serious shit, or some other stuff. There is no rule at all.

AU: Are there any artists— visual or musical—who have inspired your art and aesthetic?

Octopoulpe: Obviously, a lot of artists. Musically, I can name The Locust, Converge, and a lesser-

known band called Ex Models. There's also a band from my hometown Nancy in France called Gu Guai Xing Qiu that mixes music and theater, which inspired me a lot. I really really love seeing bands and artists mix different things together, like music and theatrical performance. That's what I'm trying to do with Octopoulpe. By the way, Gu Guai Xing Qiu means "crazy planet" in Chinese.

AU: What would be your dream collaboration, dead or alive?

Octopoulpe: I'm collaborating with people I respect a lot, which is fucking amazing for me. On my next album, I'll have some of these respected artists. If I had to name someone, it would be Mike Patton, or Cedric Bixler from At the Drive-In. It would be a dream to have them sing on one of my songs.

AU: Hey, what's up with those toilet stickers? Have you touched a lot of pee and poo trying to put them on?

Octopoulpe: The toilet stickers were a very stupid idea I had a long time ago, but I love it. It's funny to rate toilets, and a lot of people tag me online or send me pictures. They tell me they're in the middle of Indonesia and see my stickers, which is very funny. But I do touch a lot of

poo and pee. Fuck yeah, yeah, kind of a lot. Yeah, I usually put my sticker, then wash my hands because I'm a punk, but I'm also a clean punk.

AU: What made you more excited to come to Canada? Are you bringing any new music or performance specific for this tour?

Octopoulpe: I came for the maple syrup, obviously. In 2018, I played two shows in Canada, in Toronto and Montreal. And right now, I'm

bringing my new songs and the new theatrical performance with Octopoulpe. Each show is a story, and I'm acting (pretty badly), but it's interactive and theatrical. This is something new for Canada because I haven't played there much.

AU: Can you name some Canadian celebrities that you

would like to meet along the tour?

Octopoulpe: Definitely NoMeansNo. That band is the best. Their album *Wrong* is one of the craziest albums I love. I've listened to it so many times in my life.

AU: Your Canadian tour ends in

Vancouver, which is famous for eating sushi. Is that a poetic end to the tour or just a terrible coincidence?

Octopoulpe: I had no idea about Vancouver and sushi. But actually, I'm from South Korea, and we eat kimchi, not sushi.

AU: If you could make up your own interview question, what would that be and what would

you answer?

Octopoulpe: I would ask myself, "What's your favourite karaoke song?" And I would answer, wow great question, definitely "Bad Romance" by Lady Gaga. I've been singing that song in karaoke since 2010. I started in Japan and love it. I realized six months ago that there are some parts I still don't know how to sing and I was improvising them. So, I started listening to it at home to make sure

I can sing it correctly, and now I'm pretty good at singing "Bad Romance".

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PURPLE CITY 2025 Full Festival Lineup Announced!

Purple City 2025 is excited to share the full lineup of artists for their festival in Edmonton, AB from September 5-7, 2025

Over 95 artists will take over downtown Edmonton for a weekend packed with genre-pushing sound and community celebration. This year brings the return of their two day free outdoor block party, complete with full days of music programming and live pro wrestling presented by Love Wrestling. As always, the entire festival is all-ages/licensed, and features nine stages across six venues within a walkable two-block radius in the heart of the city.

Newly announced headliners include Magic Shoppe, Jehovah's Princess, DVTR, Hallows and Clone. This year will also see the return of a few of Purple City's favourites like BÖNDBREAKR, and Bonnie Trash. The 2025 edition continues to shine a spotlight on Alberta's finest, with local Edmonton favourites Whitey Houston, False Body, Real Sickies, Colleen Brown and Amy Van

Keeken, The Bobby Tenderloin Experience, and Field + Stream alongside Kue Varo & The Only Hopes, The Blue, Dial Up and Brock Geiger. Purple City continues to champion underground and independent music across genres. Expect everything from punk to psych, shoegaze to darkwave, and all the sonic wildcards in between.

This year will also feature the launch of Talk City, their brand new free-access music conference. Held at the Chateau Lacombe Hotel, Talk City brings the backstage to the forefront and offers panels and workshops covering booking,



regional and international touring, festival submissions, grant-writing and funding, music publicity, equity in the industry, and networking events. They are beyond thrilled that this year's keynote session, DIY & Punk Ethos: Past Present & Future, will be led by none other than Canadian punk legend, activist and Burnaby BC City Councilor, Joe Keithley of D.O.A. Whether you're an emerging artist or music professional, or an industry veteran, Talk City is your space to connect, learn and build community.

To learn more, you can follow Purple City Fest On social media at:

Instagram : @purplecityfest

Facebook : @purplecityfest

Twitter : @purplecityfest

Wristbands, Day passes, and Individual tickets on sale through: www.purplecityfest.com/tickets

And check out the official "PURPLE CITY 2025" Playlist on spotify!

From Web Comic to Live-Action, The South Korean Hit *Holy Night Demon Hunters* Delivers Style Over Substance

By Ed Sum

Holy Night the Zero is a web comic which really needs to be read before going to see *Holy Night Demon Hunters*. The web comic sheds light on the origins of key characters such as Ba Woo (Ma Dong-seok, who also executive produced) and Joseph. Both are orphans, with Ba Woo evolving into a detective reminiscent of *Blade* and *Batman*, and Joseph joining the priesthood. Although Joseph does not appear in the live-action film, his actions significantly impact the story. The web comic is particularly helpful in understanding Ba Woo's personal struggles.

The film centers on Ba Woo's team, the Holy Night, as they investigate a cult preparing for the end of days by summoning a devil. The team — comprised of the strongman Ba Woo, cameraman Kim Gun (Lee David), and mystic Sharon (Seohyun) — must stop this entity from fully possessing a human body. Kim and Sharon serve as partners, akin to Robin and Batgirl, each possessing unique talents. They discover a pervasive cult of devil worshippers in Seoul, actively seeking victims. Their target, Eun-seo (Jung Ji-so), becomes the perfect host, leading to a drastic turn in her life. Her sister, Jung-won (Kyung Soo-jin), notices Eun-seo's personality change and, after medical therapy fails, seeks out the Holy Night team.

The movie's themes suggest a search for faith, particularly through God and devotion. It explores the tension that arises when new beliefs conflict with older traditions. The film explicitly embraces Christianity, portraying a specific ruler of Hell as the force corrupting Eun-seo's soul. Her possession begins after her mother's passing, during a period of grief not explicitly shown on screen.

COMIC-GEDDON



The protagonists themselves grapple with personal demons, adding a layer of complexity to the narrative and maintaining audience interest. This is another area where the web comic proves valuable, helping to explain Ba Woo's challenges. However, the film still needs to fully develop the sidekicks' storylines; Sharon experiences a crisis of faith, and Kim discovers his father's connection to the unfolding events. A second viewing of the movie highlights how much of the "devil you know" is revealed, whether through the characters confronting their own vices or understanding the source of evil.



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Reverend Beat Man

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July 31 San Diego, CA - Tower Bar
Aug 01 San Pedro, CA - Recess Records Ramp
Aug 02 Los Angeles, CA - Johnson
Aug 03 Palmdale, CA - Transplants
Aug 04 Tempe, AZ - Club Car Bar
Aug 05 San Francisco, CA - Bottom Of The Hill
Aug 06 Quincy, CA - Rich Bar Tavern
Aug 13 Portland, OR - Dante's

Aug 14 Astoria, OR - 503 Marquee
Aug 16 Seattle, WA - Clock Out Lounge
Aug 17 Tacoma, WA - The New Frontier Lounge
Aug 18 Boston, MA - NeuroLux
Aug 19 Salt Lake City, UT - Urban Lounge
Aug 22 Phoenix, AZ - Chopper John's
Aug 23 Las Vegas, NV - The Usual Place
Aug 29 Cookeville, TN - Muddy Roots
Aug 30 Cookeville, TN - Muddy Roots

Aug 20 - Urban Lounge (Salt Lake City, UT)
Aug 22 - Chopper John's (Phoenix, AZ)
Aug 23 - The Usual Place (Las Vegas, NV)
Aug 29 - Muddy Roots (Cookeville, TN) w/
Eagles of Death Metal, Amigo the Devil, The
Spits, TSOL, Frank Turner, and more.

Reverend Beat-Man's status as a lifer stems from the extensive array of activities he has participated in and enabled within underground music for over four decades. Numerous collaborations and tours to spread the gospel of the Blues Trash across six of the seven continents are only half of it. Outside his performing activities, Reverend Beat-Man runs the notorious rock n' roll imprint Voodoo Rhythm Records, a no-borders launching pad for fringe bands across punk, garage, cumbia, industrial, rockabilly, noise, and other genres too strange to pinpoint into a mainstream category. Since donning the collar in 2002, nine albums have emerged under his raspy one-man band touch, accompanied by tours and festival appearances across Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Reverend Beat-Man shares his thoughts below about this upcoming trek.

"We are living in crazy times and I make crazy music so that is a perfect fit. I haven't played the West Coast for many years and it's about time to come back to play some insane blues trash. My Name Reverend Beat-Man I started my one man show in 1992 as Lightning Beat-Man king of wrestling and rock n' roll... then I died and got reborn as Reverend Beat-Man in 1999 and preaching the shit out of everything. If you like Coldplay or Ed Sheeran, stay home and Watch Netflix... this is super trash lo-fi blues!"

FB: Reverend Beat-Man (Official)

IG: @reverend_beat_man

Reverend Beat-Man

The underground rock n' roll legend Reverend Beat-Man embarks on a rare US tour across the West Coast, concluding with a Southeastern exclusive appearance at Muddy Roots Festival in Tennessee alongside Frank Turner, Amigo the Devil, The Spits, TSOL, among others. Followers rejoice! This run of shows marks Reverend Beat-Man's first tour of the New World in nearly a decade; remaining dates are listed below:

Aug 13 - Dante's (Portland, OR)
Aug 14 - 503 Marquee (Astoria, OR)
Aug 16 - Clock-Out Lounge (Seattle, WA)
Aug 17 - The New Frontier Lounge (Tacoma, WA)
Aug 19 - NeuroLux (Boise, ID)

CHECK YOUR HEAD:

Mental Help for Musicians Podcast

"When I first heard the news in 2017 that Chris Cornell (Soundgarden, Audioslave) had lost his life to suicide, the news hit me hard," says host Mari Fong, who covered Cornell as a music journalist. "Then when Chester Bennington (Linkin Park) took his own life, and soon after AVICII (Tim Bergling) did the same, I just couldn't believe it. These were artists whose music brought me so much joy—how could they be living in so much pain? I knew I had to do something that could actually make a difference."

That "something" was becoming an advocate for musicians and their mental health. Fong began raising funds by hosting music events and partnering with charities to address the growing crisis of suicides, substance abuse, and mental health challenges in the music industry.

Having personally experienced depression and anxiety, Fong brings real-world understanding and compassion to her mission.

"The darkness and hopelessness of depression, and the irrational fears that come with anxiety, were real battles for me," says Fong. "But when I finally found solutions that worked, a better, happier life was on the other side."

"Musicians can often lose their way, not know where to turn, or give up on finding help. I want to give them hope, encourage persistence, and provide both real-world and professional solutions. That way, everyone can choose their own path to recovery."

The *CHECK YOUR HEAD* Podcast is where notable musicians and experts share their stories and solutions for mental health and addiction recovery. It's also home to the largest online listing of free or affordable resources for mental health and addiction support at checkyourheadpodcast.com.

Musical guests on past episodes include: The Lumineers, Fred Armisen (*SNL*, *Portlandia*), Killswitch Engage, Lindsey Stirling, Grouplove, James Arthur, grandson, Sal Rodriguez of WAR, The Revivalists, Emilio Castillo of Tower of Power, Clarke (Guns N' Roses), Dirty Heads, Amos Lee, Seether, Jewel, and the iconic Linda Ronstadt—with more to come.

Each episode pairs musical guests with top mental health experts such as:

- Dr. Dan Reidenberg (SAVE.org, suicide prevention expert)
- Dr. Ish Major (named on "America's Top Psychiatrist" list, TV's *Marriage Boot Camp*)
- Tim Ringgold, MT-BC, Music Therapist and author of *Sonic Recovery: Harness the Power of Music to Stay S.O.B.E.R.*

With over 25 years of experience in music journalism and healthcare, Executive Producer and Mari Host Fong has interviewed a wide

range of artists including Chester Bennington (Linkin Park), Ozzy Osbourne, Paul McCartney, Aerosmith, The White Stripes, The Strokes, Green Day, System of a Down, and David Bowie.

She was featured on *Today*, *I'm Brave*, a nonprofit that highlights extraordinary changemakers, and served as Executive Producer for Sirius XM's *The Inner Circle* with Neil Strauss. Fong has also

partnered with nonprofits such as Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles and the Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance, raising funds for mental health and addiction recovery.

The podcast is proudly partnered with the Sweet Relief Musicians Fund, a nonprofit providing assistance to musicians in need. Sweet Relief recently launched a Mental Health Fund, with Mari Fong serving as its Mental Health Ambassador.

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The Cavernous

Interview by Ray MacKay

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

Robert McLaren: My name is Robert McLaren, I am a musician and promoter from Kelowna BC, my current bands are The Cavernous (a heavy psychedelic electronic duo), and I play standup bass for a folk punk band called The Good Time Charlies.

AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

RM: The Okanagan has been a tourist hub for a VERY long time, with the introduction of wine

culture in the '90s, the tourists have gotten older and swankier with every decade. Most of our venues focus on keeping the tourists happy, so it's a lot of background music, covers, acoustic acts, that kind of stuff. There are very few venues for younger local independent artists and when they do pop up, they don't last long. Kelowna, where I live currently, has been shifting massively in the last couple years. It is the fourth or fifth fastest growing city in Canada, which means the venues are starting to become segregated by genre: Jackknife is the heavy metal/punk bar, Red Bird is the hipster indie brewery, Reverie is the big room for bigger touring acts where a local act might get an opening slot for a bigger regional or national band. In years past the venues that supported live local music were open to anything, places like: Fernando's, The Grateful Fed, Milkcrate Records would host anything from folk to death

metal. As someone who has played everything from folk and bluegrass to experimental metal and electronica I do better in a melting pot. Dunnyzies Pizza downtown is the last place you can come and play whatever you want.

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

RM: The Cavernous consists of myself and Jesse Barrette, we play live electronica: meaning very little is programmed or sampled, we play live electronic drums, synths and keyboards. On record we lean into headphone worship, but live we have the soul of any heavy psychedelic rock band. We started right before the pandemic, I wanted to start a new version of my old band LAKEMAN, in that band we all switched instruments for every song and had dabbled

in electronica but were known as a dreamy progressive sludge metal band. I asked a bunch of musicians to come jam, but Jesse was the only one who kept showing up. We tried standard garage band instruments like bass and guitar but the most interesting stuff came from the electronic gear. Our first 10 or 20 songs were basically explorations of synthesizers, samplers and looping, but it was kind of boring live, now we are focusing more on song writing and how to progress a piece of music more naturally.

AU: What kind of music does The Cavernous perform?

RM: Growing up in Alberta, I was a devoted traditional metal and punk kid. I remember Tool came to town and a bunch of friends swore by them, I never got it, it felt boring like the songs took forever to do anything, but I went anyway to hang with my friends. I ended up having a religious experience, I remember there were two drummers on stage toward the end of the night and it was so heavy and intense, I came out of my trance and looked around the arena and no one was moshing or head banging or fist pumping like I was used to, everyone was totally present and invested in the music. I couldn't understand what I was seeing, but something changed in me that night and I have been chasing that feeling of a band being able to earn an audience's total presence. That is what I hope for with The Cavernous.

AU: Tell us all about your new album, *Please Hold*, and the unique way you're releasing it.

RM: *Please Hold* is a concept album based on an uncanny hold sequence. To hear the album you have to call a phone number: 877-420-9159. At first it will sound and feel like any hold sequence, elevator music, automated operator,

the whole nine yards, but the album shifts in and out of chilled out lo-fi and ambient electronica to strange and eerie synth odysseys and soundscapes.

AU: Tell us about the creative process behind *Please Hold*.

RM: With The Cavernous, we kind of divorced what we play live with what we record. What I want to create for a live experience versus a recording are two different things. When it comes to records, I love albums that you can put on in the background and kind of vibe to while doing stuff or it can also be the total opposite thing with a pair of headphones and a bit of focus, it can be a totally immersive listening experience. That is the aim of *Please Hold* to me— you can

throw it on in the background without pissing off your neighbors or you can let it take you away.

AU: Any upcoming shows?

Aug 15th - Solid Urban Studio (Salmon Arm, BC)

Aug 16th Dunnyzies Pizza (Kelowna, BC)

Aug 22-23rd - Huggkegger (Salmo, BC)

Sept 6th - Legacy Den (Penticton, BC)

Sept 19-20th - Vibes Familia (Mayra Canyon, BC)

Oct 3rd - The Coda (Victoria, BC)

Oct 4th - Strange Resonance @ Bully's (New West)

Oct 25th - All Hallows (Osoyoys, BC)

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"Banished in the Australian Outback!"

An Interview with Joseph Sims-Dennett

By James Borsa

AU: Joseph Sims-Dennett, welcome to Ultrasonic Film. Your new film is "The Banished". You are the writer, director and producer. I have to assume this was a passion project for you. How long was the journey?

JSD: At least 10-15 years. I started getting the idea for it a very long time ago. It's a really interesting concept of this scary odyssey through the bush. We mostly filmed up in the Blue Mountains in New South Wales. A couple of hours out of Sydney and it was genuinely quite creepy. There's a lot of abandoned settlements. It was all mining, railway lines that don't exist anymore. So you just wander through this endless bush and run into just some random graveyard or whatever. A decent location for a horror film.

AU: As far as chronological storytelling goes, you're clever with the flashbacks. I'm curious, was it always that way? You mentioned that you've been working on this project for years.

JSD: Yeah. The fractured timeline. I've cut a million

versions of this film. It's just a bit of an editing thing, where you can get in and out of scenes a bit faster. It gives the film an interesting kind of momentum. It puts you under its spell a bit more when it's asking questions of the audience. With that loose kind of shooting style you are able to jump cut and be a bit more

creative with the editing.

AU: You are talking to us from Australia right now. Are there some Australian films that really captured your imagination?

JSD: I reckon the greatest Australian film ever made is "Wake in Fright".

AU: That's quite a powerful cult film.

JSD: It really is. I've found myself in strange situations like that when wandering around regional Australia. It's a theme of unexplained possession that comes over you when you've been in the bush a bit too long. It's a very beautiful place but we do tell lots of stories about the influence of how vast and massive outback Australia is. You can literally be the only person from horizon to horizon quite easily.

It's interesting trying to think about direct influences. The influence of Ben Wheatley and what he managed to achieve, particularly with "Kill List". It was this random masterpiece that popped up. That shooting style, that kind of Dogma 95, but slightly more refined. It made you go, okay you can tell these sorts of stories, you can do it in this really interesting way and you don't need millions of dollars.



AU: I think we should absolutely give some credit to your Leading Actress in this film(Meg Eloise-Clarke (as Meg Clarke) Did you know immediately that she was going to be the one to do this? Because you definitely do hang a lot of the drama of the film on her and she does a great job.

JSD: Meg, she's dynamite! She was my friend before. You rewrite scripts 1000s of times before you end up pointing the camera at anyone. I asked her first before I went through and did a rewrite. The character of Mr. Green as well is portrayed by a really good friend of mine, Leighton Cardno. I rewrote the script to suit them. The whole film was shot in 13 and a half days and you need to have the characters as close to the people that are playing them as possible. Meg absolutely knocked it out the park. She's just incredible, the fact that she was able to turn over those performances in scene after scene. We were just very blessed to have her.

AU: What were the major challenges that you were facing while shooting this?

JSD: The challenges were getting out to the bush. It was "time" with this project. It was pulling 20 hour days, your alarm goes off and you've got to get back in the car. We were able to be quite cheeky. Some of the bush nighttime stuff we were shooting in a park in the middle of Central Sydney and just trying to avoid people going for their evening jog. Trying to be as clever as possible. The biggest challenge was time. We did rehearse, but it was just allowing the actors to follow their own initiative and not try and force too much in terms of performance. To allow them to go there and then just refine it as you go. At the end of the day we were getting home and having a look at what we shot and it was great!

AU: Who is in charge of your masks? They definitely do creep you out a bit.

JSD: That's a really old friend of mine, Raphael Sikic. He was one of the producers on the film. He was kind of like the first AD and the poor bloke was also costume design. He did work with a few different artists because he was in that world. It was all clay and bits of mud. We did lots of different versions. It was just terrifying all the different weird shapes. I'm like, mate this is great. Thank you.



AU: It's a pretty powerful film. Have you had a chance to see it with some audiences and get their initial reactions to it?

JSD: I haven't. I live in the bush now on a farm

and I've never enjoyed watching my films with an audience. If you want to just be really stressed for an hour and a half, go and do that. I had friends go and watch it in cinemas and the audience reactions have been wonderful. That's very good. That's all I needed to hear.

AU: Joseph Sims-Dennett, I want to thank you for joining us here on Ultrasonic Film to talk about your new film, "The Banished" A very creepy film that gets inside your head.

JSD: Really appreciate it James, thanks.

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Stoned Jesus

Interview by Ray MacKay

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

Stoned Jesus: This is Igor Sydorenko of Stoned Jesus, the guy who wrote "I'm The Mountain", the most popular stoner metal song on YouTube!

AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

SJ: I'm originally from Ukraine. Right now, it's tough to run a band in the music industry there because of the ongoing Russian invasion, but Ukrainian underground metal bands are well known all over the world—Drudkh, 1914, Kekht Arakh, Somali Yacht Club, just to name a few.

AU: Give us a brief

history of the band, who is in Stoned Jesus and what are you all about?

SJ: It started as a solo project of yours truly, so it's mostly me and a bunch of bassists and drummers through the years. My main goal, as the only songwriter, has always been finding different views of creating interesting dark, heavy, and

melodic songs. That's why many are having a hard time trying to categorize the Stoned Jesus music, calling it anything from prog rock to doom metal.

AU: What's the wildest thing that's happened at a show of yours?

SJ: Maybe not the wildest ever, but sometimes you can catch me crowd-surfing the audience during the show, while still playing some nasty 5/4 or 7/8 riffs on my guitar!

AU: You have a new album coming out, *Songs to Sun*. Tell us all about it!

SJ: During the pandemic, I amassed a lot of material which could be divided into three categories: heavy and groovy stuff, dark and moody stuff, epic and proggy stuff. This is where the idea of an album trilogy came from, so you'll be getting the first instalment, *Songs to Sun* (heavy stuff), this September. Our label Season of Mist will release *Songs to Moon* (dark stuff) in 2026 and *Songs to Earth* (just two 20-minute long prog

epics) in 2027, so keep your ears ready!

AU: Tell us about the creative process behind *Songs to Sun*.

SJ: I brought the songs to the new boys (Yurii Ciel—drums and Andrew Rodin—bass, backing vocals) and after a period of rehearsals we recorded them in this beautiful secluded place in the Polish mountains, Monochrom Studio. This was definitely the most fun each of us ever had working on the album! Then the legendary Karl Daniel Lidén (Katatonia, Crippled Black Phoenix, Greenleaf, The Ocean, etc) took over mixing and mastering, and voila—our sixth album is definitely my favourite Stoned Jesus LP at the moment.

AU: Tell us about any upcoming tours you might have.

SJ: We'll make our debut in Australia right after the album's release, then we'll return to Latin America for our third tour there (the longest to date!), and then we'll hit Europe in Spring of 2026. North America is planned for late 2026!

AU: What song would you recommend to someone who's never listened to you before?

SJ: Start with the opening track, "New Dawn". If you want something from earlier works, find any "I'm the Mountain" live version—the studio version kinda sucks in my opinion, haha. If you want something short and punchy, then "Here Come the Robots" is your jam.

AU: What song do you think means the most to your fans or has taken on a greater life or popularity than you expected?

SJ: The one with 16 million streams on YouTube alone, "I'm the Mountain"! I get these emails literally every week, where people are writing about how much this



song helped them and inspired them, and this means the world to me.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? What don't you want your family members to know?

SJ: I never did anything harder than weed!

AU: Anything else to promote?

SJ: If you're into '80s prog and art pop, check my side-project Arlekin! The fans of Marillion, Genesis and Pink Floyd will love this one for sure.


AU: Any final words for our readers?

SJ: Thanks for having us, enjoy the music and support Ukraine!

linktr.ee/stonedjesusband
arlekin.streamlink.to/LP2021

PHOTO CREDIT: - @mildaster





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Planet Smashers

By Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: To whom am I speaking and what is your role within the Planet Smashers?

Matt Smashers: Matt Smashers, I sing and play ska guitar.

AU: The Planet Smashers are a long-running ska band from Montreal Quebec. How long have you guys been playing and putting out albums?

MS: 31 years!

AU: When the band started, did you guys think it would still be going 10 years later, let alone in 2025?

MS: Not a chance.

AU: This August sees a new Planet Smashers record coming out on Stomp Records. How many albums have the Planet Smashers put out in total?

MS: *On the Dancefloor* is our tenth full-length album.

AU: What are your favourite tracks from your new album?

MS: Let's go with "Things You Do", "Police



Brutality", "Torpedo" and "Easy Like I Do".

AU: The new record has some pretty exciting guest stars! Neville Staple from The Specials, Charley Bembridge from The Selecter, and Sara Johnston from fellow Montreal band Bran Van 3000. Any details you can share about the tracks they each play on, or how they came to be on your album?

MS: All three were incredibly easy to work with! Neville was fortunately on the good side of recovering from some serious health issues, I thought he'd pass

on the request to collaborate but he went all in and literally took the track over ("Police Brutality"). He crushed it. He also toasts and does some backing vocals on "Easy Like I Do". Aitch (Charley) added some tasty timbales to "Police Brutality" and also sings on "Easy Like I Do". You can hear him on the choruses, I had no idea he had such a nice voice. Meanwhile Sara, who's good friends with our engineer and co-producer Rod Shearer, added some lovely voicing on "Falling" in the chorus.



AU: Where haven't the Planet Smashers toured in the last 30 years that you still want to go?

MS: Newfoundland, Canada and Brazil. And Mexico. And Costa Rica.

AU: On a related note, do you have any upcoming shows or tours lined up to promote *On the Dancefloor*?

MS: We do! It's not crazy road-dog touring but it's still busy for us. We're looking at about 25 shows this fall. We're doing three mini-tours; one western Canadian rip in November with the Real Sickies, and two US jaunts with Mustard Plug, mid-west in September and north-east in December. We're also doing a dozen weekend shows and some festivals in Ontario and Quebec. Last show of the year will be Stomp's 30th Anniversary in Montreal!

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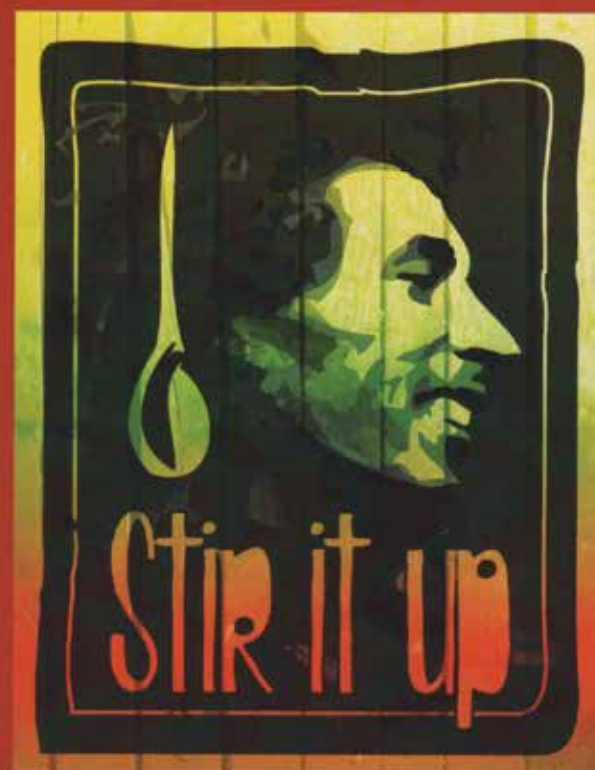


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Got it all done in two days and started to focus on playing shows. I'll be honest, Longshot is where I wanted to be, and through running into each other it started the conversation. Mike said he liked it and wanted to put it out and here we are. I'm blown away that it sold out in pre-order stage! Super grateful to all. And we actually are heading back into studio soon to record some more songs!

AU: How would you describe the sound of your band for anyone who hasn't heard Bomber?

Dean: Wow, that's a good question. So, we all grew up on skinhead and punk music. As in the song "Bomber Rules O.K.", I first heard ska in '82. Played saxophone and was all about it for about six months. Had a short-lived mod phase as well, but the real core was skinhead music and punk in '84. Our songs are very spontaneous, we don't have a formula and we don't say let's write this or that. We aren't looking for anthems or toe tapping shit that's run of the mill. This is who we are. We are a skinhead band and sing about what we experience. I would say influences are bands like The Last Resort, Oppressed, Blitz, and bands of that nature that we grew up on, but I

wouldn't say we sound like that either.

AU: Bomber recently did a tour of the United States' West Coast with Claimed Choice from France. Where did you play?

Dean: We played Pomona California, Hollywood, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. Fucking killer good time!

AU: Any fun tour stories from this tour?

Dean: One wild thing was we stayed at Hannah's house who is the daughter of Colin, singer of Cock Sparrer! That was cool, and to talk to her about her dad and hear about her life here in America was great. Other fun stuff, Lou passed out in van for two hours, all of us extremely hungover at some point. Kicking some dude square in the ribs that kept hitting my mic into my teeth. And honestly hanging with Claimed Choice; great guys. Also, the great people we met along the way who put us up for the night and had killer BBQ party and fed us well! It was all fun, I don't think for me personally there was nothing not fun... ok Saturday's hangover was fucking rough, but that's it.



nothing not fun... ok Saturday's hangover was fucking rough, but that's it.

AU: What other bands have you guys played in, or still play in?

Dean: I was in an old band in '80s, Schleprock, Generators, Malchicks. Lou was in Generators, Hardknocks, Vires, Tough Skins, The Choice. Fred, Dog Faced Bastards and

a few other LA bands. Dave plays with Billy Liar from Scotland, has a cool band called Gilman Blacklist!

AU: What are your future tour plans for Bomber?

Dean: East Coast, Europe, and hopefully up to Canada. I haven't played Canada for a while, and last time was with Doug and the Generators.

AU: Is there anything else you would like to share about your band?

Dean: We are just Skinheads for people's rights, we don't believe in -ism's. Take it and shove it up your ass! We don't pretend to be anything to be cool and get noticed. We are who we are to the core, and for me it's been 40 years. Let's have a drink and a laugh and listen to music together! And always remember... Bomber Rules O.K.!

You can find Bomber on all streaming platforms.

IG: @Bomber_oi

Bomber

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with? And what are your responsibilities in the band Bomber?

Dean: This is Dean I am lead vocals and bass player in Bomber.

AU: Where is Bomber from?

Dean: We are Los Angeles-based band from different suburbs of LA.

AU: How long have you guys been around?

Dean: We have been doing Bomber for about a year and a half.

AU: You guys recently put out a record on Longshot Music + TASM Records entitled Rules O.K.? Want to tell us a bit about it?

Dean: We started writing songs in November '23 and kept putting songs together. About February of '24 we decided to hit up David at Memphis Street Recording and worked out the six songs.





Hunting Lions

By Aeryn Shrapnel

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

Ben Coleman: This is Ben, and I'm infamous for losing my dentures while singing for Hunting Lions.

AU: Hunting Lions is made up of members from Roadside Bombs, Swingin' Utters, Beltones, and US Bombs, among others. How and when did you get together for this project?

BC: I ran into Jesse (Spite) at a local taqueria and we started talking music. I asked if he was interested in a new music co-op I was organizing. This was just pre-covid. We started getting together with Jay and Forest from Harrington Saints, along with Jeremy who was in Roadside Bombs with me. We wrote a couple tunes and liked the new sound a lot. Forest moved on but I had heard through the grapevine that Greg Utter had moved to the area. So, I hit him up and we formed, more or less, what would become the core of Hunting Lions.

AU: As for releases, you've been running a digital singles campaign lately. Any favourite tracks so far? How many more on the way?

BC: Yes, we released "Radio DJ", "1312", and "Age of The Guillotine" a few weeks apart. My favourite of those is probably "Guillotine". It's simple as fuck, but hits super hard and gets directly to the point. We have a couple more set for August.

AU: Is there an overarching theme or message to the songs you've been putting out lately?

BC: I'm really angry about the current political climate in the US. Authoritarianism has taken hold and the rights of regular working people are being trampled. "1312" and "Guillotine" are a direct response. "Radio DJ" and "Heart & Soul" (which is due out in early August) are a celebration of our sub-culture. This community of ours is a shining beacon in a sea of right-wing shit.

AU: Any plans for a full-length in the near future?

BC: We have talked about releasing these singles and a few more as a full-length at some point in the not-too-distant future.

AU: Any shows or tours on the horizon?

BC: We have a few California shows coming up: a headliner in SF, and we're opening for the Hangmen in Sacramento, I think. We're also playing Rebellion on Sunday, August 10th, in the arena.

AU: Plans to come to Canada?

BC: Man, I'd love to do a run with Territories! They're a top band for me. But nothing yet in the works.

AU: Are you all living in the Bay Area? What's the music scene in your city been like lately?

BC: Yes, we are all living in Sonoma County, just a few miles up the 101 from San Francisco and Oakland. There is a great scene in SF, Sonoma County, really the whole Bay Area.

AU: What have you been listening to lately? Anything specific you've been drawing

inspiration from?

BC: I've been revisiting The Oppressed, love Bob Vylan, The Drowns, NY Hounds, Concrete Elite... so much good music out there right now!

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention or promote?

BC: Buy records, go to shows. Liberty and freedom live in art and music... support it!

AU: Final words for our readers?

BC: Fly out to Rebellion and I'll buy you a beer!

linktr.ee/huntinglions

Photo by Greg Davis



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Interview by Ray MacKay

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

Kenley: Hi, we're Dogwhistle! We're a hardcore band from Toronto. I'm on vocals, Mariful and Nate are on guitar, Hank is on bass, and Jaeden plays drums. We've popped off the last few months locally, making noisy, sludgy political hardcore.

AU: Tell us about your band— its members, its history, and what you've done so far.

Hank: The band was formed in the spring of 2024 after two of its members met at a police station while protesting the arrest of a fellow union member on strike. We have released a studio EP and played 10 live shows so far, with many more to come. As a band with bold, emancipatory themes, we are always seeking ways to support DIY communities and marginalized groups through fundraisers and active participation in grassroots organizing.

AU: Where are you from? What's the music scene like there?

Kenley: We're all scattered around the Greater Toronto Area, which is in a heavy music renaissance at the moment. Connoisseurs will probably know Mile End or Terry Green. We also want to shout out Wrought, Mace, and Juliens Donkey Boys—all kickass bands from around the area we're lucky to share members with.

AU: Dogwhistle is a fairly new, up-and-coming band. What has that experience been like in the modern music scene?

Kenley: We've had a blast! We're lucky to be in a scene with a lot of shows to play. While it's not perfect, the scene is pretty diverse nowadays—I'm not ever, like, the only trans woman at shows anymore, which is very comforting.

AU: Describe your live performance if possible.

Kenley: We rock out, at least to the best of our unc-ass abilities. I have a dance background, so I end up throwing my whole body around often against my better judgment. At the end of the day, we're a hardcore band, but we try to incorporate fun elements from all over, such as harsh noise samples, spoken words, and poetry.

AU: "First Person Shooter" is just a small part of your upcoming EP, Textile Waste. Tell us all about this EP. What was your inspiration behind it, how did you write it, record it, how long has it been in the works— tell us everything!

Mariful: At least half the songs have been in works around the time we started the band, and the other half was written just a few months before we went into the studio in March of

2025. Our objective was to write an EP that was politically charged, heavy and angular, yet melodic and atmospheric. It was also important for us to musically stay a little outside of conventional hardcore punk norms. Also, shout out to Jesse Turnbull from Taurus Recording in Toronto. He captured and mixed the recording the way we envisioned it—gritty, loud, and abrasive.

AU: Besides this EP, what else do you have in the works?

Mariful: We have lots of ideas for new songs that we hope to record and release early next year. We're also hoping to record covers and release them as splits with other bands. And of course, we will keep playing live. We hope to play and tour on the West Coast soon!

AU: You show a very impressive music video. What was the filming process like? Any plans for more music videos?

Jaeden: Having Kenley be such a detailed lyricist, I immediately knew I wanted to project something that paralleled her lyrics. Stuff like enlistment advertisements, combat footage, and even some COD clips I managed to sneak in. I have no interest in whatever the show *Severance* is about, but one doom-scrolling night, I saw a clip of the craziest shot in the show. I watched it on a loop and immediately sent it to both of our cinematographers, Al and Hussain, asking if they could recreate it. With both of these ideas in mind, I went from there, and things started flowing. Can't take all the credit though, as both Al and Hussain really helped bring this to life with their camera work.



ENDNOTE

I think for our next video, I'd definitely like to do something experimental. I think it would be very funny to do a music video that adheres to Dogme 95 code.

AU: Who are your major musical influences?

Mariful: I think of us as a band rooted, at least ethically, in punk and hardcore but drawing inspiration from a wide range of genres— from noise rock and industrial, to sludge and post-metal, to shoegaze and alternative rock and post-punk, old school post-hardcore and screamo etc. When I'm bringing in a riff or an idea, a lot is running in my head, and it's different for every song (ex: "I want this part to sound like Sparkmarker meets Killing Joke meets Neurosis!")

AU: Your band is known for your anti-war convictions. What inspired you to weave these convictions into your music? Why does this message matter to you?

Kenley: My earliest memories are of growing up in America during the invasion of Iraq and being mired in Jingoistic military propaganda. I grew up and learned most of America's reasons for committing mass cruelty and violence there, and pretty much everywhere else for the last 70 years, were complete bullshit woven in service of capital and state interests.

AU: Anything else to promote?

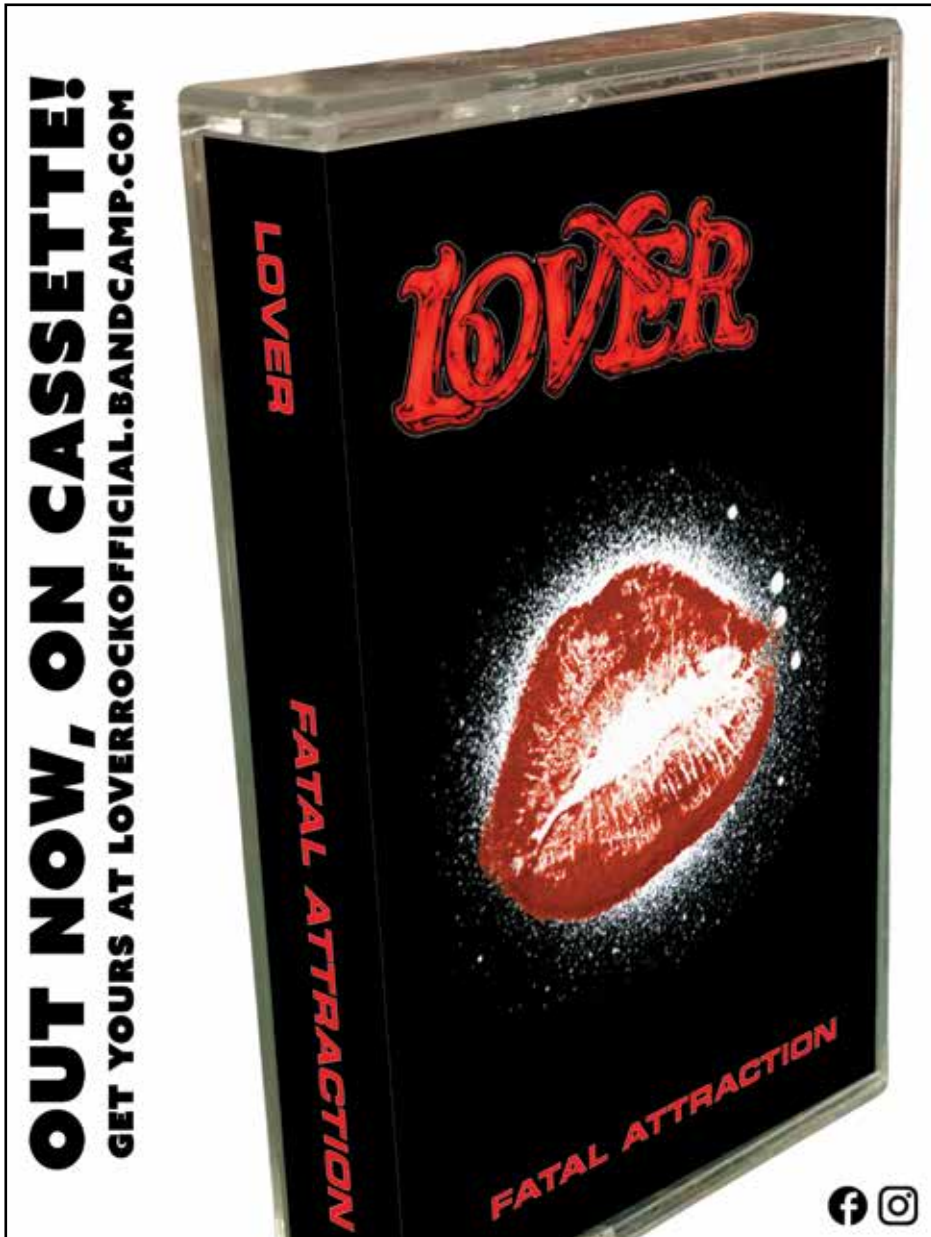
Hank: Our very own Nate started a DIY label, Endnote - endnoterecords.ca.

IG: @dogwhistlehc

dogwhistlehc.bandcamp.com

Photo by @film_ery

Album cover by @vickibmphotos and @thehlennz





Die Job

By Cyrus Lord with the help of his friends

As a lifelong masochist, there's nothing I crave more than the hellish scorn of a critic's gaze. But like any good drug will tell you, after a while, society's suggested dose of danger just ain't enough to keep the edge on; not for a judgement junkie like me. So! For my next stunt in high-flying public humiliation, I've invited my most admired artistic peers to share their unfiltered thoughts on Die Job's EP, *Hazards Of Occupation*. Secure your water wings, keep a safe word nearby, and prepare yourselves for a bloodbath deep enough to dive in.

Ding-ding-ding!

"Die Job is going for it with the most powerful weapon possible: a true belief in their art." - Colin Pearson- You Big Idiot

Did my favourite songwriter just call us self-important narcissists in front of the whole city? ... What a rush. Short, sweet, straight for the throat...

"Usually when I have fun I only last two minutes ... I surpassed that mark this time. After I finished listening, I smoked a cigarette to complete the good time (I don't smoke)." - Kyle Jones- Comedian, Founder of Gulf Island Comedy Series

We drove Kyle to pick up smoking!? Brutal. Keep 'em coming...

"Poetic melodies reminiscent of Mike Ness, high-energy pop sensibilities that would be right at home on Dookie, and poignant sarcasm that could have come from Fat Mike himself, Die Job are keeping the skate punk dream alive. But more than just three nostalgic legends in a trenchcoat, Die Job have tapped into a sound that is uniquely their own: A fast and angry, yet catchy and relatable musical theatre with a mosh pit." - Laurie Storrie- Mean Bikini, Outhouse Records

Uh-oh. We all know what it means when real punks bring up Dookie...

"Die Job's new EP is everything I love about punk. Rowdy and raucous, gritty and anthemic, it has all the fun, bouncy sensibilities of pop but without the fluff — it's pop punk with sharp edges, a war cry, inciting us to stand up for ourselves and for what's right, while also reminding us to have some fucking fun and love each other while we're at it." - Writer, Ashley J.J. White

Did she just call us POP!? God, that hurts so good...

"Die Job's latest EP *Hazards of Occupation* is protest prose perfection. Get ready to hang off of each drum fill, bass lick, and every in-your-face viola bow. Don't bother getting too comfy while giving this one a spin, you're about to open up the pit regardless of where you are. Let's go!" - Skellyton

That's why we call this mysterious force Skellyton. All it takes is one wicked word from this tenacious trendsetter to turn your band to



bones...

"With a reputation earned for powerhouse pop punk anthems, this release isn't your step mom's Simple Plan. Die Job demands retribution from unchecked authority, greed, and predatory puke-fucks... and look damn good while doing it." - Comedian, Jonny Devito

To say we'll NEVER be Simple Plan, no matter how hard we try!... Devastating and delicious. This hit piece is headed straight to the Cenobite spank bank...

"A cataclysmic spitfire of coherently poignant social and interpersonal commentary is splattered across the backdrop of hard incandescent truth, outlined by today's heavily contrasted themes of immorality and injustices on full display with DIE JOB's upcoming EP release." - Matt Danger - Ninjas with Syringes, No Pants Records guy in Portland, OR

That's one way to dismantle my hubris- Bombard me with a plethora of incomprehensible locution. Caustically rancorous. Would ride this ride again.

"The high point of the new Die Job release is certainly the moment where they pick it up. Overall, this EP feels like a ride on a punk rock pirate ship. Lawlessness, drinking swill, and

moshing about while my legs are about as stable as a newly minted cabin boy on the high seas. You and the mates are sure to sing along to these modern-day sea shanties until it's time for a friendly fistfight and flipping off the authorities. Somebody carry me home!" - Shannon Brass- Brasser

When we "pick it up"? Did this mean mistress just call us a ska band? I'm all for rough play, but this lashing cuts deep...

"Everyone knows that there is nothing cooler than not giving a shit. Apathy looks cool on everybody, always has always will. Die Job didn't get the memo. They care a lot. They care about social issues. They care about making well-crafted songs. They care about their friends. I know for a FACT they desperately care about what everyone thinks of them... and yet, somehow... it's also cool. It makes zero sense, but I'm here for it." - Matt Earle- Dead End Drive-In, Early Onset Records

A fellating fluff piece about how 'cool' we are!? It pains me to ask, but has punk rock lost its edge?

Discover the answer to this

question and more on the meta-owned information mining platform, Instagram (@diejobpunk). Read these reviews in their full gutsy glory. The whole bloody affair.

If you lust for pain like I do, find Die Job's *Hazards of Occupation* at kindacoolrecords.com Jonny Bones, Take us home!

"Die Job are friends, not just with each other, like any band that expects to survive should be, but they are my friend, and they are yours too. They may call it Fight Music, I call it Unity Music, but just like at that very first show where we met... We may write separate lyrics, but we're singing the same song. And with this new EP, I know that you are invited to sing along. Because, that's what friends are for. And, you can't ask for a better one than Die Job. Long Live Friends, Long Live Unity Music!" - Jonny Bones- The Still Spirits, Rad Radio and beyond

RIPCORDZ TOUR TIPS

As we've been driving back and forth across Canada for more than three decades, we've come up with some guidelines that help us on the road. Figured we'd share.

They're tips, not rules. Everyone has their own way of touring, but some of these may help younger bands on their way.

PART FIFTEEN

TOUR TIP NUMBER 85



AVOID PUNK CLUB BATHROOMS

'Nuff said.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 86



NEVER FORGET THAT THE CROWD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY SHOW

TOUR TIP NUMBER 87



PRINT OFF A CRAPLOAD OF SET LISTS BEFORE YOU SET OUT

...so you don't have to look for markers and paper at every show.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 88



EVEN IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, NEVER STOP MID-SONG

Crowds are forgiving. Just follow the drummer, make sure you hit the chorus and end all together.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 89



GIVING A T-SHIRT (OR TWO) TO THE BAR STAFF IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA

TOUR TIP NUMBER 90



DON'T LOSE THE GUITAR

Yes, I know. But, essentially, you're homeless while on tour. And it's amazing how easy it is to lose track of things once you put them down.

Find more tips and other stuff on our facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ripcordzpunk> and Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/ripcordzpunk>

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LUNCHMEAT



Friday the 13th: Part II Lost Footage Finally Found on 40-Year-Old VHS Tape!

By Ted Gilbert

Some rewind-radical news is circulating on the web, Tapeheads, and we wanted to VHShare it with you! You know those legendary lost scenes from *Friday the 13th: Part II*? Well, they've recently resurfaced, and we have VHS to thank! Here's an excerpt from the incredible story, as told by Edwin Samuelson of Samuelson Studios, quoted directly from the studio's Facebook page:

"The upcoming *Friday the 13th* box set from Scream Factory will include the uncut footage from *Part II*. How it was found after being lost for almost 40 years is a great story! As many fans of the series know, several minutes were trimmed because of a crackdown by the MPAA on slasher movies. A few stills have surfaced over the years that gave a hint to what was missing, but despite many efforts over the years to find the footage, it was believed to have been lost or destroyed.

While prepping to shoot an interview with Bill Randolph for *Part II*, I decided to re-watch the *Crystal Lake Memories* documentary in order to avoid repeating stories that have already been discussed in depth for years. As expected, there was talk about the footage that was shot, but not included in the final cut due to ratings board. Greg Nicotero mentions that FX artist Carl Fullerton showed him the footage in question. I wondered if anyone had reached out to Fullerton to see if he may still have the scenes that the fans have been dying to see for years. Bill Randolph (who wanted to see his scene as much as anyone else did) and I reached out to Fullerton to see if he still had it. We left a few voicemails and hoped for the best. With less than two weeks before our deadline, I received a call from Carl saying he had a VHS tape with all the material that was trimmed. However, he couldn't remember exactly what was on it, but was kind enough to loan it to us for inclusion on the set.

Because I was terrified that if it was shipped via postal mail, it might get lost in transit, so I made arrangements to get the tape in person through my co-producer and pal, Peter Bracke. I joked with Peter that I should have gotten him a suitcase with handcuffs and a bodyguard as this most likely was the only copy in existence. Peter met up with Carl, who handed him the old cassette with a typewritten date of April 24, 1981 – about a month before the film opened in

theatres! What could be on the tape?

Now came the fun part, seeing if the tape was still viewable after all of these years. It's possible because of its age, it could have been blank or no longer viewable. We wouldn't know until we got it transferred. Shout Factory's Cliff MacMillan made arrangements to get it transferred at a top-notch facility. However, there was an issue: the lab indicated that the tape was stuck together. If pulled apart, the magnetic information could be stripped, which would mean that we would lose everything. The only solution: baking the tape in an oven overnight to separate the reels. The VHS would have to be taken apart, the reels would have to be placed into an oven and baked overnight in order to make it playable. After

waiting almost 40 years for this footage, we would have to wait another couple of days to see if "Operation: Baking with Jason" was successful. So, after the careful dismantling and baking operation, the tape was then put back into the cartridge so it could be transferred to a digital format."

You can find the full story at:
facebook.com/samuelsonstudios

For *Friday the 13th* fans the world over, this is something of a dream-come true. There is nothing

quite like uncovering footage believed to be lost to time, especially when it's connected to a movie and a franchise that are as beloved as this one. But we here at Lunchmeat would be remiss if we didn't take a moment to highlight the role our favourite format played in this historic restoration.

This near-mythical footage was just sitting on those magnetic reels for nearly 40 years! As exciting as this success story is, it also calls attention to the many millions of dusty tapes lining shelves, closets, and, unfortunately, mildew laden basements and sweltering attics. What buried treasures could they contain? And how close have they come to being lost forever? How many already have?

Lunchmeat has never been shy about our clarion call for the preservation of VHS tapes of all stripes, but stories like this one perfectly illustrate what is at stake. There are still treasures, hidden away for decades, in danger of being lost forever. The good news: Videovores like you are on the front lines when it comes to keeping that from happening, and frankly, we wouldn't have it any other way.

Groove and Groove and Never Stop VHSearching!
lunchmeatvhs.com

Images courtesy of Samuelson Studios



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SCORE FASTOUR**

FAST EDDIE vs. DUANE REGRETZKY

9/30	TORONTO, ON	BOVINE SEX CLUB	10/7	KAMLOOPS, BC	HAUS OF MISFIT
10/1	KITCHENER, ON	THE YETI	10/8	KELOWNA, BC	DUNNENZIES
10/2	OTTAWA, ON	HOUSE OF TARG	10/9	GOLDEN, BC	GOLDEN BOWLING
10/3	TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC	CAFE BAR ZENOB	10/10	CALGARY, AB	PIN BAR
10/4	SHERBROOKE, QC	LE MURDOCH	10/11	EDMONTON, AB	BLAKBAR
10/5	MONTREAL, QC	TURBO HAUS	10/12	RED DEER, AB	PUNKSGIVING



Fight Club First Aid

By Lily Fawn

The first rule of Fight Club is: you do not talk about Fight Club. The second rule is: you do not talk about Fight Club. But... screw it— let's talk about some herbal first aid for your punk-ass injuries.

Herbal Nurse Lily Fawn is here for all your bumps, bruises, and rock 'n' roll mishaps. Skinned your knees skateboarding? Took a mosh pit elbow to the face? Drunken fall-downs? Don't worry—I've got you covered with some quick and easy first aid tips.

The plantain leaf is nature's Band-Aid.

Not the banana... but the weed. Plantago major grows in almost every wild grassy area near sidewalks, parking lot cracks, and beside every tour van's flat tire off the side of the highway. It is great to know about this handy herb for all your basic wounds because it sucks out dirt and toxins from wounds and can also be applied to remove slivers and bee stings.

Use for: Cuts, scrapes, bug bites, bee stings, slivers, and minor infections.

How-to: Chew on a fresh leaf and then slap the paste (saliva and all) onto your wound. There is nothing more punk than a spit poultice— ancient medicine. Plantain is also one of my number-one herbs for the Bonus First Aid Salve recipe below.

Comfrey leaf and root tea: for sprains & strains

If your ankle is twice the size after that last stage dive, comfrey can help get you back on your feet

fast. Comfrey helps with bruises, sprains, strains, torn ligaments— anything you didn't quite break. It stimulates cell growth and helps to rapidly heal connective tissue. **IMPORTANT** Do not use on deep wounds because it can heal and build new skin so fast that it can trap infection under the surface. Magical healing powers.

Quick comfrey tea to soak your wounds:

- 1/2 cup comfrey leaf
- 1/2 cup comfrey root
- 5 cups of water.

Gently simmer for 30 minutes and let it sit for 2 hours, strain, and apply regularly. Soak some gauze in the tea and wrap around your ankle.

Boo-Boo Booze Tincture

Need a painkiller/disinfectant/tonic that tastes a bit less like regret than your Pabst Blue? Make your own tincture. Use it to clean your wounds, stop bleeding, and boost your immune system.

- 1 part yarrow flowers (astringent)
- 1 part calendula flowers (soothing + antiseptic)
- 1 part echinacea root (immune boost)
- Vodka (40 proof or higher)

Instructions: Finely chop all of the herbs. Fill a jar halfway with the herbs. Top up the jar to the brim with vodka. Add a lid. Shake daily. Wait 4–6 weeks. Strain. Use drops internally for immunity or externally on wounds.

General First Aid Tips:

- Always clean wounds first (boiled water, Boo-Boo Tincture, or straight-up saline).
- Keep some gauze, tape, gloves, and activated charcoal (for food poisoning and diarrhea) in your kit too.
- Know when to go to the ER (if it's spurting blood or you see bone? Maybe don't tough it out... get proper help).
- Store your salves and tinctures in dark glass, cool spaces, and label them with what they are good for so you don't have to think about what's what when you're in pain.

Bonus — First Aid Salve

Take all the herbs I have listed in this article (plantain, comfrey, yarrow, calendula, echinacea), chop them up, let them wilt for 3 days...

- 1/2 cup dried or wilted herb
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 oz beeswax (about 2 tbsp grated)
- Optional: a few drops lavender or tea tree oil

Gently warm the herbs in olive oil for 4 hours

HERBAL WITCH

(double boiler or crockpot on low). Strain through cheesecloth, then melt in the beeswax. Pour into a couple of jars. Let cool. Label it. Use on bruises, cuts, strains, sprains, bee stings, and swelling.

Stay tough, stay tender.

hushhushnoise.com

MAAN BIKINI

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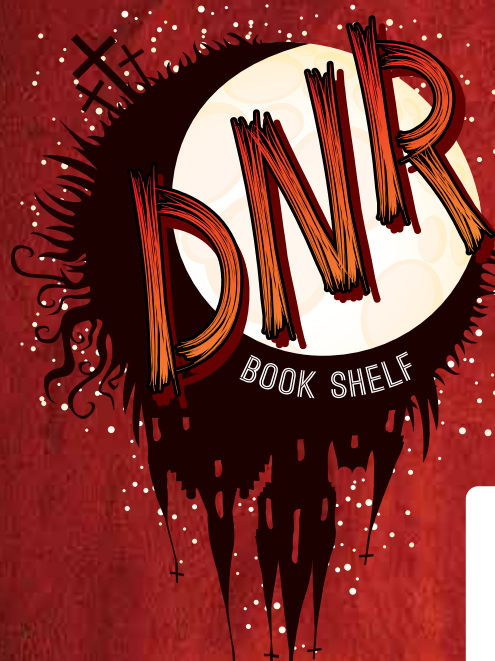
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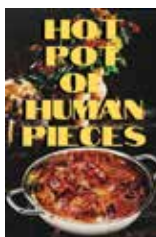
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DO NOT RESUSCITATE DO NOT READ

REVIEWS DEDICATED TO THE MOST EXTREME, HORROR, BIZARRO, NOIR, SPLATTERPUNK, GRINDHOUSE, WEIRDO, FUCKED UP, COUNTER CULTURE, UNDERGROUND, SATANIC, EROTIC, & MUSIC RELATED BOOKS WE CAN FIND!

HOT POT OF HUMAN PIECES



Ryan Dyer
Independent
July 1, 2025

Calgary's own well-travelled little freakazoid is back at it again, and this time he's serving it up from the continent of Asia. Dyer absolutely knocks this one out of the park, delving into steaming horror sub-genres such as splatter-punk, body horror, camp, psychological, gore, and good old 'what the hell did I just read'. A subject Dyer knows extensively from his time on the continent of extremes, he digs deeply into his dark matter to serve these nine twisted tales to us.

A satisfying and ominous journey any horror fan would take pleasure in. Dyer takes us through such beauties as the first course "Cockroach Girl", where the little roaches get revenge she isn't even seeking. You just can't help but need a scrubbing shower after you get through it. "The Forbidden City Cripple" is probably my favourite because it's got a bit of camp, body horror and gross out as well. A good chuckle with the clever one-upmanship of the local scraggy buskers of Forbidden City. The ghostly and dreamy overtones from "Capsule" and "Abandoned Hospital Crawl, 2:37am" leave you slightly uneasy while "The Horney Witch with the Flying Head" causes you to giggle and cheer for the Krasure and her pleasures. Wrestling and horror make a head-on collision with "The Death Match" if you can keep from flinching, that is. So many creative stories that have not been regurgitated, all ending with the final and longest of the bunch, "F*CK OR DIE!" A twisted game show gone awry. "May cause rage, erections lasting beyond the grave, or total cardiac disintegration. Not FDA approved. Not legal in Canada." That tells you all you need to know. Devour this awesome collection as soon as you can - there will be no leftovers as Dyer states... he isn't kidding! Loved it.

Demonika

THE UNWORTHY



Agustina Bazterrica,
Sarah Moses
(translator)
Scribner
March 4, 2025

The Unworthy opens as our unnamed narrator muses on the cockroaches she has sewn into the pillow of a rival at the House of the Sacred Sisterhood. Both women long to be elevated to the ranks

of the Chosen— or better yet the Enlightened, who are kept sequestered from the unworthy in a forbidden chamber with a solid black door, carved and imposing. The setting of this story is a bleak one. It has been many years, generations even, since parts of the world were overtaken by the seas. The land has become barren and inhospitable and any human wanderers left alive in the wastelands are contaminated. The House of the Sacred Sisterhood however, stays strong in its isolation. Behind a large wall and protected by the sacrifices of the unworthy, the Sisterhood aims to preserve their way of life, ruled by "Him" and overseen by the cruel Superior Sister. As new and unusual circumstances come into play, our narrator— herself one of the unworthy— begins to notice cracks in her understanding of the Sisterhood and the world around her. As she allows the doubts to creep in and new bonds to form, the question of what secrets are hidden behind that cold black door becomes ever more pressing.

Agustina Bazterrica hit international sensation status with *Tender is the Flesh*, her first English-language release. While it perhaps doesn't land with quite as much of a gut-punch, *The Unworthy* is equally unique and visceral. If your tastes skew toward sadistic nuns, dystopian futures, gothic themes, religious imagery, and a bit of magical realism, you will easily find yourself lost in our narrator's story, eager for answers and waiting with bated breath at the turn of every page.

Laura Phaneuf

THE OCCULT HARRY SMITH: THE MAGICAL & ALCHEMICAL WORK OF AN ARTIST OF THE EXTREMES



Harry Smith, Peter
Valente (editor)
Park Street Press
July 8, 2025

The one thing I believe we all have in common is we are all trying, in our own way, to make some kind of sense of reality, of the world around us, of our existence. In the case of Harry Smith, he went a hell of a lot further than the majority of us ever will, and did some pretty amazing things, in his explorations of what we call 'reality'. It's also fair to say, again, unlike the majority of us, Smith lived before he died, rather than simply existing.

This excellent book is a collection of writing on Smith. In this, Smith has much in common with Aleister Crowley. Harry Smith (1923-1991) was an artist, painter, filmmaker, anthropologist, archivist and ethnomusicologist. He is justly famous for his *Anthology of American Folk Music* and his collection of paper airplanes is housed at the Getty Research Institute. Smith had a deep interest in tarot, magic, Kabbalah and many other occult practices, his goal being to create a unified work from a variety of topics. He was truly a seeker of the truth.

To sum up, *The Occult Harry Smith* is a fascinating exploration of a fascinating man.
Steve Earles

IT CAN'T RAIN ALL THE TIME: THE CROW



Alisha Mughal
ECW Press
July 15, 2025

I had no idea what to expect from ECW Press' release, as I had never read one of their other Pop Classics (Short books on why a certain pop phenomenon matters - ECW press has a whole collection from *Twin Peaks* to *Clueless* and more) by Alisha Mughal. I was pleasantly surprised and thoroughly enjoyed it. Written by a mentally ill millennial, it's essentially like a 1990s *Coles Notes* we used back in the day for English class when we dove into a classic such as *Macbeth*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, etc. Every fact from A-Z that you could ever want to know is packed into this little 165-page powerhouse, complete with sources and all should you want to fall down the rabbit hole even further.

She starts us off from the very beginning with James O'Barr. The man, his history, how the idea started, the comic, his life, and into the budding film, all the way through the film's trials and tribulations, the iconic soundtrack, into the fandoms, the (horrible) sequels and reboots, incredibly reflective thoughts about it as a whole and beyond... it's all in there. What shocked me was even being a huge Crow superfan, there were a ton of facts and urban legends set straight I had no clue about, including the details surrounding the record-screaming tragedy that took place to the beloved Lee himself and showing us how it affected and tortured Michael Massee (Fun Boy), who delivered the fatal shot.

I didn't necessarily need the details on Mughal's life, but I actually didn't mind how they kept popping in and out throughout as she unravelled *The Crow* for us in such an organized fashion, the difference between this and *Coles Notes* - the human condition. So I can appreciate this. ANY Crow fan would cherish this book. It's got a gift-giving favourite written all over it.

Demonika

TAROT AS STORYTELLER: PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT, CARTOMANCY AND READING THE WEB OF FATE



Salicrow
Destiny Books
June 10, 2025

Interest in tarot cards has never been higher. I put this down to the uncertain and violent, and indeed, often spiritually devoid world we now find ourselves living in, a world of chaos and morbid flux, where it is no surprise that people are trying

to find a personal sense of purpose, to divine order from chaos.

However, while Salicrow's fine book is undoubtedly a most valuable aid and how to read and interpret the tarot cards, she goes far beyond that.

Drawing from her Irish traveller heritage (Being Irish, I totally understand the perception this gives her; my mother still remembers the wise women of her childhood, so it's lovely see Salicrow continue this important tradition), and her Blackfoot heritage, to delve deep into the mysteries of the tarot.

I feel Tarot as Storyteller reflects the world's need for deeper spiritual meaning, and for this, Salicrow must be highly applauded.

Steve Earles

STRANGE HOUSES



Uketsu
HarperVia
June 3rd 2025

Have you ever browsed real estate listings online, just for the fun of it? Perhaps clicking through photos, images of spacious yards or beautiful bathrooms, admiring the possibilities inherent in a new home. Eventually, you may come to the floor plans and perhaps you note which placements you prefer for windows, doorways, the various rooms and hallways. Maybe sometimes in looking closely at those layouts you have noticed something just a little... off. It could be a strangely shaped room, an inconsistent alignment, or an under-utilized corner. Many of these could be attributed to a quirk of the design parameters, or just short-sighted planning. But what if it meant something more? Those dead spaces could be an indication of something sinister at play. This is the premise for Uketsu's *Strange Houses*, as we follow the author's investigation into a mysterious house with too many dark secrets.

After my review for *Strange Pictures* in the last issue, I was eager to get my hands on *Strange Houses* as soon as I could for a follow up and comparison. Though originally written and released in Japan as Uketsu's first *Strange* novel, the decision was made to release it to the English market after the debut of *Strange Pictures* earlier this year. Since taking in both offerings, it is clear to me that they led with the stronger of the two. Uketsu gains points for making his eerie tales approachable for all types of readers, but the level of suspension of disbelief required for this story's main motivations to feel convincing was asking a little too much of me. Ultimately, I think Uketsu's current English-language repertoire would make a fun introduction for someone just getting into international horror, but despite the engaging format it may leave a little to be desired for the aficionado.

Laura Phaneuf

'EVERYBODY IS A BOOK OF BLOOD: WHEREVER WE'RE OPENED. WE'RE RED.'
CLIVE BARKER, BOOKS OF BLOOD: VOLUMES ONE TO THREE

Submit your inquires or reviews to:
demonika@absoluteunderground.ca

THANK
YOU TO



ARTIST PROFILE



Keenan Poloncsak

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

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

Keenan Poloncsak: My name is Keenan Poloncsak. I am known for making underground comics, self-published multilingual children's books and I also run my own traditional bookbinding in Montreal. I often bind my publications myself.

AU: You're the one behind *The Fart Slide* comics in the magazine, and you recently released a graphic novel titled *The Bookbinder's Slaughter*. What can you tell us about it?

KP: *The Bookbinder's Slaughter* is a psychological thriller short horror comic that tells the story of a fourth-generation bookbinder and her creepy client who is obsessed with spreading the word of God at any cost. It is dedicated to my mentor Laura Shevchenko (*The Bookbinder's Daughter*) and very loosely based on her and a client we once had at the shop.

AU: What other works have you published over the years and what are they about?

KP: My first comic series was *Pro-can (ibalizm)* (2006-2009), a story about a drug called Pro-can that turns people into zombie cannibals. From 2010 to 2018 I made a series called *Squid-gee* about a squeezeegee squid who lives in a prehistoric undersea Montreal. Around 2018 I started making *The Fart Slide* comics (loosely based on *The Far Side* by Gary Larson) (I will be putting out a third *Fart Slide* anthology this

year). I also made five multilingual children's books and co-produced two underground gore films.

AU: You also have a new one coming out, this time a kid's book. What's it about?

KP: *The Fjord Shark* is a quadrilingual (English, French, Innu-Aimun, Icelandic) children's book about a Greenland shark who visits the Saguenay Fjord. It is my best children's book so far, and the first one that I made while actually being a father. It is dedicated to my daughter (Fjord Pauline Poloncsak).

AU: What other books have you written for kids and what inspired you to start writing literature for children?

KP: I feel like making children's books is a must in the journey of a seasoned illustrator-writer. The first one I made was *Rufus the Cat* in 2009. It tells the true story of my cat who meets my dog for the first time (they

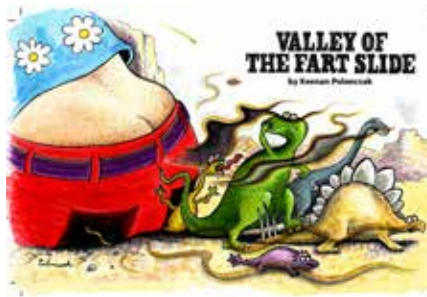
have since passed, R.I.P.). It all started because I had drawn a few pictures of my cat and dog and then decided to make a story around it. In 2012 I made *The Griffintown Fox*, the story of a mother fox in Griffintown whose babies get lost during construction of condos. The other animals help her find them. This one

was inspired by a fox that I saw while coming home from work in Griffintown. *Northern Mink* in 2018. The story of wild mink living in northern Québec. When the adults ban crossing the road, a young mink named Oakley becomes more and more curious about the other side.

Opossum's Landing in 2021. The story of a family of opossums who end up in southern Québec after jumping on a canoe during a flash flood.

AU: Are all of them multilingual? Why did you decide to write them in multiple languages?

KP: They are always at least English and French, often trilingual



or even quadrilingual. Some of the other languages include Spanish, Inuktitut, Persian, Hungarian, Innu-Aimun and Icelandic. Who knows what the next one will be? I choose the languages based on the story itself, where it takes place and the availability

of professional translators that I can find. Each page has all the languages one after the other in an eye-pleasing way. It's really a win-win for everyone; the more languages you have the more people can read it. In a sense I like making things that I would have liked to read when I was a kid. I only speak English and French. Now that I have a kid, sometimes I try to read it to her in the other languages and it's hilarious!

AU: You did all of the illustrations and bookbinding yourself?

KP: Yes! Drawing has always been my number one passion since I was a child. When I learned bookbinding (2013) it instantly became another passion. I like to do everything myself as much as possible and keep the production as local

as I can. I work full time in my bookbinding and an arsenal of material and tools at my disposal.

AU: What media do you use for your illustrations?

KP: For the children's books my medium of choice is watercolour illustrations on hand made paper. For the comics it can either be Micron pens, markers, pencils or a mix of everything.

AU: You have also done some filmmaking here and there. What can you tell us about that?

KP: In 2013 I co-produced the short film *Pro-can (ibalizm)* based on my first comic. The team was amazing! With Roxane De Koninck as co-producer and D.O.P., and Camille Monette on gore special effects. I even emailed the singer of one of my favourite mincore bands (Agathocles) and he let us put the song



"judged by appearance" in the opening credits.

The whole thing went so well that we produced another film called *Termitator* a few years later.

This one about a hermit living in the woods who has an accident with chemicals and termites, he turns into a humanoid-termite mutant. Then a bunch of douchebags show up at his cabin to party and he kills them all in funny ways. This one was particularly an interesting experience for me because I got to play the mutant Termitator. This film has a few key scenes that won us many awards in the international gore film scene.

because I got to play the mutant Termitator.

This film has a few key scenes that won us many awards in the international gore film scene.

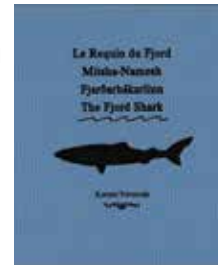
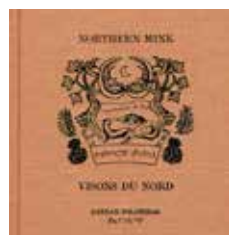
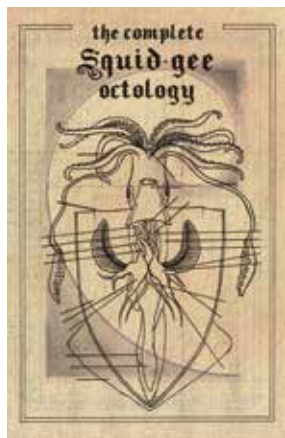
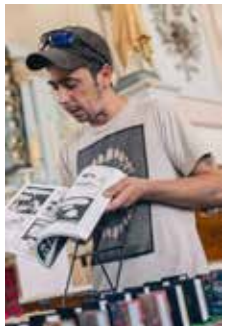
AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

KP: I am trying to get my books into as many libraries as possible. People should ask their local libraries to order my books if they don't already have them.

AU: Where can people find your work?

KP: I do a lot of zine fairs and comic fests in Québec and Ontario, always hoping one day I could get invited to a cool festival... People can also come to my bookbinding shop "Le Relieur des Faubourgs" 2205 rue Parthenais #107) in Montreal. I have everything and more there, it's a little bit like a museum...

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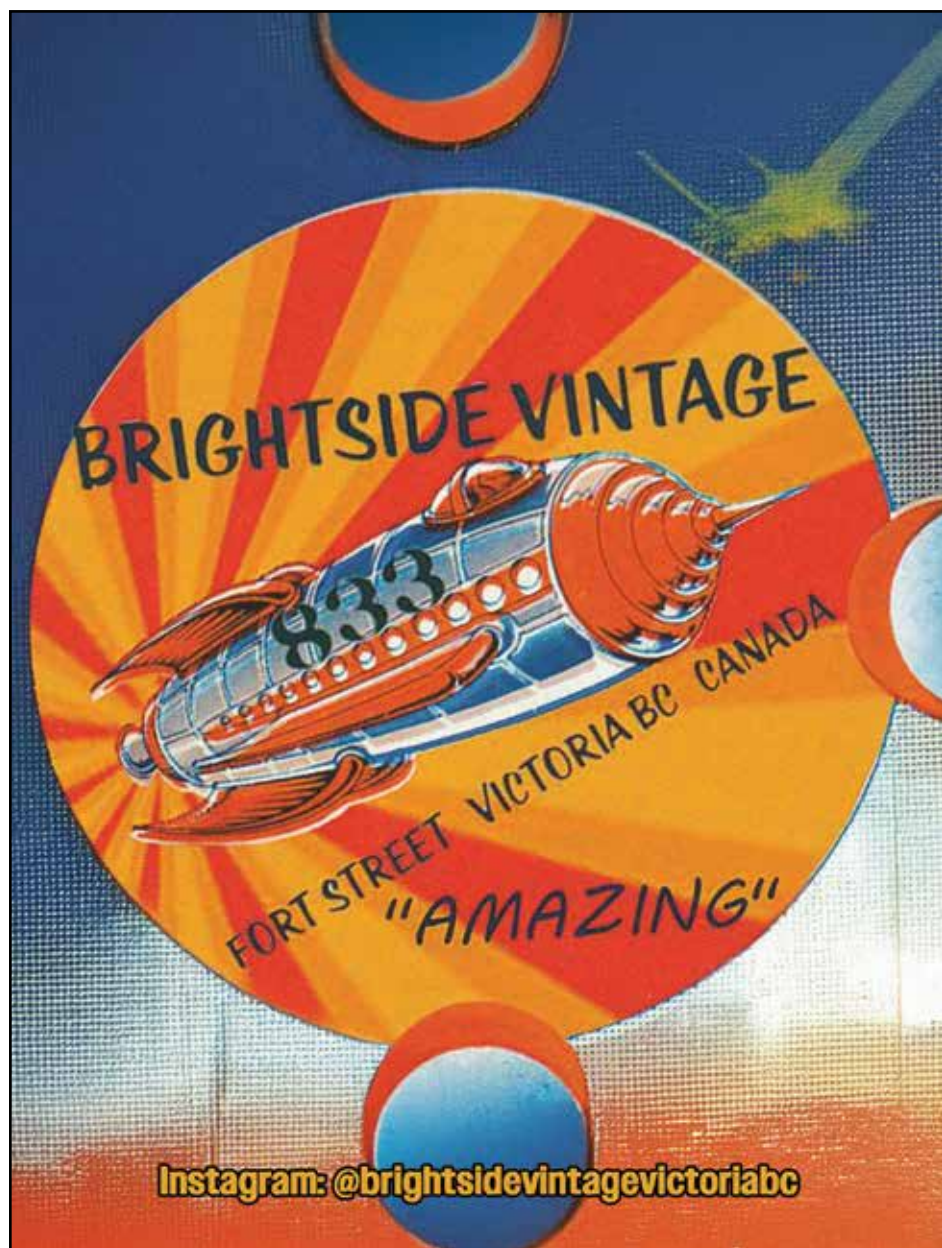
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HEADSTONES – Part 1

Head non-stoner Hugh Dillon frontman of Headstones and star of cult Canadian classic Hard Core Logo.

By Ira "One Foot In The Gutter" Hunter

AU: What are you most famous for?

HD: Hi my name is Hugh Dillon. Famous is such a funny word. I'm just me. I'm a musician, a creator, a writer, a songwriter and that's pretty much it. I created a show called Mayor of Kingstown that's on Paramount+. I started the Headstones with my friends Tim White, Trent Carr and Steve Carr. I was lucky to be on the cutting edge of Canadian television with shows called Durham County and Flashpoint. But the line through all of it is the singer songwriter for the Headstones. Oh and actually Hard Core Logo. Because Quentin Tarantino picked that movie up.

AU: Did you first start the band for sex, drugs, or rock and roll? or all of the above?

HD: I started it to get myself out of depression and drug addiction. That's why I started writing songs I was not in a good place and that was the only thing that saved me. That's the only thing that quieted my mind. So it was for none of those reasons. It was to save myself and that's what art does.

AU: Was working with director Bruce McDonald on Hard Core Logo your first acting experience?

HD: With Bruce McDonald yes, but not on Hard Core Logo. He hired me for a movie called Dance Me Outside. Here's how it started. He met us to

do a video. So at the time we were with MCA Records and they hired this guy to do a video for us. I have always been influenced by movies and television as well as music. He was interested in music and I was interested in film and television. It was a perfect kind of marriage creatively and we just hit it off. He said you should get into acting. I had acted in high school with Gord Downie in Kingston. I had a great acting teacher but it didn't appeal to me because I wanted the control of what a rock and roll band gave me, I wanted that immediacy. I loved the power of the guitars, the drums and the sound of all of it. Rock and Roll was the kind of the main driver and yet I really understood film and television. Because from the 60s, 70s and 80s I was going to movies, like a drug habit. I went every day and so I understood it but I kind of felt Rock and Roll had more integrity, at the time. Bruce was really trying to convince me to get into acting and he wanted somebody to be in his movies. I think he was looking for somebody different. Not just a standard kind of theatre trained actor, it was the 90s, it was Tarantino. He was looking for something different and to make different movies. When Hard Core Logo came about, it was that. Bruce was pivotal. That's really where it started was Hard Core Logo. What's funny is it started in BC so I was away from everybody and everything with that movie. It really allowed me to take charge because I was the lead in it and Bruce let me kind of write the ending of it. So I started understanding I can write. I'm not confined to being an actor. It's more if you can allow yourself to be that creative force then there's no limit.

AU: I remember discovering Headstones with a slim case CD that was placed inside the cases of Molson Canadian.

HD: That was our first tour. We had a van and we'd stop at beer stores like, Holy fuck we are famous.



I remember the first time we crossed the bridge coming into Vancouver and the first time we were on the ferry going to Victoria. It was like we had made it.

The band just opened up everything. To see the country and to get to Vancouver and Victoria I have a soft spot for that. I've shot a lot of movies there and Hard Core Logo was such a big thing. When we go back to the Commodore that place still erupts, we still sell it out. It's still fun. We shot parts of Hard Core Logo there.

AU: Before taking the role of Joe Dick in Hard Core Logo were you into punk rock? How much of Joe Dick is actually you?

HD: Not much. But the sentiment at the end, the suicide was me. I rewrote that script to do that and there were a lot of pieces in it that were very Headstones bandcentric. But that character, there's an old school quality to that character. I remember what I went for was the emotional component of it and I could relate to that part of it. I

know the thing with giving Billy Tallent the finger, that was me.

AU: Do you play Hard Core Logo songs live?

HD: Sometimes.

AU: A band called Frostbacks, instead of Blue Tattoo, they have a song called Blue Ski-Doo.

HD: I love it. There used to be a band from BC called Bruno Gerussi's Medallion. I was in a band called Sean Penitentiary that's where the song Cemetery first appeared back in like the late 80s.

AU: The new album will be available on vinyl. Any plans to release the back catalog on vinyl?

HD: Yeah. The whole thing with Dine Alone Records, the whole community with Dallas, Emily and Joel it's kind of where I always wanted to be. When I was a kid I was always a record collector. That's what drove me to write music and play in a band. I would lend Gord Downie my records in

Kingston before he was in the Hip. When I first got a record deal with MCA they had switched that same fucking year. So I got a CD, the CD that you found in that case of beer. The part I'm not telling you is it was fucking kind of always disappointing. I always thought you get a record deal, you're going to have a vinyl. It's only now our first release with Dine Alone is on vinyl. The very first one was PEOPLESKILLS on vinyl and the whole band loves it because vinyl is where it's at. The whole community around it and Dine Alone Records is like a record store and a record company. Sometimes it's luck and timing and perseverance and we couldn't be happier.

AU: Did you see Hard Core Logo 2?

HD: I thought it was great. I remember when Bruce was making it and talking to him about it. He's a great filmmaker. He's a Canadian icon. I'd love to do another movie with that dude.

AU: Tell us about the new album that's coming out September 19th, BURN ALL THE SHIPS?

HD: It's an incendiary piece of work. We got very lucky and that is our calling card. We keep our heads down. We have an incredible work ethic we are very much into songwriting. We got lucky with Dallas Green, Emily Haines from Metric, Luke Schindler who engineered it, Chris Osti produced it and the fact that Dine Alone Records picked us up at this stage. That they recognized the songwriting was profoundly satisfying.

AU: Any tracks you're extra stoked on?

HD: I like Put That Car In Drive and Navigate! Dallas Green's performance on Navigate was exceptional. With the Headstones band we've never followed any trend. We've just done it for ourselves. You get to a place where it's sometimes surreal at how things just fall together. We spend time together, we put the work in, and eventually something comes out of it. Something super positive that we're proud of.

hughdillon.com

headstonesband.com

dinealonestore.com

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Band Photo Credit: Mike Neal

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Night Court

Interview with bandmembers Jiffy Marx, Emilor, and Dave-O

by Ray MacKay

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

Jiffy Marx: I was the skateboarder and bassist in the band but recently broke my arm and dislocated two fingers, so maybe now I'm just a singer? Too soon to tell.

Emilor: We're Night Court and we're most famous for injuring ourselves, except Dave-O; he's made it without breaking any bones...yet!

Dave-O: I play guitar and I sing.

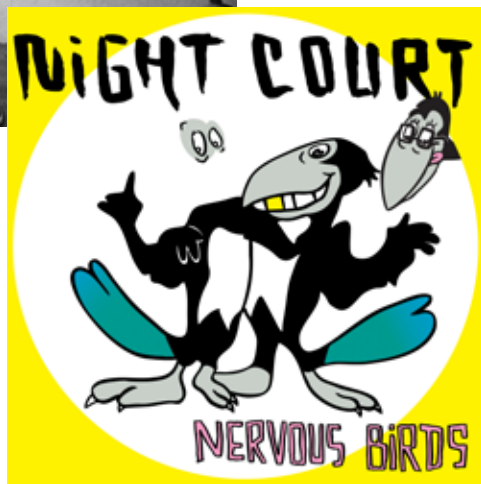
AU: Where are you from and what's the music scene like there?

Emilor: We're from Vancouver and the music

scene is alive and well. There are so many new exciting bands, venues and folks creating ways to foster community in a city that is hell-bent on making such things almost impossible. It's really wonderful to see that despite arts funding being cut and spaces being unable to survive in one of the most expensive cities in the world, that there is such a strong thriving community.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band.

Dave-O: The band started with Jiffy and I emailing song ideas back and forth to each other during the Covid lockdowns. We were in each other's "bubble" so we just started recording the songs that became the Nervous Birds duology on



Jiffy's old cassette 4-track. When the restrictions began to ease up, we convinced Emilor to join and played for the first time with Chain Whip at a skatepark generator show in September 2021. We haven't stopped playing and touring and writing since.

AU: What kind of music does Night Court perform?

Emilor: Very short songs that get stuck in your head and leave you wanting more. Luckily we keep bringing you more, and more, AND MORE!

Jiffy Marx: It's probably too shitty for the indie rockers but maybe not shitty enough for the punks?

AU: What was the inspiration for your name?

Dave-O: The name 'Night Court' made it on the list early (we thought it was very stupid and somewhat funny) and it just kept making it to the next round! It actually came down to Night Court vs Nervous Birds so we chose one for the band and one for the album.

Emilor: Late night tennis tournaments.

AU: Tell us about your new LP coming out!

Dave-O: The Nervous Birds LP is a compilation of our first two cassette releases (Nervous Birds One! and Nervous Birds Too!...plus an extra song) onto 12" vinyl! This was

always our plan for these songs so it is very cool to see it come to fruition! It's a split release between the original two record labels (Debt Offensive in Canada and Snappy Little Numbers in the U.S.) plus our friends Drunk Dial Records (U.S.) and Shield Recordings (Netherlands). Presale begins September 5, 2025 and the record is released October 17, 2025.

Emilor: It gives everyone something to tide them over while we finish up our 5th album which we recorded in Astoria Oregon earlier this year with Mike Vasquez, which was a wonderful experience after recording ourselves for the previous releases.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? What don't you want your family members to know?

Emilor: We have no secrets. We are perfect angels.

Jiffy Marx: I have not yet told them that I broke my arm.

Dave-O: Actually, lol really? I guess they'll find out here!

AU: Greatest career highlight to date?

Jiffy Marx: Very grateful for being able to open for bands that we love including but not limited to Marked Men, Toys That Kill, The Avengers, Radioactivity, most recently Pegboy, But I think the real career highlight would have to be releasing SHIT MACHINE on Recess Records last year.

Dave-O: Ditto...teenage dreams can come true!!

Emilor: Surviving an earthquake and subsequent tsunami warning in Arcata California while on tour. Oh wait, I guess that isn't a career highlight. In that case, definitely playing shows with some of our favourite bands like McLusky, Pegboy, The Marked Men, and so many more.

AU: Anything else to promote? Any upcoming tours?

Jiffy Marx: We're going to play some release shows for the new LP in October. Vancouver, Nelson, Calgary... I think we're playing Wheelies on Halloween!

Emilor: We will be playing some shows to celebrate the Nervous Birds vinyl release in October including October 11th at Redgate with the Tranzmitors and K-car!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Emilor: No guns, no gods, no war, no bombs.

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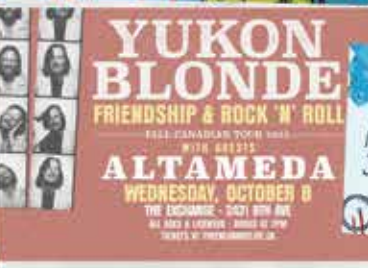
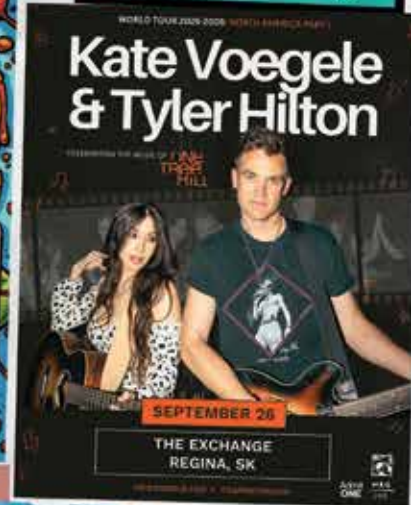
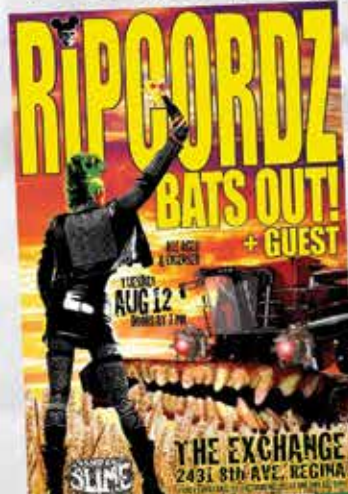
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Don't Say Please

The Oral History of die Kreuzen

"All bands have a lifespan and die Kreuzen were lucky to have burned so brightly during their tenure." - Steve Albini

Before Nirvana broke, before metal crossed into hardcore, there was Die Kreuzen.

In the industrial shadows of early-'80s Milwaukee, a band emerged from the wreckage of Midwest punk and Rust Belt disaffection with a sound that was as brutal as it was visionary. Die Kreuzen didn't just blur genre lines—they detonated them, fusing blistering hardcore with metallic urgency and whispers of 4AD melodic

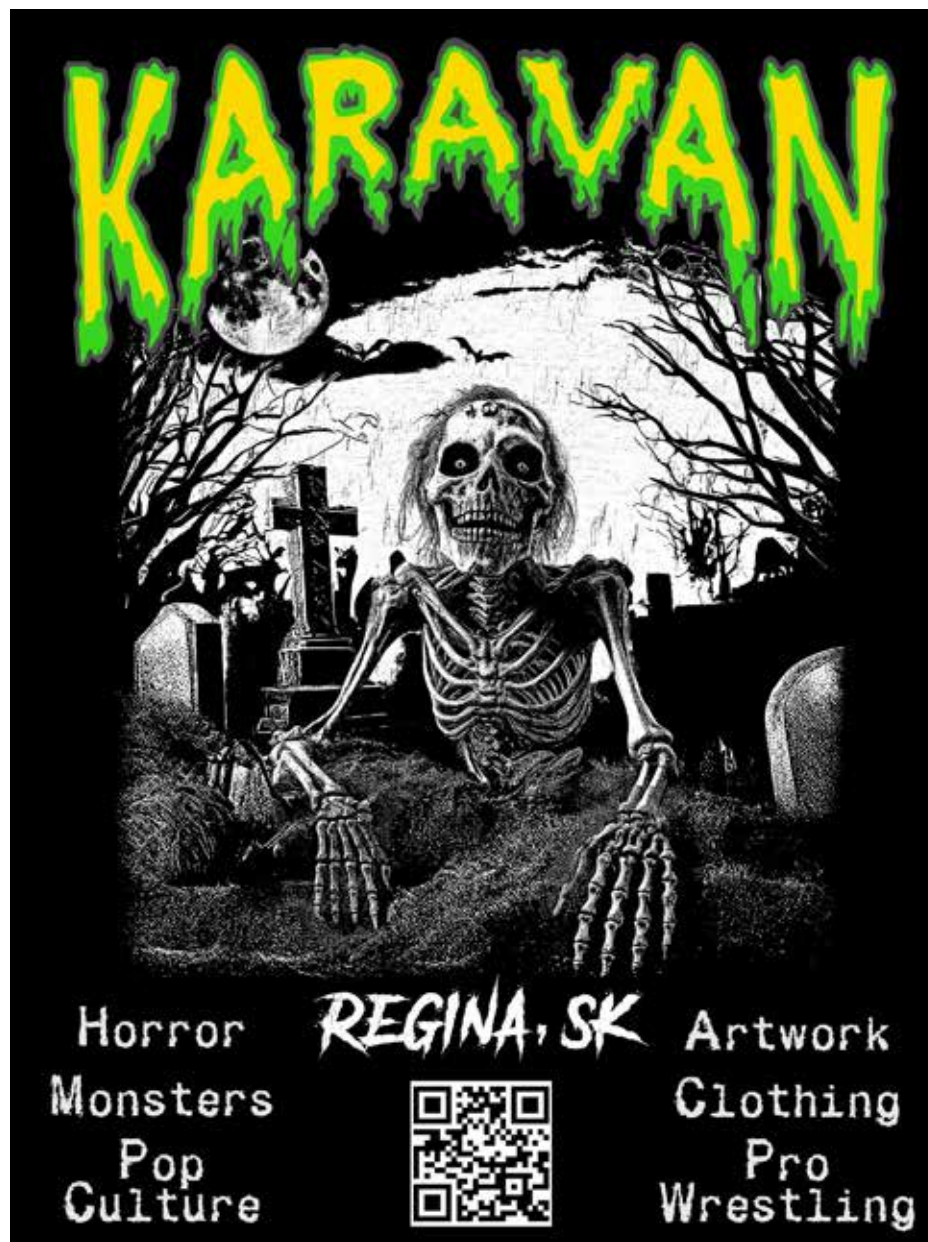
noise to forge a blueprint that countless others would follow. Were they punk? Metal? Something else entirely? Die Kreuzen's self-titled LP became a defining document of American hardcore. But rather than stand still, the band evolved—each album more experimental, more unpredictable, more uncompromising than the last. They toured relentlessly, made little money, and called it quits before most mainstream critics could even categorize them. And yet, their legacy only grew.

For the first time, *Don't Say Please: The Oral History of die Kreuzen* tells the band's story from the inside—through the voices of members Keith Brammer, Brian Egeness, Dan Kubinski, and Erik Tunison, as well as the musicians, producers, and friends who were shaped by their sound.

Featuring rare photos, artwork, and firsthand accounts, the book includes reflections from influential artists like Thurston Moore, Steve Albini, Neko Case, Butch Vig, and Lou Barlow, who lay bare the band's lasting impact on underground and alternative music.

Sahan Jayasuriya is a Milwaukee-based music writer and musician whose obsessive love of underground music was forged in the fires of '90s alt radio, Dischord releases, and dusty bins at independent record stores. A veteran contributor to *Shepherd Express* and *Milwaukee Magazine*, Jayasuriya has spent over a decade researching Die Kreuzen's history—interviewing the band, scouring archives, and unearthing lost ephemera.

feralhouse.com



Mad Wet Sea

Crowded streets below paint an image of horror; Cities burning, people screaming... the Devil Has Come! We are the Norse Gods of Fire, Wind, and Sea; Logi, Kari, and Ægir respectively, and we are Mad Wet Sea. I am Logi, I play guitar, sing, and write the music. Kari and Ægir are my brothers and play drums and bass, respectively. We sail the Sea spreading our music to the masses! We are a hard rock/metal band from the Great White North; Kingston, Ontario! Our belief is that rock has gotten too commercialized, too polished, and too generic. We want to bring the raw grittiness of heavy rock music back!

Building on the success of our previous EPs, ... *the Noise of Thunder!* and *Hunted*, we are sending out our newest song, "Devil Has Come".

laying down a killer guitar solo for us; we are grateful for his guitar skills!

Sonically inspired by classic metal like Iron Maiden, touching on Megadeth style vocals, and some Zakk Wylde guitar, "Devil Has Come" is chilling, fast, and dark!

Recorded, mixed, and mastered all in Ægir's keep, and once again released by MX-Pro Records, you will be able to find it on all streaming platforms and digital markets.

madwetsea.bandcamp.com

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We've never considered ourselves a political band, but with all of the unrest in the world, it has found its way into our music. The betrayal from empty promises, kidnapping and deporting citizens, the rich dictating policies; the populus must rise. Government works for the people, not the rich. The bitter glare from simply living, is not what we all should be receiving. To top it all off, we have our good friend Joerg Klein

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Absolute Live Reviews

AMF 2025: 15 Years of Loud, Proud, and Unforgettable Moments



July 11-12, Armstrong BC

I've been to Armstrong Metalfest more times than I can count, but it never gets old. My first time was back in 2013 — the same year Broken Neck Radio joined as an official media sponsor. This year marked the 15th anniversary of AMF, making the experience even more meaningful for us and our team, including The Horde and DJ Kaos, who joined me for their second year.



We left Vancouver Island early Thursday morning, geared up with everything for our upgraded media tent. After a stop in Chilliwack to switch vehicles and pick up Kaos, we rolled into Armstrong that afternoon. We expected a mostly empty campground. Instead, we arrived to a packed field of tents and early festival-goers already getting into the spirit. It was a clear sign — people were more hyped than ever. Credentials were a breeze. We grabbed our usual campsite — same spot as last year — and got the Broken Neck Radio banner up alongside our friends at Absolute Underground. Our home base was set, and it felt good to be back. Walking into the arena again felt like coming home. The familiar layout, the buzzing energy, the shared excitement — it's something only AMF can deliver. That night we roamed the campgrounds, taking in the community vibe that sets this fest apart. Friday came fast. After breakfast, we finalized our setup and got



ready to capture performances inside the arena. From the opening riffs of PlanetKiller to the crushing headliner Havok, the day was stacked with incredible performances. Friday standouts included:

- Shacked to the Throne – intense and brutal
- Drowning in Blood – pure heaviness
- Gravemass – eerie and tight
- Riot City – high energy, high power

The Yeti Games returned with Shane Sherman at the helm — always a hilarious highlight. But the emotional peak came at 3:30 PM with the premiere of the AMF Documentary, reflecting on 15 years of festival memories. You could feel the pride in the crowd.

Friday night brought the usual after-hours chaos. We made our rounds, including a visit to Camp Awesommer, a staple for those in the know.

Saturday kicked off with Floodgate, and the energy didn't dip once all day. Saturday highlights:

- Valley of Despair – dark and crushing
- Famous Strangers – unique and engaging
- Yegg – Wacken BC champs, and they showed why
- NOMAD – left it all on stage

A small but effective change this year saw foot traffic from the campground routed through the Metal Market, giving vendors more exposure and attendees a better browsing experience. Later in the day, Thrash Wrestling brought its signature mayhem to the festival once again. The AMF Champion defended their title in a match full of chaos and crowd energy — adding just the right dose of wild entertainment.

To close the night and the weekend, Born of Osiris delivered a high-octane headline set that tore the roof off. It was the perfect finale to an unforgettable weekend. When the last note rang out, it hit us — AMF 2025 was coming to a close. There's always that bittersweet feeling as you start packing up. But that's the beauty of this festival: it stays with you long after the amps cool down. Every year, Armstrong Metalfest brings together a community that truly loves heavy music. It's not just about bands and beer — it's about belonging. The friends you make, the moments you live, the memories that stick — they're why we keep coming back.

If you've never been to AMF, consider this your sign. It's more than a music festival—it's a metal rite of passage. Once you go, it gets into your blood. We're already counting the days until the next one.

- Stan Schinners of Broken Neck Radio

Gatecreeper, 200 Stab Wounds, Denial of Life

July 8, The Palace, Calgary AB

The cowboy hell of the Calgary Stampede occasionally allows a show to slip through that gives alternative-minded Calgarians a lifeline during the 10-day barrage of cowboy hats and daisy dukes. This year, Gatecreeper, 200 Stab Wounds, and Denial of Life dared to break through the rhinestone curtain with a blistering performance at The Palace on a sweltering July 8, as tourists clogged Stephen Avenue in a sea of sunburn and belt buckles.

It was, without exaggeration, the hottest day of the summer so far. Any beer in sight was fair game and didn't last long as fans crept into the club. Compared to previous shows—like the packed Otoboke Beaver Sled Island gig—the turnout was modest. This could be due to 200 Stab Wounds having already rolled through Calgary multiple times in the past couple years. Gatecreeper, less so, but still: this wasn't a Cannibal Corpse-sized crowd. These are newer bands still building their reputation and drawing power.

Philadelphia's Denial of Life opened the night, dropping a well-received Slayer medley and highlighting how hardcore influences are creeping more prominently into modern death metal. That said, no hardcore dancing broke out, suggesting the style has been folded into the bands' overall cadence and riffing rather than overt crowd antics.

200 Stab Wounds were clearly the main attraction. After several visits to Calgary, they've cultivated a strong following. Under dim red lights, they laid into a tightly wound set, pounding the crowd with chunky riffs and a ferocious presence. The audience responded in kind—this was the high point of the night in terms of energy and connection.

Gatecreeper, while technically tight and delivering a full set (including an encore and handshakes with the crowd), never quite hit the same level of connection. The band repeatedly urged the crowd for more action, but their set leaned between styles—some tracks pushed for a jump-around vibe, others beckoned the headbangers forward. That variation made it hard to lock into a unified crowd momentum. They weren't bad, but 200 Stab Wounds clearly walked away with the belt this evening.

- Ryan Dyer

Montreal International Jazz Festival

June 26-July 5, Montréal QC

"What does the Jazz Fest have to do with Absolute Underground?"

That's the reaction I got when I said I was covering the festival

for Absolute — a publication dedicated to underground and alternative subcultures, especially punk, metal, hardcore. But here's the thing: the Montréal International Jazz Festival is way more than just jazz. This year alone featured Ben Harper, George Thorogood, Violent Femmes, and even a band called Clown Core. If that's not punk rock, what is?

Ben Harper - July 2, Places des Arts

A masterclass in stillness, soul, and sound. From whispered vocals to soaring blues, every note felt like a conversation. Three thousand people, one voice — and total silence when he sang a cappella. Pure magic.



George Thorogood - July 3, MTELUS

Still bad to the bone after all these years. Thorogood lit up MTELUS with a gritty, high-voltage set that had the crowd howling from the first slide riff. From "Who Do You Love" to "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer", it was blues-rock played loud, raw, and tight. A true legend who hasn't lost a step.



Violent Femmes - July 4, Places des Arts

A wild, unfiltered dive into 40 years of beautiful chaos. Just drums, acoustic strings, and fire in their bones — they tore through *Violent Femmes* and *Hallowed Ground* in full. Every track was raw, ragged, and real. From punk anthems to twisted gospel, every moment felt like a sermon shouted from the street. It was loud. It was loose. It was legendary.



Clown Core - June 26, MTELUS

I didn't catch the whole set or the iconic clown masks — but what I saw was pure, chaotic theatre. A man in black, face hidden under a balaclava, walked on stage, asked for a smoke, lit it, and cued tracks off his iPhone. Behind him, a woman in a cloak filmed it all and projected it live behind them. Everyone looked around thinking: What the fuck is going on? Exactly the point. No explanations. No compromise. Just confusion, art, and a big middle finger to the system. That is punk rock. When the full show kicked in, it was a sensory assault — pounding drums, warped sax, glitch visuals, genreless noise, and total defiance. Clown Core doesn't perform. They confront. And in that confrontation, they're brilliant.



Other sets that absolutely blew me away included Trombone Shorty, who brought unstoppable New Orleans energy and lit up the stage with every blast of his horn. Monsieur Periné delivered pure joy, a colourful, infectious set full of rhythm and heart. Esperanza Spalding was simply mesmerizing, blending jazz, soul, and poetry into something that felt transcendent. PJ Morton brought deep soul and gospel fire, his voice as powerful as his presence. Fulu Miziki Kolektiv was a visual and sonic explosion — raw, fearless, and entirely their own world. And the Afrotonik Takeover turned the night into a euphoric celebration of Afro-electronic beats, dance, and connection. Every one of these performances reminded me why live music still hits harder than anything else.

So many shows, so little time — when the Montreal Jazz Fest hits, the city transforms. With 350+ concerts, free outdoor stages, and global talent, it's one of the most diverse festivals on Earth.

Some might wonder what jazz has to do with underground culture — but look closer. Jazz was born in smoke-filled rooms, out of struggle, rebellion, and raw self-expression. It challenged norms, broke musical boundaries, and gave a voice to those the mainstream tried to silence. Long before punk ever picked up a guitar, jazz was already tearing down walls with horns and heart. Jazz didn't just break the rules — it rewrote them. I know I'll get slaughtered for saying this but yeah, jazz is the OG punk.

- Jean-Francois Gosselin

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Pixies Burn MTELUS to the Ground July 8, MTELUS, Montreal QC



On July 8, 2025, the Pixies stormed through MTELUS with a no-holds-barred set that proved exactly why they're alt-rock royalty. From the first distorted note to the final squall of feedback, the sold-out Montreal crowd was on fire — and the band matched their energy with raw, relentless force. Kurt Vile and The Violators set the stage with a cool, meandering opener, but once the Pixies took over at 9:20 PM—after their signature "Pet Sounds" intro—the tone shifted fast. What followed was a career-spanning, 39-song blowout that left no era untouched. From *Bossanova* cult favorites like "Velouria" and "Dig for Fire" to chaotic deep cuts like "Blown Away," it was clear: this wasn't just a nostalgia trip, it was a sonic assault.



The crowd, charged from the first downstroke, gave it right back — dancing, shouting, and even crowd surfing. The energy was electric, the kind you only get when legends still play like they've got something to prove. Surf-rock instrumentals like "Cecilia Ann" ripped through the set like rogue waves. And when "Where Is My Mind?" dropped near the end, MTELUS nearly came unglued. A standout moment came when Kim Deal told the crowd they'd dusted off some rare tracks just for this show — relearned, rehearsed, and ripped to shreds live without a hitch. That commitment, that edge, is what separates the Pixies from the

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imitators. No pyros, no pretense — just sweat, distortion, and grit. Their full-album tour energy from *Trompe le Monde* and *Bossanova* carried right into Montreal, and it hit hard. Two hours of razor-sharp chaos. The Pixies didn't just play MTELUS. They razed it.

- Jean-Francois Gosselin

Sled Island Presents: Otoboke Beaver / BB Bomb / Brain Bent

June 21, The Palace, Calgary, AB

The 2025 Sled Island guest curators Otoboke Beaver played their only appearance of the festival on Saturday night at a very sold-out Palace Theatre. Taiwan's 20-plus-year punk veterans BB Bomb provided direct support, while Calgary's Brain Bent opened the show.

Sled Island has hosted its share



of legendary Japanese acts in the past—Boris, Boredoms, among others—but by naming Otoboke Beaver as this year's guest curators, the festival leaned further into unpredictability and punk mischief. BB Bomb, one of their picks, played multiple shows throughout the week—at Pin Bar and on Sunday at the Palomino—but this was their chance to showcase themselves on the biggest stage. Their tight, high-energy 30-minute set delivered. "Merch is expensive because we had to ship it to Canada," they explained. "Please buy it."

Calgary's Brain Bent opened the



night. I'd seen them before at Pin Bar during a previous Sled Island, and it's always fascinating to see a band that thrives in intimate settings stretch out on a larger stage. Here, they felt right at home—tossing off sharp, sarcastic songs about golden arches and dead-end jobs, setting the stage with a satirical streak that

mirrored what was to come.

Otoboke Beaver took the stage with the kind of chaotic precision that's become their trademark—flipping between hardcore punk outbursts, tempo whiplash, and synchronized blasts of noise. But what made the set unforgettable wasn't just the mayhem. It was the moments between the mayhem.



Technical difficulties hit more than once during their hour-long set. Rather than kill the energy, these pauses added a surreal, endearing layer to the night. Guitarist Yoyoyoshie, serving as the band's hype engine, filled the gaps with battle-cry-like shouts of "Otoboke Beaver!" and enthusiastic banter in halting English: "Calgary is close to... the Rocky Mountains, right?" Her chaotic charisma contrasted perfectly with vocalist Accorinrin, whose tightly coiled stage presence projected command and irritation in equal measure.



At one point, Accorinrin picked up a half-crushed beer can that had landed on stage. "Don't throw beer," she said flatly, scanning the crowd. "If I see this again, I'm going back to Japan." A voice from the audience called back, "Fair enough."

Later, when a low amp hum buzzed awkwardly through the PA, the band paused again. "I don't like this noise," Accorinrin muttered, clearly annoyed. Yoyoyoshie, without missing a beat, grinned and replied: "I like making noise."

Each time the band punched back into a song, the tension and absurdity from the downtime made the return hit harder. It felt like the band had to fight through static, translation gaps, and minor chaos just to unleash their sound—and when they did, it was absolute catharsis.

- Ryan Dyer

Turnstile or Merry-go-round? A Blast from the Past at Ottawa Bluesfest

July 12, Ottawa ON



Tuning into Turnstile on a blistering hot summer night in the flattest flats of Ottawa— the crowd is young, ecstatic, and unaffected by nostalgia. I wish I could say the same for myself. I am transported back to 2006, where I was once an angsty 15-year-old with semi-dye red streaks in my hair, thick black eyeliner, lime green and black patterned arm warmers, black clothing head to foot (no matter the weather), and chains clanging around.

It's official, it is 2025 and the emo era has returned from the land of the dead. Goddess of Fashion, save us all.

The Ottawa Bluesfest completed its 31st year of a 10-day festival from July 10th to 20th, 2025 at Lebreton Flats in Ottawa, Ontario, with Turnstile headlining their third night on Saturday, July 12th. Ottawa Bluesfest is a nonprofit and charitable organization, a festival that brings in big names every year, alongside celebrating amazing Canadian acts, and has been a music festival since 1994. It is well organized, celebrating music ranging from light rock to heavy riffs across five different stages and in the middle of Canada's bustling capital city.

Turnstile is a hardcore band that has been around since 2010, and hit the mainstream in popularity in 2021, with their album, *Glow On*. The band is described as "punk/hardcore/emo/pop mashup," "hardcore punk," "melodic hardcore," and "alternative rock," and though the band doesn't self-describe as "emo," it is well-debated in their massive fanbase that their emotional lyrics and on-stage style have distinct emo hardcore elements.

Chatting with enthusiastic fans at the show, fans tout that Turnstile has music that is "accessible" and tends to bring in a broad fanbase due to more experimentation with different genres. Younger fans also tended to credit TikTok for hearing about Turnstile, and for the increasing mainstream popularity of hardcore music overall. In addition, it isn't just hardcore music that has made another turn around the sun and is back into the limelight, the unique and distinct emo look is back as well.

Some would debate that the mainstream popularity of emo and hardcore music never left, yet anyone who lived as a teenager in

the early to mid-2000s would beg to differ. Everywhere you turned in the first decade of the millennium, an emo and emotionally distraught teenager could be spotted. It can be argued that the defining cultural phenomenon of the millennial generation is indeed the popularity of the emo teenager, spotted listening to My Chemical Romance and Jimmy Eat World and more serious music lovers digging in even further. From 2010 onwards, the popularity of emo and hardcore died down, leaving it to the fans who really loved it to continue going to shows and supporting bands.

What does this new fad mean then? Does it mean that the emo revival has finally arrived? Are hardcore bands headlining at big music festivals only temporarily? Or is hardcore finally a permanent fixture in the make-up of mainstream music? One can certainly hope not.

The kinship and dedication of true fans is a key part to the undying legacy of hardcore, punk, and metal as legitimate music genres, whether these shows happen in a drippy basement venue or with a major band at a music festival. By giving bands like Turnstile a headliner slot in major festivals due to their "accessibility," it waters down the legitimacy of emo and hardcore, and the genuine fanbase that exists,

despite any fads that perpetuate to love it.

Basically, Generation Z TikTokers, get moving onto the next fad and let the true hardcore fans get back to loving the music that truly matters.

- Kip Phillips

Photo by Greg Kolz

Clutch – Full Ahead Flank MMXXV Blacktop Mojo, The Inspector Cluzo

August 10, Grey Eagle Resort and Casino, Tsuut'ina, AB

Clutch has nothing left to prove—yet they keep proving it anyway. Venue sizes are still growing, new fans keep joining the ride, and that jacked-up Ford isn't slowing down.

This stop had a few quirks: a later 8:00 PM Sunday start, and—rare for the Grey Eagle—seating. Not unheard of (The Cult had seats here too), but unusual. In the end, the chairs were a blessing, giving the crowd something to lean on as the night wore on. Neil Fallon acknowledged the setup, joking that years ago he'd have felt differently, but now he was a little jealous—before launching full throttle into "X-Ray Visions."

At the front was Jean Guy Donair—better known as "Rock Lobster." He's seen Clutch multiple times, hitting several shows on every tour,

and is hard to miss in his bright red crustacean costume (even Iron Maiden once spotted him in Calgary). Fallon caught sight of him and tossed him a lobster-claw hand gesture.

Touring for the 30th anniversary of their self-titled album, Full Ahead Flank MMXXV delivered on fan expectations. This set mixed favorites like "The Regulator" and "Cypress Grove" with self-titled staples "Big News 1," "Escape From the Prison Planet," and "Spacegrass." "The Mob Goes Wild" had the crowd shouting that line, and "Electric Worry" carried extra local flavor for anyone who's heard it at a Roughnecks lacrosse game. New cut "The Streets Are His" got a polite nod from the crowd as they tried to catch its groove.

Opens The Inspector Cluzo brought eccentric French two-piece energy, complete with a song about a "Catfarm" and a finale that wrecked their instruments. Blacktop Mojo leaned on heavy rock grit and a solid "Them Bones" cover, though their set ran a little long—time better spent on more Clutch.

—Ryan Dyer



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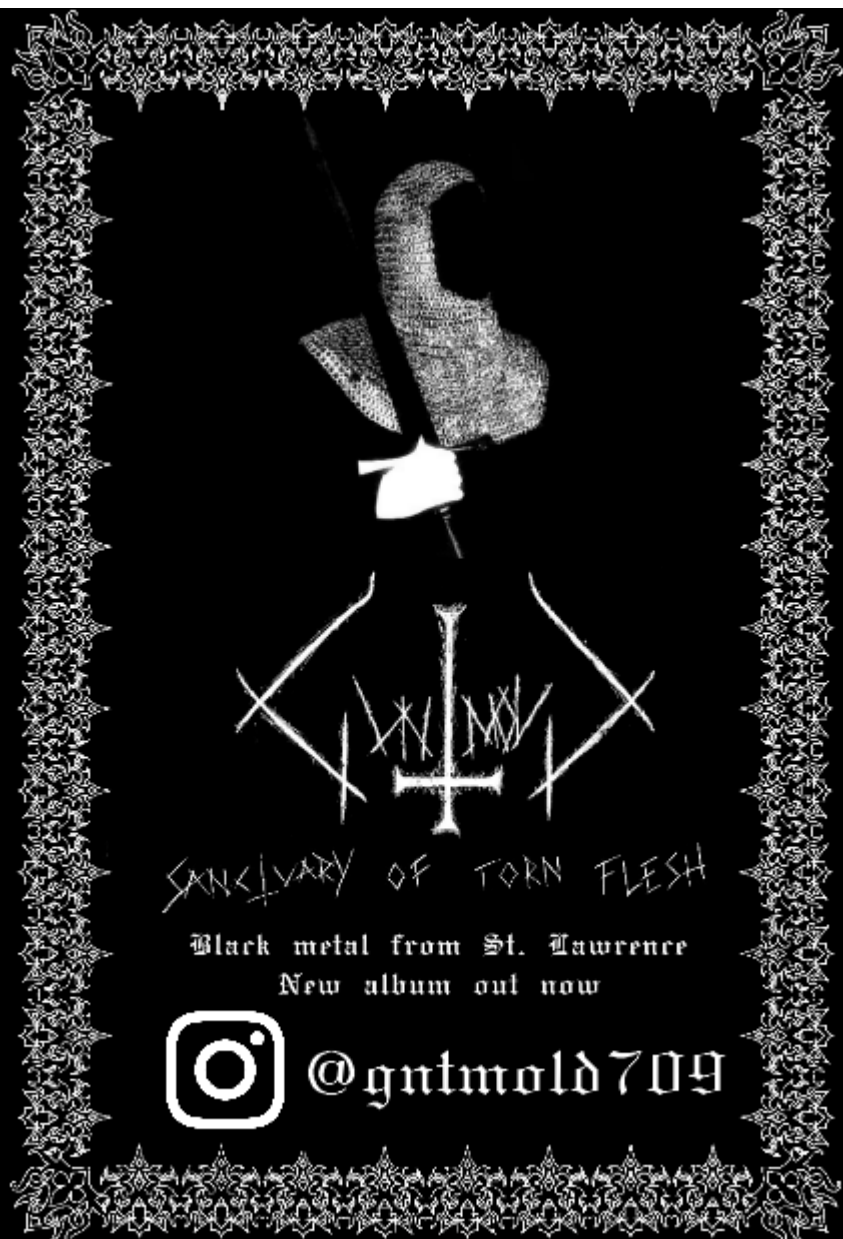
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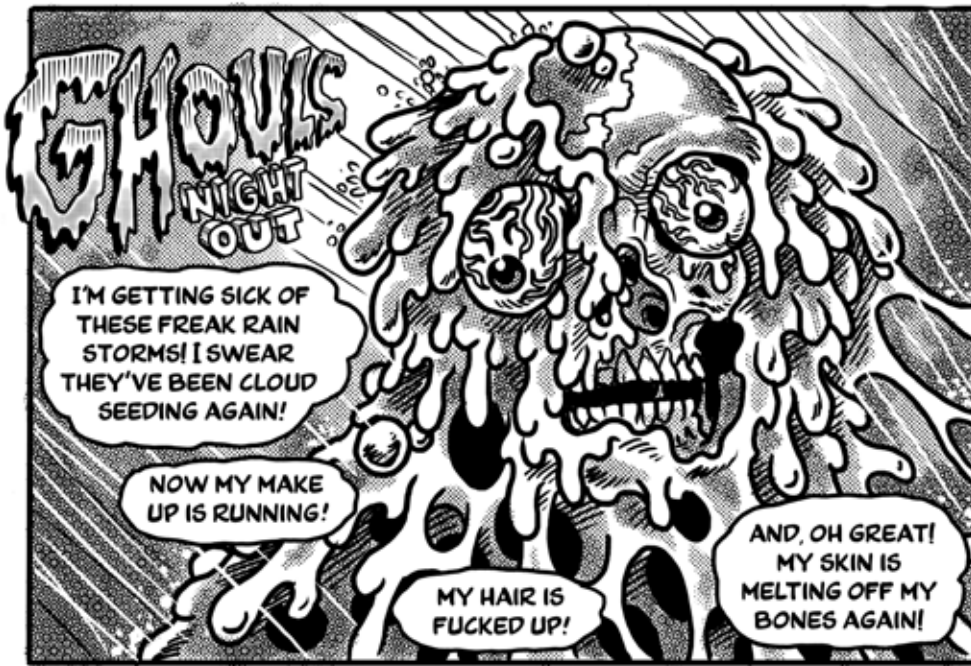
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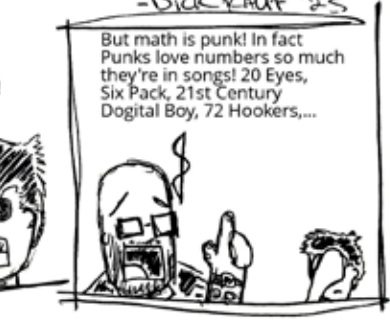
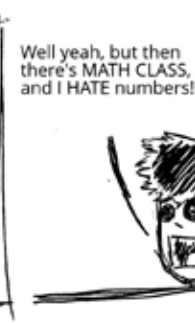
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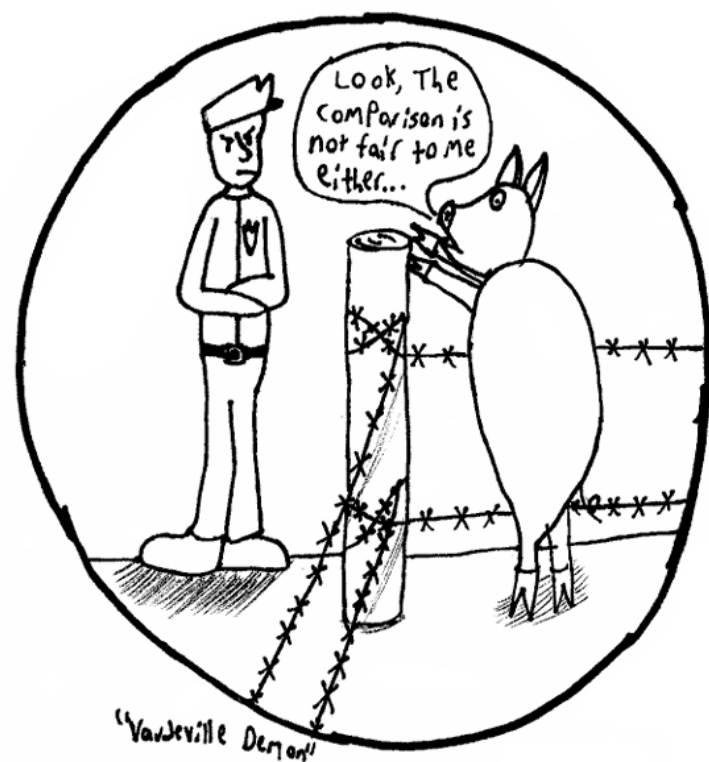
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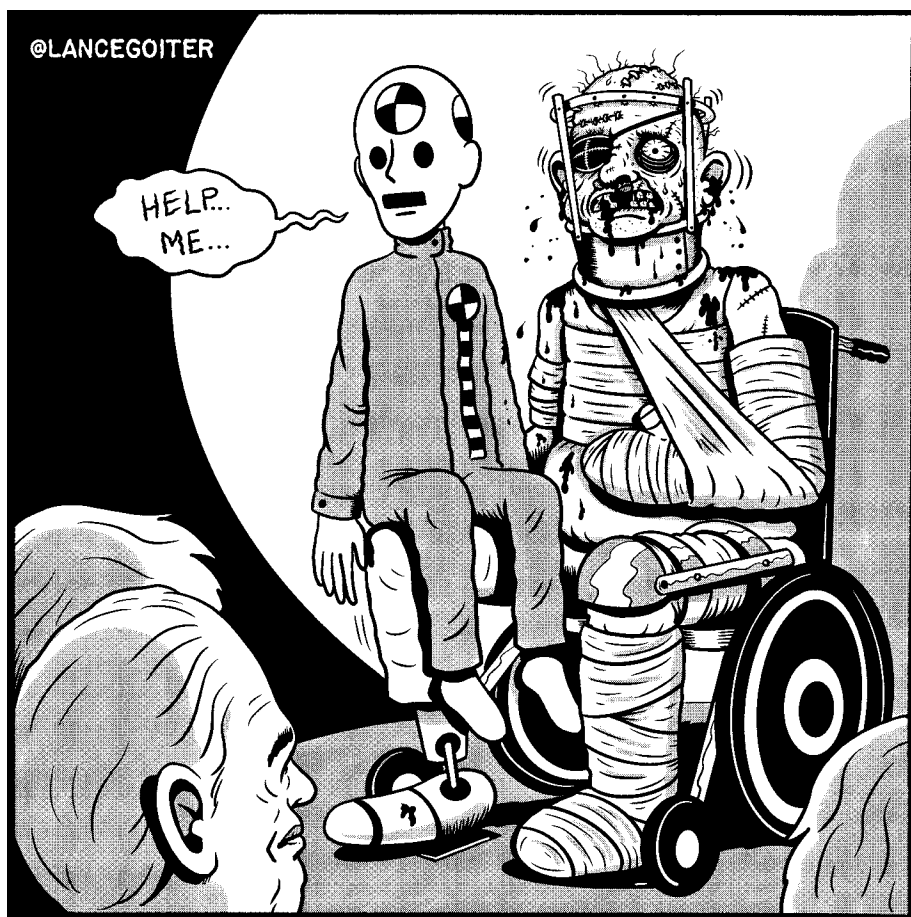


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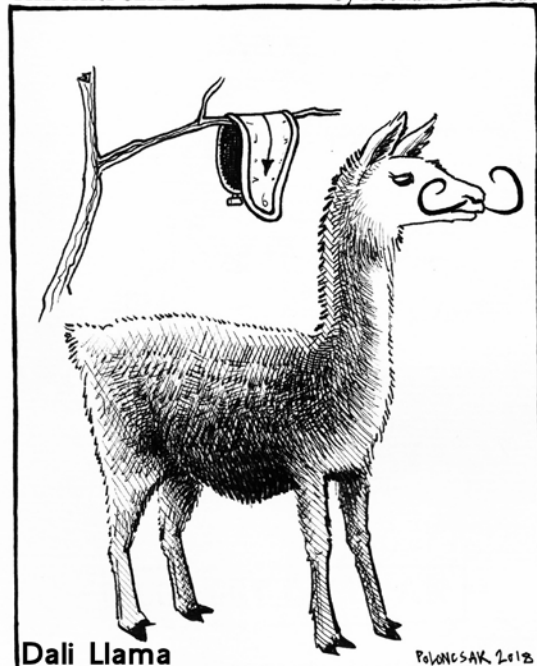
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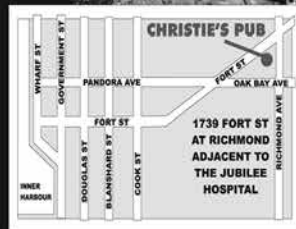
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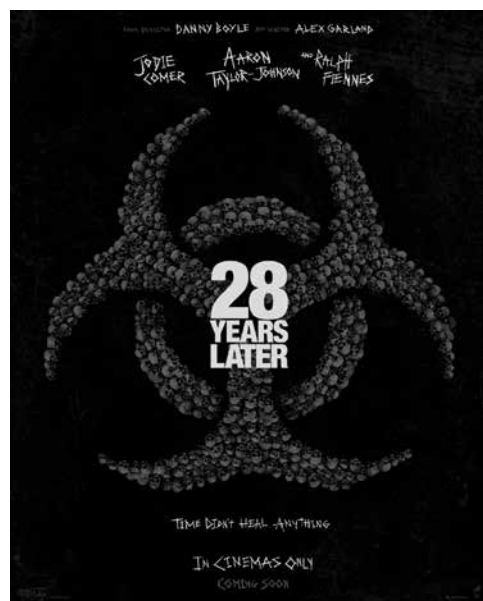
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Absolute Movie Reviews



28 Years Later

28 Days Later is an all-time classic film in any genre. Its sequel *28 Weeks Later* was disappointing to put it mildly, but with Danny Boyle and Alex Garland back onboard, I had high hopes for *28 Years Later*. I'm happy to report it does not disappoint, exceeding my expectations.

Without spoiling the film... it is set 28 years after the original film, after the second outbreak of the rage virus which has been eradicated from continental Europe, with Ireland and the UK in permanent quarantine.

At its heart, the film is a coming-of-age story for the 12-year-old Spike who leaves his island sanctuary for the infected mainland in order to find medical help for his mum. Britain has returned to a medieval state *Life After People* meets *The*



Wickerman via Dawn

of the Dead. The Infected have evolved, and non-infected survivors have created their own strange ways of coping.

It's gripping, heartfelt and beautiful, Boyle and Garland have taken onboard a strong Joseph Campbell influence, playing with time, Spike is on the hero's journey of transformation as are we all as we struggle through life... and that is what truly makes the film special!

- Steve Earles

Dog of God

Dog of God introduces a compelling new antihero, Thiess, who is more creepy than charming. When this film is presented as a parable, drawing inspiration from the 17th-century court case of Thiess of Kaltenbrun where an 82-year-old man who admitted to being

a werewolf and he's out to serve a greater good, everyone didn't believe him. And what's presented in this animation is a challenge upon authority!

The werewolf's presence is justified by the moral failings of characters like Buckholz (Regnars Vaivars), who is far from a pure man of the cloth, and Baron Klodt (Kristian Karelins), driven by carnal desires. They prey on women, and Thiess, the emissary from God, steps in to teach them a lesson. Even the accused witch Neze (Agate Krista), who sees Thiess for what he is, deserves redemption. Klibi (Jurgis Spuleniaks), living in fear, must choose between helping the wolf and the barkeep to escape his Father's prison. This situation perfectly sets the stage for the emissary.

As a folktale, the film reveals unsettling truths, including the



Sugar Rot

The punk rock filmmaking scene has a new maverick, and her name is Becca Kozak. If you haven't seen any of her short films, then prepare to be blown away with her indie cinematic debut, *Sugar Rot*! This Vancouver-based talent is making her debut on the biggest stage of them all, Fantasia Film Festival 2025, and this work is a bizarre and unapologetically bold horror comedy. Fans of exploitation and unadulterated sex will love this work!

The film follows Candy (Chloë MacLeod), a rebellious young woman who begins to physically transform into a grotesque and nightmarish smorgasbord of sugary confections after a bizarre attack by an enigmatic ice cream man. Kozak's fearless use of practical effects, graphic violence, and dark humour creates a wildly unhinged tone that blends David Cronenberg's body horror with the manic absurdity of an R-rated Adult Swim fever dream. The result is a visually arresting experience that delights exploitation fans and horror aficionados alike.

True to Kozak's underground roots, this film centres on a strong female lead who challenges traditional gender roles and societal expectations. The film explores themes of rebellion, identity, and the anxieties of growing up — especially when it means abandoning punk

ideals for adult responsibilities like "getting a real job." Candy's transformation becomes a powerful metaphor for indulgence, consumption, and bodily autonomy, with the character's very name driving home the film's dark irony. Narrative coherence takes a backseat to visceral chaos and unapologetic excess, which perfectly suits the exploitation genre Kozak embraces.

Beyond its shock value and twisted humour, *Sugar Rot* resonates on a deeper level as Candy's mental state deteriorates alongside her physical mutations. Pregnant and desperate for an abortion she cannot afford, her struggles echo real-world anxieties about bodily control and personal agency. Kozak's bold visual style and fearless storytelling position her as a rising talent in the horror underground. With previous cult shorts like *Girls with Guts* and *Linda Blair Barbie*, Kozak is poised to challenge local horror royalty — warning the Soska Sisters, who are also locally based, that she's vying for a position.

4 stars out of 5

- Ed Sum

UNDERGROUND IN RECOVERY

Top 5 Songs That Still Keep Me Sober

by Peter Barret

I'm not going to lie. I came to punk rock for the alternative ideology. The underground scene has always cried for rebellion against the outside world. But after living that rebellion for a couple of decades, looking up from four years of meth and booze, a lot of the idealism let me down. There weren't a whole lot of songs about the principles of internal self-work in the scene I was hanging out in. There was a lot of nihilism and self-destruction, over idle talk about "system change".

Sure, there may be a lot of rhetoric about ACAB and burning the system down, but in the end, there is very little discussion about what it takes to be an upstanding human. Very few gave any thought to what their punk rock utopia would actually look like, or how it would operate in real life. Most of my circle just wanted the freedom to get high without responsibility or consequence.

This hit me hardest when I saw one of my most prolific anti-war/anti-capitalist/anti-system punk rock heroes begging for spare change on the streets, while drinking out of a brown paper bag. Or worse— when another revolutionary lyricist was found dead in a bathroom stall, with a needle lying on the floor. They had lost the real revolution in their own hearts and minds.

20 years ago, when I needed to sober up and get straight for my own survival, a lot of hardcore bands were singing about the exact struggles I was going through. They knew that this world had us set up for loss, and it was literally a fight to be clear-headed in a society selling every flavour of escape. Yes, a lot of the bands were straightedge, but you don't have to be some spin-kicking cult member to appreciate wisdom when you hear it. Some pointed out what was wrong with my lifestyle, others pointed to how I could overcome it.

Here are some lyrics from five old hardcore songs I can still listen to that keep me straight and sober:

Minor Threat – "In My Eyes"

"You tell me you like the taste— you just need an excuse. You tell me it calms your nerves— you just think it looks cool. You tell me you want to be different— you just change for the same. You tell me it's only natural— you just need the proof. Did you fucking get it? It's in my eyes... And it doesn't look that way to me, in my eyes. You tell me that nothing matters— you're just fucking scared. You tell me that I'm better— you just hate yourself. You tell me that you like her— you just wish you did. You tell me that I make no difference— at least I'm

fucking trying. What the fuck have you done?"

Snapshot – "You've Lost It"

"You'd sell your soul for a drink right now, but you've got no money so you don't know how. You've lost your wife and you want her back, but the bottle's there, no turning back. You've lost your mind, you've lost your pride, you've lost your strength, you've lost your wife, you've lost your car, you've lost your job, you've lost your life, but you'd still kill for drink right now."

Cro-Mags – "Hard Times"

"Hard times coming your way. You're gonna have to rise above them someday. Organize your life and figure it out, or you'll go under without a doubt! Hard times, seems I'm being forced into a mold. Hard times, forcing me and I'm growing cold. Hard times coming through, but if you're hard it won't get to you. They're gonna try to drag you into the ground, but never surrender, never go down!"

Gorilla Biscuits – "First Failure"

"I've worked so hard on things that never seemed to pay off. But looking back I realize that I never really meant that much. And if you've been let down, and if it's not the first time, I'm sorry and I know how it feels. When my eyes see a loser in the mirror, I think 'what did I do?' Sure, I fucked up, but I got back up, so that loser shit is out the window! And if you been let down, it might not be the last time. Cheer up, it will hurt much less tomorrow. We're all tired of fucking up and that's not just being sorry. It means brush the dirt off, get up and try again!"

Shelter – "Chance"

"I've always wanted more. I couldn't settle for second best in life and end up like the rest. I know out of thousands only one will come forward... A narrow gate that I'm gonna go for! I'll try, but I may not succeed. But if I know I took that chance, well, that's all I need. I'll try, let the world disagree, but I'm gonna take that chance. The hour glass drops sand, as we waste our time... so, what's getting ahead unless we transcend? For that, I'm gonna try and try again!"

Lyrics are poetry, and most people writing them have something to share. When in recovery, you have to be careful not to fall into judgement or superiority trips like a lot of the straightedge scene eventually did. We all make mistakes. You have to be on guard against your personal toxicity as well. But when you need some assistance, at least you can know there are bands and people out there that have done the work. Stay strong and fight the good fight, folks.

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Absolute Albums

Atomic Rooster

Atomic Rooster

Esoteric Recordings

This album is not to be confused with Atomic Rooster's self-titled debut album, *Atomic Rooster* released in 1970 (spelt with a triple 'o', well, it was the '70s, it made sense then!). This album dates from 10 years later, and is superb! But first, a brief history lesson to give an idea of Atomic Rooster's influence.

Formed by two members of The Crazy World of Arthur Brown, drummer Carl Palmer (who would shortly go on to worldwide fame with prog-rock nutters Emerson, Lake, and Palmer) and organist Vincent Crane. It was this line-up which produced the debut.

Line-up changes ensured, which would be an ongoing pattern for the band, a certain John Du Cann joined on guitar and vocals, and this line-up recorded the highly influential *Death Walks Behind You*. More line-up changes followed, but 1980 saw Du Cann and Crane back together in Atomic Rooster, and this superb album is the result!

Atomic Rooster fits in well with the nascent new wave of British heavy metal. As an added bonus, this superb reissue comes with a splendid like album recorded by this line-up in 1980 at the legendary Marque Club!

- Steve Earles

Black Sabbath

Black Sabbath

This is the most important heavy metal album of all-time. YEAR ZERO for our beloved heavy metal music. Without Black Sabbath there would be no Metallica, no Slayer... the list endless.

The first thing that strikes you about *Black Sabbath* is its sleeve, a photo of a witch in front of an ancient mill. It is very Hammer Horror, very

Dennis Wheatley (when my mum was pregnant with me, she read the complete works of Dennis Wheatley, which explains a lot!), and very occult indeed!

The occult infused everything in the '60s and '70s as people sought the meaning beyond what is laughably called 'reality'. If we are honest, we all know there is more to life than the material dross and media noise we numb our senses with. We all crave more meaning.

So, Black Sabbath rode the crest of the occult wave, but most importantly, they provided the soundtrack. Though Ozzy is sadly gone from our reality, the huge success of his and Sabbath's farewell Back to the Beginning concert proved what a hugely positive cultural force heavy metal is, and that is a superb legacy for Ozzy and Sabbath to leave.

- Steve Earles

Blackened Priests

Venom

Dissonance Productions

This is a very-well deserved and beautifully put together collection of the three Venom albums recorded with Tony 'The Demolition Man' Dolan replacing the departed Cronos on bass and vocals, and a very fine job he does too.

While obviously the early Venom albums such as *Black Metal* and *Welcome to Hell* are stone-cold classics, and hugely influential (without Venom there would be no thrash metal, speed metal or black metal, they are that important!), these three albums, *Prime Evil*, *Temples of Ice* and *The Wastelands* deserved to be reappraised in their own right! *Prime Evil*, in particular, is on a par with any of the classic Venom albums, and benefits from a superior production. This was the point where Venom, a great line-up, could finally have become the heavy

metal giant they deserved to be.

Sadly, this was not to be so, the metal world was changing and Venom had missed the boat... again. Nowadays we still have a Cronos-led Venom, and Tony is leading Venom Inc, who I feel have the true spirit of Venom, listen to these three albums and hear the truth of my words. Hell yeah!

- Steve Earles

Considered Dead/The Erosion of Sanity

Gorguts

Dissonance Productions

You remember when *South Park* was funny? Indeed, I know, it was in the Paleo-Metal Era, when herds of Ozzy Osbournes roamed the Earth, and at the end of an episode Kyle would say, "I've learned something today!" Well, reading the excellent sleeve notes to this dynamic deathly duo of Gorguts reissues, *Considered Dead* and *The Erosion of Sanity*, I learned that the French-Canadian slang word for 'fuck' is 'tabernak', how fucking cool is that? As part of a cultural exchange, I share with you the knowledge that the Irish slang word for 'fuck' is 'feck', as made famous on *Father Ted*. I tell you this, to misquote Donald Pleasance in my beloved *Escape From New York*, in the hope of bringing out great nations closer together!

Okay, back to the music! It goes without saying there is little connection in sound with the Gorguts of these primordial death metal albums to the current progressive metal Gorguts. Yet, the power, sincerity and heaviness of these early albums is splendid to listen to. Again, getting back to the sleeve notes, the adversity Gorguts had to overcome to make these albums makes them all the more impressive. Total death!

- Steve Earles

Freya-Arctic Jam

Djabe and Steve Hackett

Cherry Red Records

Guitarist extraordinaire Steve Hackett was a part of Genesis during their Peter Gabriel-led heyday, wherein they made mad and magical prog rock epics, with more twists and turns than a twisty turning thing. Then Peter and Steve left, Phil Collins took over on vocals and Genesis became a byword for shite.

Steve can hold his head up high, however; he isn't responsible for any of their '80s abominations (No, *Invisible Touch* was created by some vile yuppie archdemon in Hell). Rather, Steve, on leaving Genesis, followed a much more adventurous music path, forever searching for new sounds, new friends to play with, and making music for all the right reason.

Steve travelled to the Northern part of Norway to jam with Djabe. The musical chemistry between Steve and the band is obvious, they clearly were having the craic. This is intelligent, evocative and uplifting music, rising as high as the northern lights that framed its creation. The environment *Freya-Arctic Jam* was recorded in is very important. It's very evocative of the wild unearthly Viking landscapes of Norway, a place where it's easy to believe the old Norse gods like Freya still hold sway.

To sum up, this is music made with love, skill, and camaraderie. The way music should be made but so seldom is.

- Steve Earles

Middle Class Revolt

The Fall

Cherry Red records

There never was, and there never again will be, another band like The Fall. The Fall, no matter who was in the band (aside from the ever-present Mark E. Smith), always sounded like The Fall. This may not seem like a big deal but as a man who's written about music since he was a teenager, it's sadly all too rare. What's also sad is, while *Middle Class Revolt* was not a commercial failure on its release in 1994, you have only to look at the bands from this period that took their cues from The Fall, like Pulp and Blur, and see how The Fall deserved to be much bigger.

Time has been kind to *Middle Class Revolt*. On its original release it was compared unfavourably to its predecessor *The Infotainment Scam*. Smith's wife Brix had left both him and The Fall at this point, and The Fall was a much more unstable and unhappy band. Brix brought a pop sensibility and lightness of touch to The Fall which was a joy to behold, and is sadly absent here. But, in retrospect, *Middle Class Revolt* sounds great, very bass-driven, which I like. Mark's lyrics, despite his best efforts at self-sabotage, are post punk poetry.

Cherry Red have outdone themselves with these reissues, which consist of the original album, a disc of rarities and four live CDs. Like I said, there will never be another band like The Fall, mores the pity.

- Steve Earles

The Noise Years

Lefay

Dissonance Records

I wasn't familiar with Lefay's music before, which is shame, as they are an excellent heavy metal band that deserves to be far more well known than they are. I hope this fine collection will go some way to remedying this.

Originally formed in 1989 in Sweden as Morgana Lefay, the band were signed to the cult Black Mark Records, home of Bathory, and owned by a certain Börje Forsberg (who was Quorthon's dad, known as Boss!).

In the late '90s, Morgana Lefay attempted to sign to Noise Records. Black Mark were not happy about this, and legal hassles ensued. To prevent further legal hassles, the band shortened their name and were able to record three fine heavy metal albums for Boise, *The Seventh Seal*, *S.O.S.*, and *Symphony of the Damned*. All are must-haves for lovers of true metal!

- Steve Earles

Sabbath Bloody Sabbath

Black Sabbath

By the time of *Volume 4*, Black Sabbath had released four truly amazing albums, and changed the face of music as we know it, creating our beloved genre of Heavy Fucking Metal Music! All hail Ozzy, Tony, Geezer and Bill!

When it came time to record a new album, as always, the pressure was on Tony Iommi, to come up with new material. As Tony himself said, "Everyone was sitting there, waiting for me to come up with something, I just couldn't think of anything. And if I didn't come up with anything, nobody would." So, in 1973, Sabbath set up shop in Clearwell Castle in the Forest of Dean, a menacing gothic pile, the perfect place for Black Sabbath; I mean, they rehearsed in the dungeons, you cannot get more metal than that! Tony delved deep into his internal riff-dungeon and came up with the title track "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath", and verily, did it all flow from there!

Drew Struzan's cover art is incredible and iconic. And those venomous lyrics: "God knows as your dog's nose/Bog blast all of you." Overall, a timeless classic from a band at their creative peak.

- Steve Earles

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17th - For One Hate / Holy Grinder / Klobber / Wasteland / Abysmal Whore - 6pm

18th - Chakra Shakers / Afternoon Delight / Queens and Kings - 7pm

19th - With Intent To Cause Bodily Harm / Crude Flame / Gash - 7pm

Wednesday August 20th - Close Out & more

21st - Reality Denied / Terminator / Blood Wraith / Sold Short - 6:30pm

22nd - Wax Mannequin / Delyn Grey / Beams / Sarah Good and the Bads - 8pm

23rd - Deathproof: How Is This Legal? A No Ring Hardcore Pro Wrestling Experience!!

24th - The Havoc / Balm Squad / Gag Order / Big Brother - 7pm

27th - Phantasia & more - 7pm

28th - 65 Ronin / Paper Petals / EBU - 7pm

29th - Fake Friends / So Tired & more - 8pm

30th - (BLOODSPORT BRUNCH) - Scorpion Kombat 4 year anniversary Boxing! - 11am

31st - Dark Hamilton's Southern Ontario Goth Fest - 6pm

September

1st - The Varukers - UK Hardcore Punk D-Beat Legends / Phane (BC) / Decade (Hamilton/Toronto) / Convikt (Niagara) - 7pm

10th - Hedonist / Corprolith / Mortuary Slab - 8pm

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Sabotage

Black Sabbath

This is my favourite Ozzy-era Sabbath album. Born of the band's rage and frustration at their management stealing their money, the aptly-named *Sabotage* is truly groundbreaking and influential. For starters, there is the mighty "Symptom of the Universe", to my ears the first thrash metal song, with one of the all-time great riffs and some really 'out-there' lyrics. "Hole In the Sky" is grimly prophetic.

It's not all riffs of doom though! "Supertzar" is unique and beautiful, really uplifting and points the way to the diverse-sounding metal scene we now have. Make no mistake, the metal of now owes much to *Sabotage*. Ozzy's vocals are excellent, a sonic legacy!

We have to talk about THAT sleeve.

This is the only Ozzy-era Sabbath album to feature a photo the band on the sleeve. I get what they're trying to do but Sabbath look like they got pissed and stoned, then raided the local charity shop! Ozzy referred to himself here as 'The Homo in the Kimono' and the least said about Bill Ward's 'look' the better! But it's the music that counts, and *Sabotage* is not just a great Black Sabbath album, but a great record period!

- Steve Earles

Shadow of a Fallen Star Part 2

Seven Sisters

Dissonance Productions

A few years ago, I saw Seven Sisters play Dolans in Limerick and they were an excellent live band too. Great musicians, great interaction with the audience, and they really

love their metal.

On this album, the band show a more epic and progressive side to their nature, while still being heavy.

Overall, this is a sincere will-played album coming from a band that truly loves metal!

- Steve Earles

Sanctuary Of Torn Flesh

Guntmold

Cold, evil, vinland black metal. Guntmold always brings a hell storm to their releases, and this one is their best yet!! Vocals loud, screeching. But not overdone like other bands do, and their riffs... FUCKIN KILLER!!! Reminds me of Burzum's self-titled album, but if it was more cleanly recorded like this. If this release was raw, it'll be very similar, Till Valhalla Guntmold!!!

- Tyson Norman "Corinthians"



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Absolute Snacks

Lays Rockin' Buffalo Ranch

Lays tried out three limited-edition chip flavours recently; new flavours in bags with cool graphics, which is something I care about, as an adult person with mature and sensible interests.

First up was Rockin' Buffalo Ranch.

This was frustrating. When combined with Cool, as in "Cool Ranch", you wind up with one of my all-time favourite chip flavours. But when you add Buffalo, you lose me completely. I don't even understand what the buffalo is bringing to the party; it's not like a meaty taste, like an actual buffalo. My internet research said that in this case "buffalo" refers to adding hot sauce and cayenne pepper to the ranch, and here the result is a tang which is sharp to the point of being nasty, like a mean old cheese going nasty at the back of the fridge.

The bag has a cartoon image of a bear screaming into a microphone while using a bowl of dipping sauce like a turntable, and playing some drums. It's a cool design, but why is there a bear on the buffalo-ranch chips? Do buffalos not know how to DJ?

These could've been awesome. But they were not. They were kinda crap.

Lays Country Smokehouse BBQ

Lays limited-edition numero-dos.

These Country Smokehouse BBQ chips were somewhere between "fine" and "meh". I love me a good BBQ chip, but where was the smokehouse?

I thought these were gonna be unique, maybe unpalatably so, but that exciting taste journey just didn't manifest. Nobody took a chance here. Nobody tried to leave their mark on this product. At the end of the day, it's just another barbeque chip, no different from the many that came before it.

Once again, a fun bag design that might've raised my expectations unfairly. I saw that silhouette of an old cowboy riding across a desert and I thought, this here's gonna be a potato chip that can stand up

to the harsh rigours of riding the range. But this ain't no cowpoke's chip. It ain't the horse the cowboy rode in on, it's more like the little dog that followed along, barking at the horse's heels.

Not bad, but certainly not memorable.

Lays Sweet Lime Sea Salt

Three limited edition Lays flavours. At least one of them had to be good, right? And hey, this was the one!

There's a crispness to the lime that makes you sit up and take notice. The lime is as sharp as the blade on the samurai sword I picked up at the VGH thrift shop, and pairs perfectly with a kick of the sea salt that slaps your tongue like an ocean wave on a hot day.

The bag is all aqua-tones- moody greens and blues, with a giant disco ball hanging over a city made of stereo-speakers and sidewalks that are one long keyboard. It's a bag that makes me feel like I'm listening to some late '90s funk-pop, partying with a bunch of ethnically-diverse models on a rooftop overlooking the city on a beautiful summer evening.

This chip makes me want to have the evening I dreamed about when I was a teenager. I wanna go ride my skateboard and have an adventure and say clever things to interesting strangers.

As always with Lays, I didn't really care for that over-processed texture, but in terms of taste, this one brought it home.

Doritos Tangy Golden Sriracha

This review comes with a content warning. I wish the chips had come with such a warning. I just don't want to freak you out, gross you out, or overshare when you're not expecting it. So here's a moment to prepare yourself. Okay? This is gonna get a little personal, and a little gross. If you're cool with that, then we'll continue.

Twice I tried a handful of these chips. And twice I had blood in my poop the next morning. Maybe

it was just a coincidence, though it hasn't happened again since I stopped eating them.

And since we're practicing near-toxic levels of honesty here, I want to admit to you: if they'd tasted good enough, I'd still have finished the bag. I would've pushed through. But they didn't, so I didn't. Instead, they received the lowest rating a chip can get: an unfinished bag, rolled up at the back of the cupboard. I'm still debating calling their help line to complain about my experience.

In conclusion, I leave you with the following quote: "What is here was dangerous and repulsive to us. This message is a warning about danger."


No Name Nacho Cheese Tortilla Chips

Is there a chip more punk rock than No Name? Nobody's messing around here- no funny graphics, no clever comments, no hipster flavour names. Just plain black text on a yellow bag- yeah, you know these guys.

No Name was there for you. When mom lost her job and we needed cheap cereal, No Name was there. When the stepdad spent most of the grocery money on beer and we needed affordable snacks, No Name was there. When we spent all our cash on weed and required an edible object that could still technically be called a burrito- No Name was there. And yet, for all their cheapness... these chips are goddamn good. For both taste and texture, they're one of the best on the market. I dunno if the financial savings enhance the flavour, but they sure don't hurt.

No Name Nacho Tortilla Chips are a damn fine chip, and they get the job done at a fraction of the price charged by the big bags. We're lucky to have them, and I'd like to take this moment to salute them in print and say "Thank you, No Name, for making good chips any stoned slob can still afford."

- Hank Pattison



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Anarchy on Abbey Road

The Filth, The Fury and the Fab Four
 “No Elvis, Beatles or the Rolling Stones,” sang The Clash in 1977— but that was a long, long time ago. Today, the punks have thoroughly changed their tune.

Last year brought *Punk Me Up*, a star-studded punk tribute to the Rolling Stones and now comes *Anarchy on Abbey Road*, a 15-track collection that sees an army of spiky-haired punkoid heroes and veterans fold their fists around the Fab Four’s favourite ditties, breathing a whole new wave of energy into these classic songs.

“Why Don’t We Do It in the Road?” demand Peter and the Test Tube Babies, one of the most entertaining of all the bands that flourished in punk’s Oi! diversion. “I’m Down,” lament Eddie and the Hot Rods— a band that is celebrating its 50th anniversary around now, but still blazes as brilliantly as they did in ’75, when a lot of their set was made up of ’60s classics.

The legendary 999 tell what happened when “I Saw Her Standing There”; The Members recall their favourite “Daytripper”. From the proto punk years, The Flamin’ Groovies “Revolution” and The Pink Fairies “Get Back” reflect back upon their infancy— these aren’t their first Beatles covers, after all.

Just as Eater’s take on “Something” rewires a softy ballad into a hard-edged rampage, Skids’ “Eleanor Rigby” leaves tire tracks across the cemetery. “Eleanor Rigby” is the latest single from this remarkable album, with a breathtaking guitar that cuts through the track.

“Eleanor Rigby is a song that has been with me since childhood,” says Skids founder/

frontman Richard Jobson. “It’s a wonderful example of how The Beatles could mix the serious with the commercial. We’ve tried to give the song a different energy but keep true to the emotion.”

Back in the day, a lot of punk bands chose classic rock covers because they knew it would annoy the boring old farts who loathed this latest twist in rock delivery. But this is no novelty disembowelling of those we once loved. If anything, it’s a chance to relive what the Fabs themselves might once have sounded like, if they’d been playing these songs in Hamburg while they were on their way up. And that’s something we all need to hear.

Album Available at

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R.I.P. Jim Durkin

I have been working with legendary drummer Gene Hoglan since 2006, after we had met in Vancouver during the Strapping Young Lad recording of *The New Black* at Armoury Studios. This was surreal to me because I was a fan of his and his previous bands Dark Angel and Death. I remember thinking “I really hope I get to meet Dark Angel at some point,” and now here we are.

It was in 2013 when I finally spoke to Jim Durkin and I was ecstatic. We hit it off pretty quickly, conquering some pretty big hurdles almost immediately. As a Dark Angel fan since 1988 and seeing the Ultimate Revenge VHS released by Combat, I remember being blown away at the speed and ferocity, almost on the edge of a punk/hardcore vibe! We definitely had great chemistry.

After many years of talking with Gene about the possibility of doing Dark Angel again, finally in 2013 they decided it was time to move forward. But because Jim and Gene were so busy with their other projects, commitments, and life, they decided to do festival one-offs. Even with this to offer, the fans were very happy for their return.

Finally, my first show experience with Dark Angel was in 2014 at The MetalFest in Chile. It was insane! The energy was so raw and fierce. I remember Willie G, our friend and Dave Mustaine’s guitar tech saying, “Megadeth are fucked” after Dark Angel’s performance. Everyone howled as Dark Angel was direct support for Megadeth at that show.

Our worldwide adventures with Dark Angel continued for over a decade and Jim was a delight to spend time with. We were going to countries like France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Japan, The UK, Mexico, Australia, and travelled all over the US. I was (am) working with my favourite people and my favourite musical

genre. It felt like I was back to my childhood. Life felt amazing.

I’d like to mention, Jim was also my biggest supporter in this industry in addition to Gene. I was so grateful to have had Jim in my life. I remember how much faith he had in me. He said, “I’m happy to invest in you and see you grow.” Jim was one of my favourite human beings and I cherished every meeting we had. Sadly, during the recording of the up-and-coming Dark Angel Record, *Extinction Level Event*, Jim had passed away very suddenly. I don’t think people knew how much influence he had on metal and putting people together. This man was a humble visionary and trust me, you still hear his influence everywhere in today’s metal!

I miss you Jimmy D.

- Rob Shallcross

RIP

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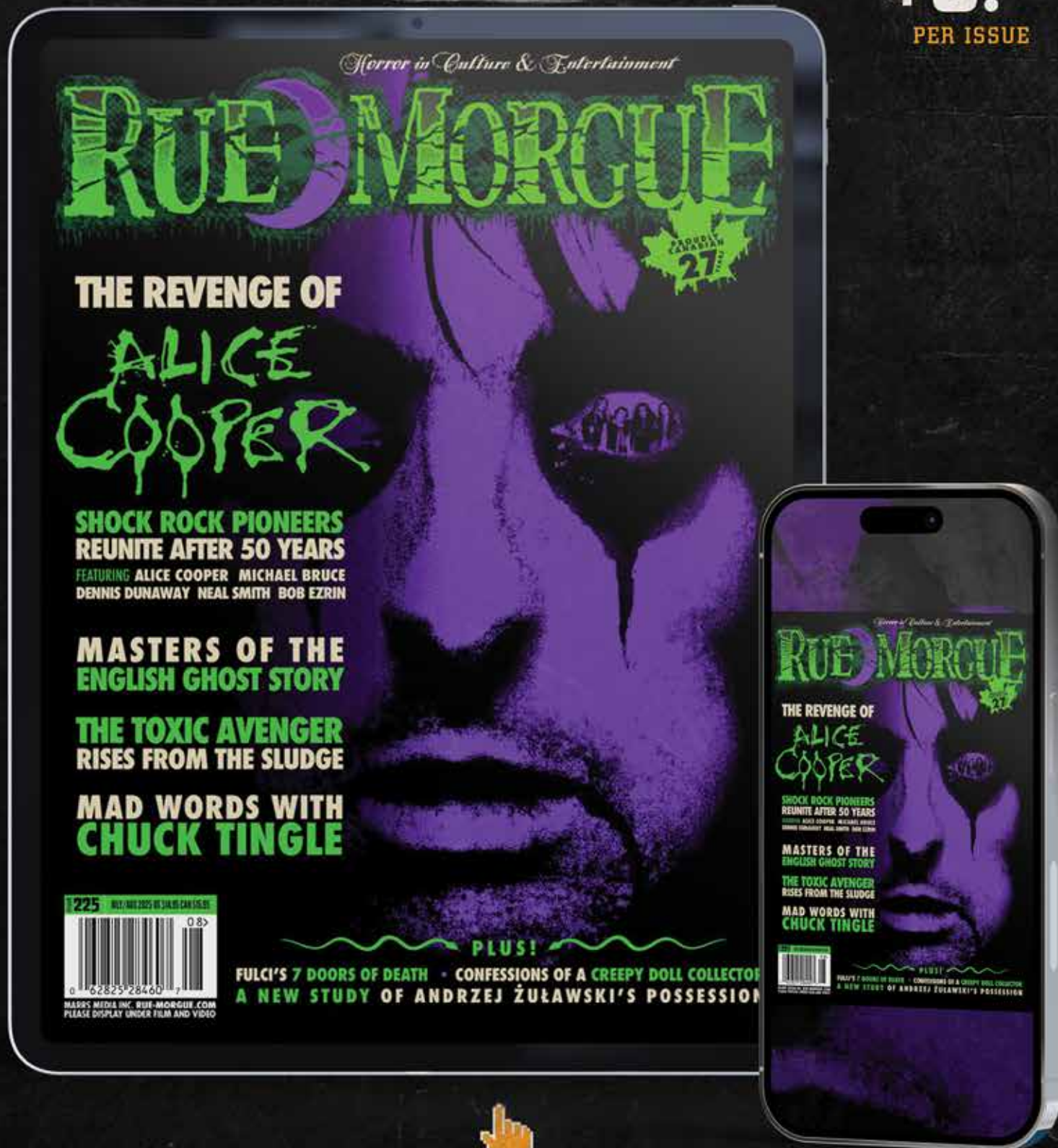
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