

Gasoline #6

SUM 41 ALIVE

IS SCREAMO B.S.?
FLORIA'S FUEL

IAN BLURTON~MINISTRY~THE TEA PARTY~WILDHEARTS
CLAIRE STANSFIELD~MOONEY SUZUKI~DFA 1979



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THE JERRY CAN

The summer is the season of rock. Tours roll across the country like mobile homes in a Florida hurricane. The most memorable for this magazine/bar owner were the Warped Tour and Wakestock, where such bands as Bad Religion, Billy Talent, Alexisonfire, Closet Monster, The Trews and Crowned King had audiences in mosh-pit frenzies.

At Wakestock, in Wasaga Beach, Ont., Gasoline, Fox Racing, and Bluenotes rocked so hard at their two-day private cottage party that local authorities shut down the stage after Magneta Lane and Flashlight Brown. Poor Moneen didn't get to crush the eardrums of the drunken revellers. That was day one! Day two was an even bigger party with the live music again shut down. The Reason, Moneen and Crowned King owned the patio until Alexisonfire and their crew rolled into party.

Gasoline would also like to thank Chuck (see cover story) and other UN officials for making sure that the boys in Sum41 made it back to the Bovine for another cocktail, despite the nearby mortar and gunfire during their Warchild excursion. Nice job.

Darryl Fine
Editor-in-Chief

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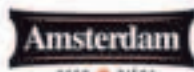
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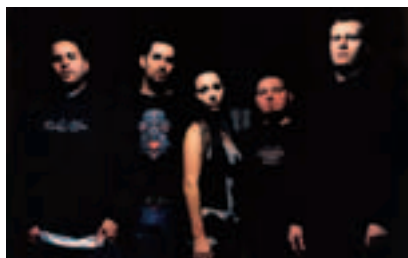
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LOWDOWN



Evanescence Writes Fallen Follow-up

Evanescence has started writing for the follow-up to 2003's multi-platinum release, *Fallen*. The Arkansas rock band had some time to work on ideas at home, before embarking on its summer tour.

The new material marks the first time singer Amy Lee has written without guitarist Ben Moody, who co-wrote all the material on *Fallen*, but left the band mid-tour last year.

Lee and her bandmates – guitarist John LeCompt, drummer Rocky Gray and guitarist Terry Balsamo – are all contributing to the new songs, but haven't yet set a studio date. "We're really enjoying the writing process," says Lee. "Everybody's been writing separately, then we're going to come together with all the ideas."

With *Fallen* featuring such songs as "My Immortal," "Torniquet," "My Last Breath," and "Haunted," Lee admits she's still delves into her dark side for lyrics. "I go into a fog for a couple of days and lock myself up and work and it's usually somewhat of a dark place. It's one part of myself, this band. It's one aspect of me."

"I'm a goofy, nerdy normal person really," she says, "but I have issues, and the band's a place for all my issues. For me to be that dark character and hone in on the things that are wrong with me, that's where my inspiration comes from, usually."

A visit to a movie theatre even yielded a couple of vampiric ideas. "I saw *Van Helsing* – I know it's stupid but I was visually (inspired) and I went home and played piano all night."

As for titles, she jokes, "One's called 'Helsing.'" – Karen Bliss



Queen Musical Will Rock Toronto

The remaining members of U.K. rock legends Queen will bring their musical, *We Will Rock You*, to Toronto starting in June, 2005, at the Canon Theatre. The playwright, Ben Elton, will direct the Mirvish Production.

After a triumphant two-year engagement in London, England, an American adaptation of the show recently opened at the Paris Las Vegas. It's also playing in Australia and Spain, and is slated to open in Moscow and Germany. Featuring characters such as Scaramouche,

Galileo, Killer Queen, and Khashoggi, the futuristic tale features more than 20 of Queen's biggest hits, including "We Are the Champions," "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," and "Another One Bites The Dust."

"In many cases, it's uncanny how much the songs tell the story that needs to be told at the time," says Queen guitarist Brian May, musical supervisor on the production. "They are very dramatic and they're often sung with the voice of someone who may be frustrated or needs to break out of somewhere, the expression of how he feels about his love and his life."

"I don't know if it's luck or not, but all our songs speak about human emotions and human fears and human aspirations. It's a good home for the songs in the musical. It's a rock show like there hasn't been a rock show before in the theater." – Colin Devenish



Hyde & Peep's New Label

Len's Marc Costanzo and That '70s Show's Danny Masterson are forming a label with two other partners. Leaning towards the name *La Famiglia*, or simply *The Family*, they are talking with potential distributors in Canada and the U.S.

"We're going to need somebody to put some money into some of these acts. (But) I (also) have my own studio so I know how to make records for zero dollars," says Costanzo.

The domestic signings are Baby Blue Soundcrew, which is managed by another partner Daymon Green, as well as rapper Bishop and reggae artist Fire Kid Steenie.

Len's U.K. manager Graeme Lowe is the fourth co-founder. He has given the label full rights to his management clients, including rock band Black Rebel Motorcycle Club (B.R.M.C.) and singer Amanda Ghost.

Los Angeles-based Masterson, who portrays Steve Hyde on the FOX TV series *That '70s Show*, and appeared in Len's video for "Feelin' Alright" in 2000, is also a hip hop DJ. He plans to compile cool mix CDs with television and film actors, athletes, and other well-known personalities. "He's been dying to do stuff with all kinds of names," says Costanzo. "It will blow you away."

Costanzo has struck a separate deal with Outside Music in Canada to release a Len compilation consisting of songs recorded between 2001 and 2004. Len's last album, 1999's *You Can't Stop The Bum Rush*, sold more than a million copies worldwide and achieved platinum sales in Canada, due in part to the enormous pop single, "Steal My Sunshine." – Karen Bliss



Rock Messenger

Ian Blurton behind the board and in front of the mic

By Keith Carman

Photo : Paula Wilson

C'Mon : Katie Lynn, Ian, Randy

The air is thick with the sweat of a night's passion. A sea of cables wrap around the room at Toronto's Chemical Sound recording studio like some sort of electronic jungle. Various instruments in questionable states of repair lie about, abused by efforts to wring that special take from their mangled bodies.

This is just another day in the life of Ian Blurton, legendary CanRock singer/guitarist/producer. The scenario could either be for his own power rock trio C'Mon, kickin' out a rousing set of MC5-meets-The Who rawk 'n' roll or behind the board as producer for one of the many indie acts that seek out his talents.

After a solid 22 years at this, Blurton is comfortable in either setting. Yes, 22 years, an endless lifetime commitment to the pursuit of the perfect song that has made the bearded, jean-jacket sporting, enigmatic Blurton one of The Great White North's more enduring, respected and golden-haired messengers of rock 'n' roll.

From his earliest years ("half of my life, 16 to 32," he sighs) fronting independent rock heroes Change Of Heart to blasting lead guitar for Montreal-based agro-rockers Bionic, spearheading namesake Blurtonia's melodic output, and, most recently, forming C'Mon, Blurton has paid more than enough dues. But he's been up for it since day one.

"I always knew what I was gonna do," Blurton says, fresh out of a recording session with Montreal punks Le Nombres. "I just got caught up in that energy of early Alice Cooper, KISS and The Stooges. The further I got into music, the more I real-

ized that there are a lot of amazing people out there that support great bands. Today, I feel totally honoured by the people that stand behind me. There are so many people that do this for the absolute love of it. That's a beautiful thing (and) I feel honoured to be a part of that."

Even more beautiful is watching C'Mon flail about the stage and hurl musical and verbal abuse at capacity club crowds. Quickly becoming one of the country's strongest bands, C'Mon is the culmination of 20-plus years experience. Powerful and bold without being brash or confrontational, this is a fresh side of Blurton, accented by C'Mon's strong connection with and talent of his girlfriend, bassist Katie Lynn Campbell (Nashville Pussy) and drummer Randy Curnew (The Swallows/Cash Brothers). The band's independent debut, *Midnight Is The Answer*, confirms all expectations of high-octane, rock 'n' roll might.

"C'Mon is a combination of trying to get better individually with honing our craft down to a point (and) all of the elements of things we like," says Blurton. "That's why I started playing in the first place, to create music I'd want to hear, and I get that from C'Mon. I really love playing in this band. It's given me a renewed sense of joy in my playing. There are childlike qualities in the way I enjoy playing in this band. I always wished I was doing things like that, but now it's the ability to take everything I've always wanted to do and put it into one package. It's exciting."

Strange that Blurton would wind up

becoming one of Canada's unsung underground rock heroes, considering he was initially turned down for the drum seat in a pre-major label Cowboy Junkies because of his age. Unfazed, the teenager formed Change Of Heart, which put out 10 independently-recorded albums. Two were licensed to Virgin Music Canada, including the final one, 1997's *Steel Teeth*. It also spawned his production career. He has since helmed recordings for such acts as Tricky Woo, The Weakerthans, Skydiggers, The Illuminati, Amy Milan (Stars), Nefarious and MC Collision.

"(Recording) has always gone hand-in-hand as far back as Change Of Heart and recording us on portable machines," he relates. "Curious, eventually I just started bugging bands to let me record them. We tried stuff and it went from there."

Yet despite the notoriety which has gone so far as to see him dubbed "Sir" Ian Blurton by Tricky Woo frontman Andrew Dickson, Blurton still maintains his humble outlook.

"I feel lucky to be able to keep doing this," he says. "Other people in society have chosen to make a stronger financial living and that's fine for them. It hasn't been easy all the time for me. I haven't got any money, but I have great friends and some totally fucked-up experiences I could never buy. I just hope that I've played great shows and treated people well. If anything, I hope that I'm seen as that."

C'Mon is currently on tour in Canada this fall with Toronto's The Illuminati.

WELCOME TO HELL

Sum 41 escapes war zone with Chuck

By Karen Bliss

Everyone is safe and sound at the Toronto headquarters for War Child Canada, a charity to aid children affected by war. "It would seem that all our humanitarian work will now be done from these offices," laughs Sum 41 drummer Steve Jocz, aka Stevo.

In May, thousand's of miles away in Africa's Democratic Republic of Congo, the multi-platinum Toronto-based rock band; management assistant Jeff Marshall; War Child's Dr. Samantha Nutt and Dr. Eric Hoskins; and producer/directors Adrian Calender and George Vale found themselves trapped in a war zone, where they were filming a documentary, now titled *Rocked: Sum 41 In The Congo*.

Three months later, under happier circumstances, Nutt, Hoskins and three of the band members gather 'round Marshall's lap top in War Child's front office – not for a debriefing, but to hear Sum 41's new single, "We're All To Blame," from the forthcoming album, *Chuck*, (due Oct. 12), the follow-up to 2002's *Does This Look Infected?*

While the new disc is named after the Canadian United Nations volunteer who spearheaded the evacuation plan

from the group's hotel to the UN compound, none of the 13 tracks on *Chuck* are specifically about Sum 41's life-threatening experience there – not even the single.

"That song was being written while we were in the Congo, so it doesn't really have anything to do with the Congo," says guitarist Dave "Brownsound" Baksh, 24, sitting in the boardroom, his right arm freshly bandaged from a voluntary wound, a new tattoo.

"You can relate it to the Congo," adds bassist Jason "Cone" McCaslin, 24.

"You can relate it to lots of things," says Stevo, 23.

Sum 41 frontman Deryck Whibley, 24, who wrote the lyrics, is absent from the conversation, having just relocated to Los Angeles.

"We're hopelessly blissful and blind to all we are," goes one line from the song, which juxtaposes an angry forceful vocal in the verse with a softer reflective chorus.

"It's about the state of the world today," Whibley says on the phone line a few days later from the set of the "We're All To Blame" video shoot. "Whatever we are as a society and culture, it's taken a while to get to this

point, and we've all contributed to it somehow. Everybody's to blame, somewhat, even if it's just ignorance or if there's a direct involvement."

The band, friends since high school in Ajax, Ont., just east of Toronto, signed to Island/Def Jam in the U.S. and Aquarius in Canada after the guys showed their true colours, via an electronic press kit, complete with water-gun drive-bys and a pizza grab. Subsequent showcases at the now defunct Ted's Wrecking Yard in Toronto included a trampoline and Martin Lawrence cut-out. Now, this very same cast of characters wanted to do its part to help children in war-torn countries.

Greig Nori, Sum 41's co-manager and frontman for Toronto rock band treble charger, sent War Child an email in January, inquiring how Sum 41 could get involved — a benefit concert, an album or, particularly, a trip overseas. Given information on the Sudan, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo to peruse, the band chose the Congo. Stevo, in particular, was passionate about going there, after reading historian Adam Hochschild's 1999 book *King Leopold's Ghost*, detailing the 1880s Belgian ruler's colonization of the Congo and slaughter of millions.

However, before Sum 41 could make the trip, it had to make a new album.

Nori, who produced the band's very first demos in 1996, and has produced all

and long-lasting qualities. It's a completely matured and positive indication of where they're going."

Back at the War Child offices, an appropriate setting for the interview, the guys say nothing of maturity and depth. The conversation, as usual, is filled with laughter and nutty comments from Baksh joking about pulling out a didgeridu onstage in the band's newfound quieter moments to Whibley's apparent adoration of Whoopi Goldberg and her *Sister Act* films.

"The majority of the album is heavy. Some are heavier than others, like 'Welcome To Hell,'" says Stevo.

"But there's also some of the softest songs we've ever done," points out Cone.

The softest, "Slipping Away," Steve calls a "half-song," originally intended to be an "intermission" between the album's heavier material.

"It's only two minutes," says Stevo. "Deryck played piano on it and there's cello at the end. There's acoustic guitars in parts, but it's not like kumbaya acoustic."

Of "Some Say," Stevo says, it's clearly not pop. "No, none of them are pop songs, but that one is slower. There's an acoustic guitar. It's softer..."

"It's almost indie rock," says Cone.

"Without the tie-dye," cracks Baksh.

Cone: "It's in the same vein as 'Handle This' from All Killer..."

"On the last record," says Cone, "we ended with 'Hooch,' which was a fast song, but had a soft sweet-sounding melodic part, but was really slow and unlike anything we had done. Deryck thought it would be cool to end it like that again, but make it longer."

Later on the cell, Whibley talks a little about the lyrics he writes so well under pressure. "There's No Solution" is a personal song about self-doubt, while "The Bitter End" is about what happens when we die. "Angels With Dirty Faces" is about drugs, and "No Reason," is about the "state of the world."

Originally, "No Reason" was supposed to be the first single, but the band wanted to insert a different chorus, taken from the song "No Control." In fact, Sum 41 still had that to do, plus other tweaking to the album, when it took a break in late May to go to the Congo with War Child.

The violence in the Congo (formerly The Belgian Congo, then Zaire) has been on and off since King Leopold's reign. The civil and regional war broke out again in

"WELCOME TO BUKAVU, THE TOURIST CAPITAL OF THE CONGO"

the recordings since, except for 2001's *All Killer No Filler*, would again be behind the board. Matt Hyde (Slayer, Hatebreed, treble charger) was hired as engineer. After preproduction, in March, they went to L.A. to Sound City where Stevo laid down the drums. Then, to be closer to home, and more cost effective, they did the rest in Toronto at Reaction and Umbrella into early April. As usual Whibley wrote his lyrics at the eleventh hour. "He always comes through," says Nori.

The songs include the heavy metal assault of "The Bitter End," complete with a speedy guitar solo to the acoustic-launched "Slipping Away," which contains cello and piano and beautiful gentle vocals from Whibley that barely sound like him. "Some Say" is almost pop with an Oasis-type feel, and the closing track, "88," goes from pounding rock to orchestral back to rock to menacing metal and dissonant new age/avant-garde.

"For me, it's the most substantial album they've done," says Nori. "It's got depth

Baksh: "Same sort of idea, but it's better, more melodic."

"The Bitter End," Cone calls "a ripper."

Stevo: "That's influenced by Metallica."

Baksh: "Fast and heavy. There's a solo that goes on for a minute. They said, 'Hey, make a solo that sounds like Kirk Hammett!'"

Did he make faces too? "No, no, but I did get the hair plugs," Baksh quips.

Stevo: "He permed his hair."

"Angels With Dirty Faces" was named after Whibley read an article on Sum 41. "The journalist called us 'angels with dirty faces,' and was going off on how we do drugs," recounts Stevo.

Dirty with angel faces seems more accurate.

"Yeah, far from angels," Stevo laughs.

"I love the fact that even Christians make fun of us," says Baksh.

"Next thing, it will be Scientologists, and Kabbalists," deadpans Stevo.

The album finale, "88," is so titled because the tempo is 88 beats per minute — not because it goes in about 88 different directions.



Chuck: In helmet

1998, partly over pressure attributed to the Rwandan genocide, but also over the country's rich natural resources: oil, gold, diamonds, timber, and a mineral called coltan, commonly used in cell phones.

For the documentary, which will be ready to shop to television networks in October, Sum 41's agenda entailed visits to refugee camps and child soldier rehabilitation centres in Bukavu.

Staying at The Orchid hotel on Lake Kivu, a UN-brokered peace accord deal had been in place for two years and the idyllic town, full of UN peacekeepers, had been calm for three. At the main entrance to the town, a big blue arched sign extends right across the road, declaring, "Welcome to Bukavu, the tourist capital of the Congo."

A week into their 9-day visit, the members of Sum 41 had experienced what Stevo calls "eye-opening" and "sometimes uncomfortable" talks with kids. "There were girls who had been raped. It was difficult to listen to, but

Cone



I'm sure it was more difficult to tell, so it was important to have it be told.

"Other times, it was fun," says Stevo. "Dave and I met these girls, around (age) 10, accused of witchcraft, who had been kicked out of their houses, but they are normal, great girls, and all had crushes on Dave."

"You know, it turned out that they actually weren't witches," adds Baksh.

"Then we just played soccer," says Stevo.

When they returned to the hotel, there was little to do, except drink, play dice, and sit in their rooms. The downtime would yield "We're All To Blame."

Whibley awoke one day at 5 a.m., and, bored, picked up his guitar. "No one was up yet, so I started writing. I was working on the song all morning and then half-way through the day, all the guns and bombs started going off," says Whibley.

The song escaped him as he escaped danger.

Dr. Nutt, War Child Canada's executive director, says UN peacekeepers notified them that the Congolese had detained some senior Rwandan officials who were trying to pass back into Rwanda a kilometre away, and they went back into town and started "an old fashioned shoot 'em up," she relays. "We were in a hotel that was inconveniently placed – but conveniently close to the UN."

Cone says they could hear the popping of the mortar rounds and gunfire. "It was really close."

"It was day time," adds Stevo. "You could see attack helicopters that are the UN's, and you could hear bullets (fired). And then, when they started shooting more around the hotel, the hotel shook."

Enter Charles Pelletier, the now infamous Chuck, who hails from Victoria, BC and is camp manager at United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). "He was a UN volunteer," says Stevo. "He used to be in the Canadian military. He was staying at our hotel. When everything broke loose, he went into military mode."

Taking refuge in ground-floor rooms, Pelletier herded the hotel's 40 or so occupants into the lobby in small groups, along with two senior South African peacekeepers. Together, they ran with everyone to armored personnel carriers, which took them to the UN compound just a half-kilometer away.

There was reportedly no Seinfeld or Almost Famous about-to-die moment, confessions of love, hate, hit and runs, or sleeping with another's girlfriend. "Everybody was just really quiet. There's not much to talk about," says Stevo.

"The only thing you're going to do by getting all vocal and weird is freak everybody else out," says Baksh.

"I did yell at a few people because they were taking so fuckin' long," remembers Stevo. "Chuck was like, 'You can't bring anything. You're about to die.' 'Well, can I

bring my computer or my make-up bag?' 'No. Put it down. Let's leave.'"

"When we all got to the UN compound, it was all hugs and kisses," says Cone.

But there was still more danger ahead.

Eric Hoskins, War Child Canada's president who is married to Nutt; information officer Sebastien Lapierre, the group's Canadian contact at the UN; and Igor Bulgakov, a senior UN military official at the joint operations centre had to get a different set of 40 people (there were about a thousand assembled at the compound) to the Bukavu airport, about a 90-minute bus ride away – which meant driving 10 minutes right through enemy territory heavily occupied by gun-toting rebels – to government-held territory.

War Child Canada had chartered a plane and called pilot Lary Strietzel of Uganda-based MAF airline, which was on stand-by. He bravely came to get them in the middle of the turmoil (not 24 hours later, rebels surrounded the airport and killed a number of government troops and civilians). The party of nine took the two-hour flight to Uganda, where they decompressed for a few days, before flying to the U.K. and eventually home.

Whibley visited a friend, then rejoined the guys for shows in the U.K. and U.S., and didn't get back to Toronto until two weeks later.

"The day that I got home, I started playing my guitar and started playing this song," Whibley recounts of "We're All To Blame."

"I was really surprised that I remembered it because while we were there, there was no electricity, so I couldn't record it. It was just in my head. And then the war started.

"So when I got home, I remembered it exactly. I thought that was a really good sign, so I made a quick little demo of the part that I remembered and I showed it to Greig and people in my record company, and everyone said, 'That's the best song on the album. You have to finish that.'"

So they did, finally completing the album.

Sum 41 doesn't know yet how Chuck feels about his name gracing the cover of its third full-length album, but, by all accounts, it could've been called Sebastien or Igor or Eric or Lary. Getting one of Canada's top bands safely home, and ready to rock, was a collective effort.

And the guys may never wish to repeat the event, but they will undoubtedly repeat the story, perhaps embellishing the danger with every telling, and will be inextricably involved with War Child Canada.

As Stevo puts it so well: "All hell broke loose and we almost died, but I didn't have this religious epiphany. Given what happened to all of us, we're still pretty grounded. I just look at the world a little differently now. I'd just like to help more."

Deryck



Dave



Stevo



VIDEO EMPRESS'S ULTIMATE CREATION

By Nick Krewen

Floria Sigismondi's internal manifestation of her frustration



Floria from Interpol's "Obstacle 1"

"In order to find ourselves, we must destroy ourselves. The human race craves the experience."

If you think this quote is a statement from one of those high-and-mighty philosophers like Freud or Nietzsche, guess again. The author is Floria Sigismondi, the Italian-born, Hamilton, Ont.-raised music video provocateur.

Provided to introduce Come Part Mental, her first major exhibition of photographs, installations, sculpture and videos for the Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art back in 2001, the quote could equally apply to the majority of her disturbing, yet riveting, rock videos.

Whether it's the Mussolini impressionism for her classic Marilyn Manson clip "Beautiful People," or the animated fury of Incubus' chiding "Megalomaniac," or the war-torn imagery of Sigur Ros' "Untitled No. 1," Sigismondi's visual flair is dark, distinctive, compelling, and, perhaps, the most consistently imaginative forays into a medium inhibited by MTV parameters – and it's made her an international sensation in the music community.

Perception being the fuel of creation, then it'll be interesting to see what the future holds for Floriavision because her life is about to irrevocably change. In October, Sigismondi and her husband, Lillian Berlin, singer of the politically charged St. Louis punk rock trio Living Things, will welcome their first child into the world.

"It was a pretty scary thing for the first

two weeks when I found out," Sigismondi admits from her New York apartment, although she's negotiating to buy a house in Brooklyn where the family will reside when she's not in Toronto.

Used to long periods of solitude to stoke her fertile imagination, she explains, "I was kind of unstable with the whole of what's happening to me. And then, I was just thinking of the birth as the ultimate creative thing – the human being. Working with kids on the Sigur Ros video, I learned there was something really freeing and amazing about their souls, not being dampened by the rules that we are."

"As adults, if we're hungry, we just go get something to eat. Kids yell, 'I'm hungry!' or 'I'm tired!' and they lie on the floor. It was incredibly freeing. I'd love it if people, when they were tired, would just lie on the floor."

"So I think it's just another stage of things to discover and I'm actually looking forward to it. But the isolation – I don't think I'm going to get that, am I?"

Well, yes and no. Along with the demands of parenthood, the Ontario College Of Art alumnus plans to buckle down to the solitary task of writing a screenplay she intends to direct, realizing a lifelong dream of helming a feature film. It's important to her after reaching an impasse for her own big screen version of the 1947 unsolved murder case The Black Dahlia.

"I just decided to write something of my own," says Sigismondi of Behind The Ballyhoo Blues. "I think that's maybe the best thing. If you think about how I create,

the reason I enjoy doing them so much is that they come from me."

Before BTBB comes to fruition, there are a couple of mid-September exhibitions at New York's Deitch Projects and The Spike Gallery. And in 2005, a book of her photographs will be published by Die Gestalten Verlag, no doubt featuring Sigismondi's unique and immediately identifiable signature.

It's a surrealistic vision that permeates most of her work, ranging from early videos like Our Lady Peace's "The Birdman" and The Tea Party's "Save Me" to more recent classics: Amon Tobin's "4 Ton Mantis," Interpol's "Obstacle 1," The Cure's "The End Of The World," Sigur Ros' "Untitled No. 1" (MTV Europe 2003 video of the year) and Christina Aguilera's "Fighter" (MVPA 2004 pop video of the year). She'll be the first to admit you're getting as much of her, if not more, than the artist you're watching.

"It's more of an internal manifestation of my frustration, like Incubus' 'Megalomaniac,'" she explains. "Usually the lyrics conjure up some interest in me, unless it's something like Sigur Ros, where the soundtrack made me cry. But what's extremely frustrating to me at the time is where I need to put all my energy."

Her current preoccupation is war imagery, especially since the terror of 9/11 occurred a mere block-and-a-half from her Big Apple apartment.

"It really affected me, because all the soldiers were here, in their combat uniforms and wearing gas masks," recalls Sigismondi, who was in Toronto at the time of the World Trade Center attacks, but returned to New York two weeks later.

"It was incredibly surreal to walk around this big, international city at night wearing this gas mask and hearing your own breath. That quite affected me, and I think that's where the Sigur Ros stuff came from."

"War images are the ultimate morbid images. My preoccupation is more into that world, because they're just so prominent today, and the idea of loss of control, too, I think that's what I'm feeling – where freedom is at the edge of the cliff."

Although she readily admits she doesn't "intellectualize" her art or the motives behind it, Sigismondi does seek the truth within, and, hopefully, some common ground with others.

"What I do intend is to go deep inside and get the truth out of me, or something out of me if I'm afraid of it or angry," she says. "Maybe once you go deep down inside and get rid of all that stuff, maybe we're all the same, with same desires or same angers."

And perhaps the happiness and rewards that come with motherhood. By the way, it's a girl.

"Who else is going to inherit my wardrobe?" she laughs.

JUST BE WH

Is 'screamo' just a bullshit term?

By Karen Bliss

George Pettit of Alexisonfire

Set 1973's *Exorcist* star Linda Blair's demonic vocal emissions to aggressive rock and you might have the roots of "screamo," the newest buzz term in the music industry. It's an unlikely lineage, but just as viable as tracing its roots to metal, punk or sub-genres hardcore, metalcore and nu metal.

Haven't rock singers always screamed? Haven't those who don't understand the music always complained "It's just noise" or "They're just screaming"?

Why is Lemmy from Motörhead any different than Entombed's devilish growls? How the hell is one to distinguish between screamo and metal and hardcore and nu metal and emo and oh-no and what the fuck?

In a nutshell, "screamo," which stems from another buzz-term "emo," is simply emotional music with a screamer, well emotional heavy music with a screamer. But as New Jersey's Dave Ciancio, manager of Thursday, Shadows Fall, God Forbid, and others says, "What music isn't emotional? Maybe you could argue Jimmy Buffett isn't emotional, but if you're not putting emotion in your music, then why are you writing music?"

Leading the screamo pack in Canada is St. Catharines, Ont.-spawned Alexisonfire. The band is getting zero to no mainstream airplay, but has rabid fans that sing along to every word. What's unique about the band is it pits George Pettit's expressive screams against Dallas Green's melodic singing, but both do what they do exceptionally well.

Watch Out!, Alexisonfire's second album (2002's self-titled debut scanned 30,000 copies) debuted in June at No. 6 on the Top 200 Nielsen SoundScan Canada chart, selling more than 6,500 copies in the first week. Two months later, the Distort/EMI Music Canada

release had sold more than 20,000 copies, and is now gold (50,000). Many domestic signings with major label push and radio play haven't sold as much.

In the U.S. where the band is on Equal Vision, Watch Out! scanned 4,600 copies first week out, and continues to move between 1,000 and 1,500 pieces a week, again without radio. The band is on Eat Sleep/Sorepoint in the U.K., Defiance in Germany, Shock in Australia, and Imperial in Japan.

"There's this underground network of with-it kind of bands and record labels that kids tap into and it's been going on underneath the noses of the major industry," explains Pettit of how kids know about Alexisonfire.

Unlike some musicians who abhor being categorized, Pettit doesn't scoff at the term "screamo."

"There's a definite scene," Pettit agrees. "It all kind of started in the mid-'90s with this band called Grade from Burlington (Ont.). Grade got the ball rolling for melodic hardcore (in Canada) because you had these guys that were from these known hardcore bands playing more melodic screaming music. It really took off, and then it kind of disappeared for a little while, and the bands started coming out again.

"(In the States), you had bands like Thursday, who were doing the whole scream verses singing thing and, yeah, there's definitely a scene for it now. If you consider that in Southern Ontario alone, you've got Silverstein signed to Victory. We've got us, obviously, Alexisonfire. You've got Boys Night Out, who are signed to Ferret. These are all bands that have the melodic screaming sound to them."

Alexisonfire's guitarist Wade MacNeil, the guy who actually invited Pettit

to scream for the band in 2001, says he had heard the term "screamo" or "screamocore" tossed around back then, but not as much as nowadays. "I've always wanted to have a band that had a frontman who was aggressive and in-your-face and that's why I wanted to have George spitting on the mic," he explains. "I don't think we invented the screamo market for Canada. I would never say that."

Mark "London" Spicoluk, co-founder of Toronto-based punk label Underground Operations and frontman for Closet Monster, believes '90s Swedish act Refused was instrumental in bringing screamo to the generic punk rock fan with the Epitaph release of 1998's *The Shape Of Punk To Come*.

"It's the most obvious reason for everything in the underground turning that direction," Spicoluk says. "As soon as that record started selling they broke up as a band, but kids went ape shit over it, and then everybody's band and their brother started sounding like Refused."

U.O. artist Rody Walker, who fronts Whitby, Ont.'s Protest The Hero, like Pettit, also cites the burgeoning of screamo in Canada with Grade, but says it really caught on with the music of Alexisonfire and Burlington, Ont.'s Boys Night Out. PTH's earlier sound, Walker says, was derived from listening to bands like Dillinger Escape Plan and Between The Buried And Me, but still infused melody.

However, he seems disillusioned with the genre now, after seeing such marketable acts as The Used and Story Of The Year. "We're really trying to stay away from that screaming market now. It's just become over-used and very tired. The delivery is no longer interesting. It's just to compensate for

AT YOU ARE

“My dad would just call the stuff heavy metal” – Josh Grabelle
Trustkill Records

lack of creative ideas. That's my personal belief. Screaming is supposed to be used as a very rhythmic instrument, and I don't think people get that. I don't think it's supposed to be used as a melody.”

Besides Alexisonfire and Boys Night Out, lesser known Canadian acts like Blue Skies At War, Abandoned Hearts Club, The End, and the now defunct End This Week With Knives fit into that vein, but why then wouldn't Billy Talent or Death From Above 1979 not be “screamo,” if indeed they have elements of screaming? Where's the line?

“It's pretty hard to trace it,” says Pettit. “But hardcore came out of punk rock and all these sub genres came out of hardcore.”

The differences are so subtle, they border on absurd, believes Josh Grabelle, president of New Jersey-based Trustkill Records, whose roster includes Poison the Well and Hopesfall. He cites '80s U.K. hardcore band Embrace and '90s Seattle ‘emocore’ band Sunny Day Real Estate as spawning the genre 10 or 20 years ago.

“My dad would just call the stuff heavy metal because he can't tell the difference, but someone who is really involved with it will call one thing metalcore, another screamo,” says Grabelle.

“Screamo is definitely something that the media picked up at a certain point, probably with some of my bands like Poison The Well or Hopesfall. Everyone has their own view. A band like Hopesfall, someone is going to call them metalcore and someone's going to call them screamo. I just call them a really cool rock band.”

Greg Below, who runs Toronto hard music label Distort, which signed Alexisonfire, says it's only natural that new sub genres crop up every few years. “Music has to go somewhere,” he says. “Where did nu metal come from?

It's just that metal turned into something a bit more groove oriented and not so guitar solo heavy, and it changed from singing like Bruce Dickinson to screaming half the time. You can't go anywhere else in metal. You've already played as fast as you physically can – bands like Napalm Death.

“Or tuned down as low as you can go – bands like Bolt Thrower and Cannibal Corpse. Or something that just growls and plays heavy riffs. And then you play as slow as you can in a genre of music like doom metal. They have Trouble that has been around for 20 some odd years and you have Kyuss and Cathedral and bands of that genre. And there's straight-ahead heavy metal like Motörhead. Every genre has been touched on at one point or another.”

Carl Severnson, president of New Jersey's Ferret Music, which signed Killswitch Engage, Everytime I Die, and Canada's Boys Night Out, points the finger at music journalists for creating the term. “Rolling Stone and others are begging for a name to hang on the next big thing and emo wasn't good enough I guess. But it kind of works,” Severnson admits.

“It all stems out of hardcore music. As Warped Tour came along, and you have bands that have roots in hardcore and punk rock, they expanded to more people, and more and more kids got into it that didn't have those older hardcore roots. They grew up on maybe Thursday or Taking Back Sunday or stuff a little earlier than that.

“It's definitely a newer spin. I could run off a list of about 80 bands that are doing it right now. From Autumn To Ashes are probably the heaviest of all the bands, but the drummer does all the melodic stuff and the singer does all the heavy stuff. Funeral For A Friend same

sort of the thing, except the singer does all the singing and the drummer does all the screaming, and then a lot of bands the singer does everything.”

Manager Dave Ciancio just thinks the whole screamo label is dumb.

“I'm probably not the best person to ask,” he says. “I think the word ‘screamo’ is an industry term and most bands that are being labeled as ‘scream’ have no desire to be labeled as screamo. It's become an A&R buzz word or industry people to be able to genre-lize something.

“I think if you went and asked the Stone Temple Pilots if they were grunge, they'd say, ‘I don't know. We play rock ‘n’ roll.’ And if you went up to Thursday, Glassjaw, Story Of The Year or Yellowcard, or any of these bands that are being pigeonholed as that, they'd probably say, ‘I don't know. We're not that.’

“I think the favourite term is ‘punk indie hardcore’ or ‘post hardcore.’ It's one of those things where I don't think any band ever said, ‘We're going to be a screamo band.’ Any band that is trying to be a screamo band is doing it because they're trying to buy into the music business. People need to be able to associate things with a movement or a style or a genre, but it's a bullshit term. It doesn't really mean anything.”

So what's next? Femo or femocore – a female emotional screamer? Besides the raging Candace Kucsulain of Trustkill act Walls Of Jericho, they're hard pressed to find. “There's a little bit more of a female presence than there was, but, for the most part, it's pretty much a sausage party out there, which sucks,” says Alexisonfire's George Pettit. “I don't understand why there aren't more girls in bands.”



SMASH IT UP





Photography: Paula Wilson
 Stylist: Tony Holiday, assisted by Shawna Meggers
 Make up: Lisa Bromhead
 Hair: Dwayne and Jodi, Coupe Bizzare
 Clothes available at Spy Lab, Damzels in this Dress and Puma

Left top: Jodi: socks, HLDY; shirt, Puma
 Bottom: Misty: wristbands, CBGB; shirt, HLDY
 Marcus: shirt, HLDY; pants, Tension Jeans
 Right top: Helen: dress, Damzels in this Dress; shoes, Puma
 Marcus: pants, Dickies; shirt, HLDY
 Bottom: Misty: shirt, HLDY; pants, Betty Blush; skirt, Shanna; shoes, Puma
 Ariel: dress, Damzels in this Dress; shoes, Puma



The Existence Of Angels

By Mitch Joel

"This band went through the fucking saddest of roller coasters, but came out the other side to some joy," says Jeff Martin, frontman/guitarist for rock trio The Tea Party. "If you listen to this record and you don't get it, I seriously have to wonder if you indeed have a soul."

Considered by many as dark, brooding and majestic, The Tea Party is back with its ninth disc, *Seven Circles*, an album Martin considers "the best thing this band has ever done."

The band – Martin, Stuart Chatwood (bass, keyboards) and Jeff Burrows (drums) – formed The Tea Party 14 years ago, in Windsor, Ont. Now based in Toronto, it has become one of the most recognizable rock bands in Canada, always true to a driving rock sound that echoes with shards of hard rock, traditional blues, monumental arrangements, and even modern electronica.

Though many personal issues ensued during the past two years, the most tragic was the passing of its manager, Steve Hoffman, who stared down lung cancer with dignity and strength to the very end in October of 2003. Hoffman, 38, was an integral part of the band's success.

Over the years, he encouraged Martin, who is overly protective of his band and music, to "let go" of his reigns as the main songwriter and producer for The Tea Party. Martin admits that he relented for the recording of *Seven Circles*, in part, as a tribute to his close friend and manager.

"Steve believed that there was a way to make an incredible Tea Party disc without me wearing all of the hats," says Martin. "He knew there was a way for me to still be captain of the ship and be able to focus more on the songwriting. After *The Interzone Mantras* (2001), he definitely wanted us to modernize our sound. He wanted me to work more on my guitar sounds. My library of sounds is what it is,

but he always pushed me to try more."

For *Seven Circles*, The Tea Party went to Maui, "Steve's favourite place in the world," to record three songs with producer Bob Rock (Metallica, Bon Jovi, The Cult). "It was great to watch one of the masters of rock take on The Tea Party and see his interpretations of our music," says Martin. "I obviously had some concerns, but I kept them to myself and let him do his thing. It turned out for the best for those three songs."

The Tea Party finished the album in Toronto with Gavin Brown (Billy Talent, Three Days Grace, Thornley), known for bringing his vision to a project. "I wanted a sounding board and someone who is very 'now,'" says Martin. "Gavin was very respectful of the whole situation and just put his input in when he thought it was necessary. He was more of a song doctor for the arrangements on the bigger songs to make them that much more accessible for today's climate."

For a band with a propensity for Shamanism, esoteric books and lyrics shrouded in mystery and hidden messages, Martin's baritone vocal attack and lyrics on *Seven Circles* are a complete one-eighty from previous efforts.

"For me, especially at this point in my life, I don't have time for mystery any more," Martin says. "I don't have



The Tea Party turns tragedy into a musical triumph

time for any of the bullshit anymore. The one thing that Steve taught us in his very brave battle with what he went through is, and even though it's a cliché, life is short. I needed to get to the point as quick as possible."

Martin, who believed Hoffman would visit Maui with the band if it returned to do some more songs with Rock there, wrote *Seven Circles*' "If I Promise An Ocean" for him. And "Stargazer" and the first single, "Writing's On The Wall," the singer believes, is going to bring a lot of joy to others because of their immediacy.

"Just listen to this record," encourages Martin. "I have seen a lot of fucking things in my life. I've seen both terrifying and beautiful things. I've always questioned the existence of angels. Since Steve has passed away, I do not question that anymore. My life was very much a struggle. When he was struggling, I was struggling. Every day since he has passed away, my life has exponentially become better."

The Passion of The Tea Party

Scott Stapp and The Tea Party single, "Relearn Love," from *The Passion of Christ* DVD, is already at radio, and the band may return to South Beach, FLA. to write a whole album with the former Creed singer.

"Steve used to say to me that one day I would work with Scott and I was like 'Fuck off, no way, it will never happen.' Well, it's happening," says Martin. "The Tea Party was always one of Scott's favorite bands and it was a dream of his to have the three of us work with him. Creed broke up and he called us. I have the highest degree of standards and if this wasn't going to work, I would have been the first one to put the other two guys on a plane and say, 'Let's go home.' The song is beautiful, a 'With Arms Wide Open' kind of thing."

NOT WELCOME AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Bush Whacking With Ministry's Al Jourgensen



By Liisa Ladouceur

"The world's a hell. What does it matter what happens in it?" – Alfred Hitchcock's Shadow of a Doubt, 1943.

"The time is right for decision. The time is right for those with something to say." – Ministry, 2004

Anyone with any brain cells left knows that the planet is fucked. Apart from what humans do to each other and their environments, there's an idiot with his finger on the button. The way to change is threefold: education, politics, and art. Ministry's Al Jourgensen is tackling all fronts.

The first strike comes via music. For 20 years now, Jourgensen has made Ministry a force to contend with, but as he admits his band and his banter are most fierce when the Republicans are in power in America.

Ministry's latest album, *Houses of the Molé*, is an unabashed critique of the Bush administration, not to be confused with 1992's *Psalm 69*, which attacked the "New World Order" of Bush Sr.

"I've never been a big fan of the Bush family, in general. I'm certainly not on their Christmas card list," says Jourgensen, by phone from his home in Texas. "It was a no-brainer, with the policies and directions that his administration is taking for us and the world, for Ministry to do something about it."

"It's unfortunate that it takes that kind of catalyst to get us motivated. It's unfortunate that people think we only do good records when Republicans are in office. I don't think that, but everyone is entitled to their opinion."

There's no mistaking Jourgensen's opinion on Houses of the Molé. More than ever, it was his record to make. The departure of long-time member Paul Barker and his digital tools freed him to record live in the studio. Jourgensen credits himself for "deprogramming." The result is an industrial-thrash sonic assault that could have been called *Psalm 70*. Tracks titled "Wrong," "Worthless" and "Worm" are blatant in their condemnation of George W.

Jourgensen's ace has always been a sharp, sarcastic sense of humour. Not surprisingly, the album's most entertaining attacks come straight from the President's mouth, edited and twisted around. For example: "I have a message for the Iraqi people...Go home and die" used in the track "Wrong."

"It takes a lot of George W. Bush's rubbish and throws it back at him," Jourgensen explains. "I sat through about 110 hours of Bush speeches downloaded from www.whitehouse.org. They're public domain. Listening to that dolt was probably the low-light of recording this album. I was pretty delirious by the end of it."

Unlike the President, Jourgensen is not declaring "mission accomplished" when the job isn't done. In partnership with Punkvoter.org, he's embarked on his own election campaign – to register voters (The U.S. requires people to actively register themselves in advance in order to vote).

Ministry's upcoming tour happens right before November 2nd's U.S. Presidential election, and Jourgensen's

recruiting. "We're setting up voter booths," he says. "I'm personally going out to the booths after sound check, for two hours a night, to register voters. I figure people will come if I'm actually there. I'll use any devious method I can. I'll trade my autograph for theirs. It's important. Instead of just paying lip service to it, people need to get politically active. It's about time. The correction is needed."

Jourgensen is more than a little qualified to shoot his mouth off about politics. Born in Cuba, he grew up in Chicago, where before making a name for himself in the Wax Trax! industrial music scene, he earned a masters degree in history from the University of Chicago.

"People are always surprised, because of the stereotype," he admits. "To be honest, this whole rock thing got in the way of my teaching career, which I'd like to be able to go do, soon. If things get boring, I have a second career besides working at Denny's or something."

Jourgensen even says if a White House change doesn't happen this fall, he may pack up his Texas ranch and come to Canada. Anyone want to sign up for Mr. Al's Poli-Sci 101?

"I really would like to go ride off into the sunset and be a college professor. That would be my happy ending. You're still up on the stage, after all. Mr. Jourgensen's class would be the best. We'd order pizza and smoke crack (laughs). I would hope I could at least enlighten them slightly. That would be my goal."

SIX FEET OVER

Death From Above 1979: as loud as they are tall

By Liisa Ladouceur

Photo: Paula Wilson

"I don't play loud on purpose," explains Jesse F. Keeler, the bassist, keyboardist and vocalist in Death From Above 1979. "I play loud to be heard over the drums."

Making it hard to be heard is drummer and co-vocalist Sebastien Grainger, who crashes the kit with the ferocity of what the duo likes to call "an elephant in your living room." Yes, a duo. Gone are the days when folks are impressed with what a power trio can do.

"We don't have any extra stuff in our band because we don't need it," explains Keeler. "We haven't done everything we can do as a two-piece. When we reach that point, we'll add stuff."

With release of the band's first fully formed full-length album, *You're A Woman, I'm a Machine*, the growing hype is almost as deafening as its music.

The success of DFA 1979 has nothing to do with the guys' towering good looks (both well over 6 feet) or industry connections, although they have both. It's because everyone who witnesses its live show leaves stunned and screaming, "Hell ya!," "Whoo!" and "Pardon?"

You're a Woman, I'm a Machine (released on LastGang/Universal in Canada and Vice/Atlantic in the U.S.) captures much of what makes DFA '79 great: the intense physicality of its rhythms, the depth of its groove, the variety in its retro-style rock riffs, the memorable melodies squeezed from their scratchy, pained vocals.

It's fierce and funky at the same time. But compared to the band's 2002 debut, *Heads Up* (Ache Records), or its blistering live shows, it's also more accessible, less punishing. Going mainstream already? Not so, says the band.

"You can't actually make a record louder," says Keeler. "Our first record, we paid for mastering with a bottle of whiskey. That's why it sounds like that."

"Recording our band is so hard," adds Grainger. "If you just put the mics and recorded like normal, it's just noise. When you see our band, that sound of your ears breaking and everything going into it at the same time, it mixes in your ear. This record is our best attempt, to

date, at recording our band. The songs have actually gotten a lot crazier. The first record we were just playing on the dots. Now, it's more insane."

Not as insane as the life DFA 1979 has been living in 2004. Apart from constant gigs in and around Toronto, the band has played non-stop around the globe, including three shows in one night in London and a Vice magazine party at the Canadian Consulate in Japan. In the meantime, it had to change its name: NYC production duo DFA had dibs. Rather than giving it up completely, the guys added 1979, the year of Grainger's birth.

The day of this Gasoline interview, Keeler and Grainger have just returned from another whirlwind jaunt, skipping from Japan in extreme summer to winter in New Zealand. Barring a few cold sniffles, they're holding up well, handling the lifestyle with a good sense of humour and late-night antics. It doesn't hurt that Keeler met his dream girl in Australia, a model who uprooted and followed him home. If that sounds oh so rock star-ish, it's really not. DFA '79 isn't like that. The two ham it up for the camera, but hate posed photos. They like to party, but don't do drugs.

"We do get as debaucherous as we can within the confines of 'cocaine sucks,'" explains Keeler. "We've pretended to be a cab before and picked people up in the van."

"We also do drive-by hugs," says Grainger. "We jump out and hug people then drive away. I guess we're pretty PG as a band, although we like to drink on someone else's bill and pick fights too."

So you might want to keep your eyes as well as your ears out for this pair, if you can spot them: besides standing out because of their height, they don't care to be famous faced local celebs.

"So many bands seem content with being popular in Toronto," says Grainger. "It makes you feel good I guess, to be recognized on the street. We're not, but I prefer not to be recognized in Toronto, but to sell records everywhere else. Really, I just want to live in a tugboat in the Bahamas. It's gonna happen."

SIX FEET UNDER

Death From Above 1979's music is loud enough to raise the dead. And considering the band practises in a former funeral home, it just might. "My house was built in 1907," says Keeler. "One of the people who survived the Titanic had their funeral there. It's not a funeral home anymore though. The family that ran the home have another location now." Good thing if you want to rest in peace.

THE ENDURANCE TEST

By Eric Wilson

England's The Wildhearts has been a mere blip on the radar to North American fans for more than a decade. That's being rectified this year, first with the Riff And Raff compilation of b-sides and recent singles on Gearhead Records, and recently with a brand new album of originals, entitled *The Wildhearts Must Be Destroyed*, on Sanctuary.

It's truly rip-your-face-off-rock without one crap song on it, much like its 1994 landmark debut, *Earth vs. The Wildhearts*. Pounding, infectious and catchy, the band is melodic like the Foo Fighters, but way heavier and with better songs. It has been aptly described as The Beach Boys meet Motörhead.

After eight years, the band's long overdue return to these shores came courtesy of The Darkness, which served as its opening act on a 2001 U.K. tour, and returned the favour by bringing The Wildhearts over as the support in North America in April and again in June, exposing it to capacity crowds.

Talking with mainman Ginger on the tour bus prior to the Montreal show at Verdun Auditorium, he was in great spirits over these developments. "We're cruising on positive energy," he says. "We just played a sold-out show in New York (at Tribeca Rock Club) that was fantastic – limousines with famous people pulling up to check out the gig, being recognized on the street. Couldn't believe it."

Brutally honest and funny as hell, Ginger has an informed opinion on everything from his disdain for the Bush/Blair/Iraq disaster (an opinion he held before the war began) to his own experience with depression that brought him to a mental hospital and the poor treatment it administered.

Like all good bands that endure, The Wildhearts has a legacy of substance abuse problems, inter-band punch-ups, members coming, going, and coming back. Its current lineup is flushed out by original members CJ (guitar) and Stidi (drums), and recent recruit Jon Poole (bass), who had been a member of SilverGinger5, Ginger's side project.

Triumph and trouble have followed the band over its 10-year career – from persistent label problems to the departure of long-serving bass player Danny due to alcoholism – but despite the occasional

The Darkness helps The Wildhearts



Ginger

Photo: Heller

hiatus, it has maintained a loyal following in the U.K. and Japan, the country that has released the most Wildhearts product.

"Japan is a market unto itself," says Ginger. "We got offers for shows there at a time when nothing else was happening with the band, and we still got our usual crowds, which was very encouraging." The band documented the visit on its first official live album, 2000's *Tokyo Suits Me*.

The last time The Wildhearts played this side of the pond was in 1996 opening for AC/DC, even though there was no album release to promote. "We had been supporting them in Europe when we were both on East/West, and they felt we'd gone done well with their fans," explains Ginger. "I thought (the fans) hated us, but apparently their support acts usually get bottles thrown at them, and we didn't, so that qualified us as a good opener."

"They offered us the American shows, but we didn't get to finish them 'cause we ran out of money. We later heard that (AC/DC singer) Brian Johnson said, 'If it's money they needed, why didn't they just ask?'"

While the Wildhearts may have only released four proper albums in 10 years, the frontman is a prolific songwriter. Many great songs appear only as B-sides or on limited mail-order singles, either Wildhearts, solo, or as SilverGinger5, his project that began as a

solo album then became a touring band with the addition of Electric Boy Conny Bloom on guitar and vocals.

Only available as imports in North America, and even those aren't easy to find, Ginger isn't upset that MP3s of his songs can be found on the Internet. "Downloads, bootlegs, it's all the same, just another excuse for poor CD sales by the record companies," says Ginger. "The problem is the crap that they've been focusing on, that's why their sales are down generally."

Ginger is fully active online. He has been furthering the band's profile on The Wildhearts official website (www.thewildhearts.com), featuring his rant section called Ginger Says, which includes such gems as his personal 12-step approach to quit drinking, to the Ask Ginger area where he fields all kinds of questions, not just music and band related. "I've answered questions, privately, about depression, abuse, alcoholism, and other problems people have, much of which I've suffered through myself," he says.

With The Wildhearts' profile on the rise, there's talk of a headlining club tour in North America this fall. Ginger's enduring memories of Canada? "Being a crack addict and hanging out on Hastings (in Vancouver), looking to score," he reveals, and an affinity for our raccoons. "Those little bandits. I was feeding them cat food until I told people and they freaked."

ALIVE & AMPLIFIED & PRETTY DAMN FUNNY

Story and Photo: Steve McLean



Sonny James, Jr

THE MOONEY SUZUKI SIDEKICKS

New York City's The Mooney Suzuki has independently released two critically hailed albums of soulful garage rock since forming in 1997, but it's now taking a shot at more widespread exposure with a deal with Columbia and a new album, *Alive & Amplified*, produced by The Matrix team that was behind Avril Lavigne's smash debut. After a day of fielding questions from journalists, the band's lead singer/guitarist Sonny James, Jr. and guitarist Graham Tyler (bassist Michael Miles and drummer Augie Wilson round out the lineup) were in a playful mood while enjoying pre-show pints of Guinness on the rooftop patio of Paupers Pub in Toronto with Steve McLean. Decide for yourself the truth to fiction ratio in their answers:

After hearing about The Matrix's involvement, I was concerned about you getting soft. But this album still rocks. Tell me about making it.

James: "Why sit down and write a bunch of songs when we had money to hire the best? So we tipped a fuckin' dump truck full of money and gave it to The Matrix and said, 'Give us the hits.' We then went back to our apartment, got high and watched MTV. We showed up the next morning and played what they told us to play and we got a dope-ass record out of it."

Are you concerned with losing any credibility with your longtime fans?

Tyler: "It's a small price to pay if you lose

10,000 fans and gain 10 million. So fuck 'em if they can't take a hint."

Why did you select the title track as the single?

Tyler: "After extreme market-testing, we found that one had the biggest response. At first it wasn't as good as some of the other songs, so we went back and changed a few of the melodies. We got the questionnaires back talking about the offensive parts of the song and, nine times out of 10, it was the same part. So we changed that part and then, after further extensive market research, we discovered that the third edited version of 'Alive & Amplified' was the most sellable and palatable."

James: "It was actually the same company that tests Little Debbie snack cakes that market-tested our singles. It was a reputable company, but all of the market researches were incredibly obese and had chocolate all over their faces."

There's a larger traditional soul element on the album, especially with the female backing vocals.

James: "Now we can afford people who can actually sing. Again, with the market research, we saw that rock 'n' roll wasn't doing too well on the charts. But R&B clearly is. So we figured that we'd hire a couple of soul backing vocalists and get a little R&B in there and a little pop in there to take us to the top of the charts."

A lot of the songs deal with women and sex, aside from "Shake That Bush Again," which is obviously a political song.

James: "There are many, many meanings to the word 'bush,' including the burning bush of biblical yore. They used to shake the burning bush to get all of the serpents to flee. At Pentecostal churches, they'll yell to the preacher to 'shake that bush again,' as in give me more knowledge by shaking truth from the burning bush. It's a gospel shout. But when we played the song live for the first time, a friend of ours said, 'What's that new song - 'Shake That Pussy Hair?' That's not the title, but if you want to think that that's what the song's about, more power to you."

THE NAME GAME WITH THE MOONEY SUZUKI

How did you get the band name?

James: "From Melvin Mooney and Damo Suzuki."

What would it take to get you to join Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church?

Tyler: "Money and the promise of virgins in the after-life -- and the actual-life and the before-life."

David Suzuki is Canada's foremost environmentalist. What's the most environmentally friendly thing about The Mooney Suzuki?

James: "We're voting for George Bush. He wants to drill in Alaska to get more oil, which we heartily support because we need more oil. We consume a lot of fuel, but I think that we could do better."

The Suzuki Sidekick had problems with tipping over. Do any of you have that problem?

Tyler: "No sir. We have much wider wheel bases. Look at this guy's ass (points to James). It's a shithouse. That thing's not tipping over."

If you could have a sidekick, who would it be?

Tyler: "My sidekick would have to be Tim Conway in the Dorf suit with a golf club and a tiny Hitler moustache."

James: "I'd would take Eddie Murphy as Billy Ray Valentine."

GASOLINE CLASSIC

A LIFE-CHANGING ALBUM

REVIEWER: Early Moses/ex Econoline Crush frontman Trevor Hurst

CLASSIC PICK: Killing Joke – Night Time (1985)

Growing up in rural Manitoba made it very hard to find new and interesting music. The hammers, screwdrivers and standard issue rusty pliers found in the back of any pick-up truck were paralleled by what was in the cassette deck – Guns N' Roses, AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, Judas Priest, Van Halen, and the occasional Pink Floyd album.

Every small town has dissenters, the odd ones out, who weren't very good at sports, cared little for school spirit and seemed to make the "cool kids" uncomfortable. My town, Virden, was no different and my group of "scary monsters and super freaks" introduced me to a different culture, a different view of the world and, ultimately, to new and innovative bands.

My good friend Conan gave me a mix tape that included Killing Joke's "Love Like Blood." Even amid REM and Black Flag, it stuck out and begged for more investigation. I found a cassette of 1985's Night Time in a Records On Wheels store in Winnipeg. It sounded like an urgent call to arms.

Jaz Coleman's vocal delivery was so different. It was demanding, vulnerable and, at times, on the verge of a scream. Jaz seemed almost unpolished, and to me, more honest. Geordie supplied guitar tones and textures that I had never heard before. He was both heavy and soft, ethereal, gothic, haunting and mean. The rhythm section, featuring Paul Ferguson on drums and Paul Raven on bass guitar, was relentless.

The sound generated by this combination of players and personalities, styles and politics, seemed to collide with precision, and hypnotize me into listening. I felt like a bystander staring at a car crash. Transfixed and immovable, I listened and learned.

It's the stuff of legend. In 1982, after releasing Revelations, Jaz developed an obsession with the occult, and convinced his mates to abandon all hope and move to Iceland. Jaz believed that the apocalypse was near. World intact, Killing Joke returned to England a year later, and in 1984 went to Berlin, Germany, to record with producer Chris Kimsey.

The songs were recorded in a style so unlike the Mutt Lange uber production that I was listening to before finding this album. "Night Time," "Darkness Before Dawn," "Kings And Queens," were music of their day. The songs seem to channel some dark, sweaty, filth-infested, strung-out eighties club. It's a very visual sound. It was the music

of my time. It was the first thing that was mine and it was unique. It's just like reading your first great novel, or really understanding why you like KISS. It's a moment in time that you can't forget. This album was new music to me. But as much as it represented the now, it was somehow the sound of the future.

"Love Like Blood," was then, and is today, a massive goth hit. This song is so far into the matrix, you don't whether you should take the blue or red pill. It made me think of William Gibson novels, and rainy Vancouver nights with the streets sparkling from the glow of neon signs and lamp posts. "We must play our lives like soldiers in the field/But life is short I'm running faster all the time... 'Til the fearless come and the act is done! A love like blood, a love like blood." Trent Reznor and Marilyn Manson must love this song.

"Tabazan" is simply brilliant. The bass guitar is so nasty, it makes me smile. Raven is a menace and the sound you hear on this record becomes his trademark (Check out the Prong CDs that Raven played on). Geordie's guitar sounds so futuristic, yet it seems like it's crossed with a streetwalker's attitude. Jaz is right on the edge, twisting and pouring through the words like a manic poet and landing effortlessly on any emotion he pleases.

"Europe" stands up today. Could fit very nicely alongside Modest Mouse, Sparta, The Strokes and The White Stripes. There are bands out there now that have discovered this sound and seem to meld it with a Robert Smith vocal. Here, and on most of this record, Killing Joke is a band which provides us with personality, that beautiful collision of mind, body and spirit.

"Eighties," the eighth and final track on the recording, is a hard-hitting commentary on the times.) "Eighties – I have to push/I have to struggle." Not everyone prospered in those times. There was a lot of unemployment in England. Another interesting thing about this song is that it bares a very striking resemblance to Nirvana's "Come As You Are." (Killing Joke sued Nirvana over the guitar riff but lost).

Years later, the band I formed, Econoline Crush, went on to cover "Psyche" on our first EP, Purge, in 1993. That irreverent Killing Joke spirit has pushed me to pursue my music even when I thought it seemed impossible. Today, as I begin anew with Early Moses, I carry that spirit with me. "Within disorder I assume my role/Laugh and cry as I accept." – "Multitudes," Killing Joke.



Album info:

Released: 1985

Label: Editions E.G. Records/Polydor

Produced by: Chris Kimsey

Engineered by: Brian McGhee; Thomas Stiehler

Recorded at: Hansa Ton Studios, Berlin

Track listing:

Nighttime

Darkness Before Dawn

Love Like Blood

Kings And Queens

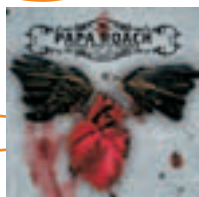
Tabazan

Multitudes

Europe

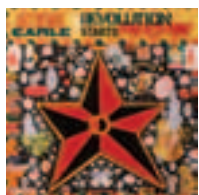
Eighties

DISC REVIEWS



Papa Roach
Getting Away With Murder
(Geffen/Universal)

Three albums in and the NoCal band, which sold 3 million copies of its major label rap/rock debut, *Infest*, ditches its rap side for good. Vestiges remain on 2002's *Lovehatetragedy*, but on *Getting Away With Murder*, frontman Jacoby Shaddix pushes his vocals melodically and aggressively. While the band reportedly went for anthemic singalongs, sometimes, like on "Not Listening," and "Take Me," the results are just too trite, and "Blanket Of Fear" barely has a detectable chorus. Still, the threatening single, "Getting Away With Murder," is superbly catchy, and the lead track, "Blood," is contemptuously explosive – both of which should sell this one. – Karen Bliss



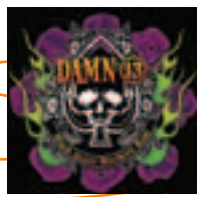
Steve Earle
The Revolution Starts...Now
(Artemis/RED)

Steve Earle's new release is the work of an angry man. His Texas growl targets the U.S. government and their execrable policies. Recorded in marathon sessions in the spring of 2004, the album has a timely and urgent feel with references to the war in Iraq ("Home to Houston," "Rich Man's War") and the currently oppressive nature of U.S. censorship ("F The CC"). His long-time backing band, The Dukes, bends stylistically from folky ballads ("The Gringos Tale") to one-drop reggae on the hilarious paean to Condoleezza Rice ("Condi Condi"). Let's hope the voters south of the border take heed and start the revolution... now! – K. Curtzel



Closet Monster
We Rebuilt This City
(Underground Operations/Universal Music Canada)

Sum 41 put Ajax, Ont. on the map when it released its debut EP. Closet Monster aims to steal the spotlight from the juvenile punkers with *We Rebuilt This City*. The album is a powerful blend of fist-pumping, political punk rock anthems that take their cue from the likes of Anti-Flag and Black Flag. "Mamma Anti-Fascisto" screams with urgency like a boxer in the 12th round, while "Punk Rock Ruined My Life" is a call to arms for the punk rock community. With an infectious blend of politics and punk, this monster is too good to keep hidden in the closet. – James Wright



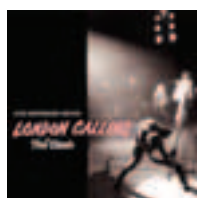
Damn 13
Black Heart Northern Soul
(Independent)

Toronto's Damn 13 has finally released its debut album, *Black Heart Northern Soul*, a follow-up to its 1999 EP, *The Dynamite Gossip*. Co-produced by lead vocalist Adam Sewell and Rob Sanzo (Voivod, Treble Charger, Sum 41), the violent power chord riffs of "I'll Give You Fire" and the wildly raucous speed metal opening of "Rocket Fuel" firmly show its hard rock credentials. Even when the band slows down for "Broken Bones," Sewell's guttural voice and dark lyrics keep the sound heavy. The carefully crafted guitar solos and melodies showcase Damn 13's songwriting skills and, best of all, that it totally rocks. – Erin Smith



Doctor
High Is as High Gets
(MapleMusic/Universal Music Canada)

Doctor may be new, but it combines the songwriting efforts of two well-established Canadian musicians, ex Watchmen singer Daniel Greaves and ex Royals/Rocket Science/Change of Heart member Rob Higgins. The album, produced by John Whynot, fuses solid hooks with a punk rock aesthetic. Surprisingly innovative, heavy guitar riffs fall over top of pop choruses and thoughtful lyrics in "What of It?" which stands as a contrast to the rock anthem "What Makes You Think He's Lucky?" and the contemplative "Sweet U." It's only Doctor's first house call, but it's a nearly perfect rock 'n' roll record. – Erin Smith



The Clash
London Calling: The 25th Anniversary Edition
(Legacy/Sony)

London Calling, originally released in the U.K. in late '79, changed the political dynamic of punk forever. The re-mastering of this album is impressive enough, let alone the bonus disc: the long lost Vanilla Tapes, which include the original demos and the pre-vinyl version of "London Calling" and some choice covers, including a lightning-charged cover of Bob Dylan's "Man In Me," that Mick Jones had in storage. Then there's a DVD featuring a 45-minute documentary of rare studio and concert footage by Don Letts, plus observations from Clash manager Kosmo Vinyl. If only Joe Strummer was alive to celebrate this 25th anniversary landmark. – Nick Krewen



Todd Kerns
Go Time
(HRM Records/Warner Music Canada)

Vancouver's Todd Kerns has shaken off some of the more mannered pop pretensions of his previous bands, *The Age of Electric* and *Static In Stereo*, but hasn't forgotten how to write a hit. His debut solo album, *Go Time*, juxtaposes catchy choruses with straight-up guitar rock while rarely falling into cliché, although the uniformity of sound does wear as the 14th track cues up. Lyrically, he tackles the genre's usual boy-girl issues with equal amounts of contempt ("It's Not You It's Me") and sincerity ("My True Love," "A Drug Like You"). The production is less polished than his past work, but the edge suits the material's rawness. – Brian Slade



k-os
Joyful Rebellion
(Virgin-EMI Music Canada)

Toronto singer/rapper k-os's follow-up to 2002's *Exit* is less heavy on "state of the world" messages, and more about the state of hip hop and state of oneself. Still, saving the world is not out of his head altogether, as he notes on the reggae-based "Crucial!" Possessing a rich melodic singing voice as well as a penetrating rap flow, the album ranges from the Love Cats-snap of "Crabbuckit," to the old-school hip hop of "B-Boy Stance" and Latin-flavoured soldiering of "Commadante." Killer crossover cuts include the pumping soul of "Man I Used To Be" and smooth rockin' collab "Dirty Water," featuring Sam Roberts on the chorus. – Karen Bliss



Bjork
Medulla
(Elektra/Warner)

Bjork's previous album, 2001's *Vespertine*, featured a mixture of electronica, lush orchestration and choral voices. With *Medulla*, she's cut out the instrumentation completely and made a purely vocal album that also features the likes of Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq, former Faith No More frontman Mike Patton, Robert Wyatt and British and Icelandic choirs. The Roots' Rahzel provides the percussive bass line for most of the songs, most notably on "Where Is The Line," "Oceania," and the danceable closer, "Triumph Of A Heart." There are a couple of numbers sung in Icelandic and "Sonnets/Unrealities XI" is based on an e.e. cummings poem. – Steve McLean

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