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SOUND BITES

COURTNEY DEVORES ON THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL MUSIC SCENE

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Tribute marks 20th anniversary of Allin's death



Twenty years ago this week Antiseen's Jeff Clayton was in the studio when he received a call that his friend, notorious punk musician G.G. Allin, had died of an overdose. Clayton and members of Biggy Stardust, Self-Made Monsters, Dirty South Revolutionaries, the Chalkies, and Rapegoat pay tribute to Allin Friday at Tremont Music Hall with Hated: The Music of G.G. Allin.

In 1994 when I moved to Charlotte people in music circles were still talking about the time Allin spent here. I imagine the stories have trickled down to new generations of punk fans now.

"He would spend a week here after every one of his tours starting after the first time he got out of prison," says Clayton whose band Antiseen backed Allin on the "Murder Junkies" album. "He was here a week before he died."

Antiseen's association with Allin began in the mid '80s when both acts were featured on a compilation double cassette release.

"We didn't really think much about it until we saw an interview with him in 'Maximum Rock n' Roll.' It didn't have any crazy pictures, but hearing them talk about his shows. He was hitting on the same thing we did with that confrontational thing and maybe taking it further," says Clayton of Allin's controversial live shows which usually escalated in a near naked Allin defecating, smearing himself with feces, and belligerently inciting the crowd to riot or fight him - not a show for everyone. "He would always have magazines print his phone number in interviews. (Antiseen guitarist) Joe (Young) and I were talking - 'We need to get him down here. We need to see this show.'"

Young called Allin and dared him to play Charlotte. They booked the building beside the Milestone Club which was then called The Church of Musical Awareness. Athens' the Primates volunteered to back him.

"In the first 30 minutes everything we'd ever heard about happened," recalls Clayton. "It was a blitzkrieg. Before you knew it, it was over. We had to make a hasty exit."

Clayton pulled his car around and Young quickly escorted Allin - covered only in a trench coat and his own filth - outside.

"We took off and I'm just kind of staring at him and we both just

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ABOUT THIS BLOG

Courtney Devores has been writing about music and entertainment in Charlotte for 16 years and has been a regular contributor to The Charlotte Observer since 2003.

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started laughing," says Clayton "From that night on we were in close contact."

The two exchanged letters while Allin was incarcerated for assault. Some of those letters are part of a new limited edition book, "My Prison Walls" (pictured above), which is set for release in August. The book includes "30 Days in the Hole" - Allin's handwritten journal chronicling his first days in prison - as well as illustrations, art and prose by Allin and correspondence with his family and convicted serial killer John Wayne Gacy.

"They were looking for the envelopes he'd customize and mail from prison," says Clayton of the publisher. "I sent a couple letters. I had a file in my file cabinet of them - this is when he was alive. I wasn't even thinking he wasn't going to be with us much longer."

Despite Allin's on stage persona, Clayton characterizes him as just another friend.

"When he was just hanging out with us he was just like any of our other friends. People got this misconception of him being this introverted, miserable person. He seemed to love life. He was always laughing, always wanting to hear jokes, tell jokes, play jokes on people. When it was time for him to go from Kevin (his real name) to G.G. he could flip that switch in a second. I've seen the switch get popped first hand. When he was in G.G. mode he was a different person," he says.

Clayton disagrees with Allin being portrayed as a junkie.

"It wasn't all drug and alcohol-fueled. People have the impression he was a junkie and he was not. He wasn't even a full-time drug user. If you showed up with a handful of stuff he'd say, 'Hey, sure,'" he adds.

The dichotomy of the real person versus the stage persona is one Clayton understands. The first time I saw Clayton he was dripping with blood on stage at The Ritz on Independence opening for the Ramones. I freaked out when I realized shopping at Repo Records where Clayton worked a few weeks later that the thick scar on his forehead meant *that* blood was real. Yet nearly 20 years later I know Clayton's not a bleeding maniac all the time. It's all part of the show.

"I understood it completely," says Clayton who mimics professional wrestlers on stage by cutting himself and sometimes jumping through tack-covered, burning tables with his face covered in blood.

"We don't incite the kind of interaction G.G. incited with his audience, but I could easily go into that if I was willing to. I have a little more at stake than G.G. did," says Clayton who works a regular job and has three children in addition to still touring with his 30-year-old band. "G.G. literally carried everything he owned in a tiny suitcase and was ready to leave town in a moment's notice. It's not like he had to make arrangements. He'd just find a car going North, South, East or West."

Although Allin threatened to commit suicide on stage - another reason his performances attracted gawkers no doubt - he died of an overdose after his most volatile performance.

"He wasn't as much into self-abuse at that time as much as he was assaulting the audience. That show at the Gas Station (in Manhattan) was probably the most brutal show that happened. It spilled out into the street and people were having a riot out in front of that place. G.G. just walked away," says Clayton. "G.G. just jumped in a cab wearing nothing but his jock strap and vest."

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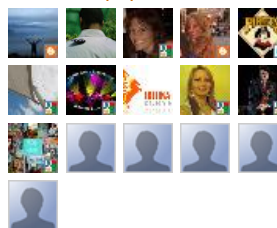
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