

NO, SERIOUSLY ASK THAT GUY

Where the guy who wishes he had enough hair to comb into a devilock waxes poetic about bands who did.

All murder, all guts, all fun: This, boys and ghouls, was **SAMHAIN**.

FILE UNDER: Gothic Horror-Core **YEARS OF EXISTENCE:** 1983-1987; reunited 1999 **RECORD TO START WITH:** Just fork over for the whole *Samhain* boxed set (E-Magine, 2000) and thank me later. **AFTER THAT, CHECK OUT:** *Live 1984 Stardust Ballroom DVD* (Music Video Distributors, 2005) **GO DOWNLOAD:** "All Murder, All Guts, All Fun," "Archangel," "Black Dream," "Death...In Its Arms," "Unholy Passion"

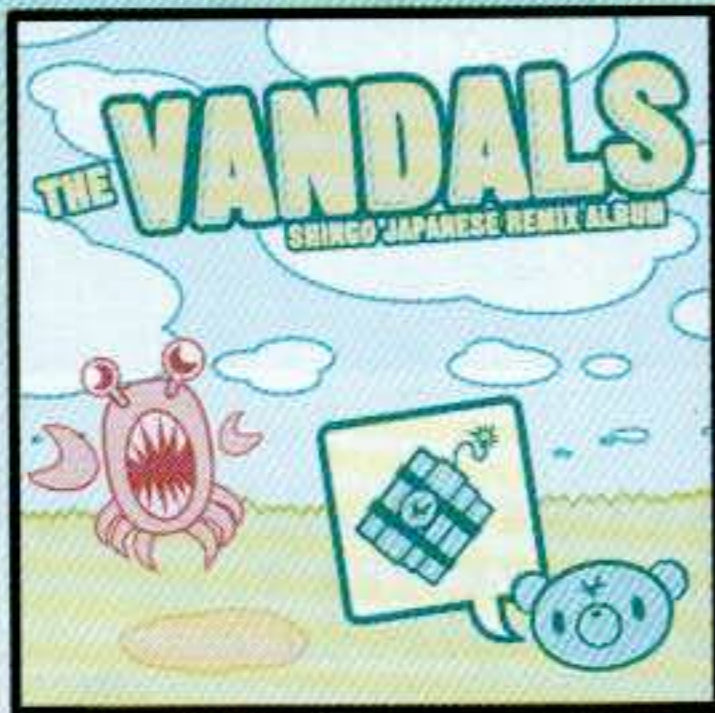
THE MUSIC, THE MESSAGE: Visually speaking, Misfits founder, Samhain mastermind and eventual Danzig chairman Glenn Danzig is as much a marketing genius as he is a musical one. Of course, being a visionary means you're never content to rest on your laurels, so when Danzig flushed the (original) Misfits down the crapper and launched his next project in 1983 with ex-Misfits roadie Eerie Von, some big changes were in order. First was the image—though expectedly creepy, Samhain seemed to be Danzig & Co.'s way of saying they weren't faking the funk: From the gore-festooned cover of the band's 1984 debut, *Initium*, to the raging demonomania of 1990's posthumously released *Final Descent*, to the dissonant, goth-metal pallor of the music, Samhain's work carried the same over-the-top satanic poker face one normally finds in bands like Slayer. (It could also be just as accidentally comical.) But Samhain—whose second lineup featured Minor Threat's Lyle Preslar on guitar—were at least punk in spirit. Danzig just hadn't yet found a lineup with the chops to take him storming into heavy-metal Valhalla, but that'd change with the 1987 hiring of guitarist John Christ, as *Final Descent*—essentially a rehearsal for Danzig-the-band's eponymous 1988 Def American debut—makes clear.

PUNK-ROCK RELEVANCE: You need only look to AFI—who toured with Samhain on the band's not-embarrassing 1999 reunion tour with, get this, Danzig—to see how well Samhain's visual, lyrical and musical appeal has endured. (Going under the band name Son Of Sam, AFI's Davey Havok and three ex-Samhain members released an album, *Songs From The Earth*, in 2001 on Nitro Records.) If that's not your thing, check out Cleveland hardcore legends Integrity—or at least their Danzig-worshipping frontman, Dwid, who started taking the band in an eerily Samhain-esque direction earlier this decade. If that doesn't move you, well, do you live near a shopping mall? Step inside Hot Topic, marvel at the black-blooded collision of punk rock, heavy metal, goth and hardcore within, and send your royalty check c/o Glenn Danzig, Spook City, USA.

CURRENT WHEREABOUTS: The only constant in Samhain's revolving-door lineup, Glenn Danzig probably feels surprised himself when he steps back to consider that he's now a household name, with a music and comic-book empire (see danzig-verotik.com), a line of toys in his image, and a persona big enough to have earned him an animated guest appearance (as himself, naturally) on an old Christmas episode of *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. As Danzig's frontman, he's also the boss of the annual Blackest Of The Black Tour, and though we don't imagine he'll be reuniting Samhain to play two sets, in two different bands, each night anymore, who knows; we also said the Misfits would never reunite without him. —Aaron Burgess



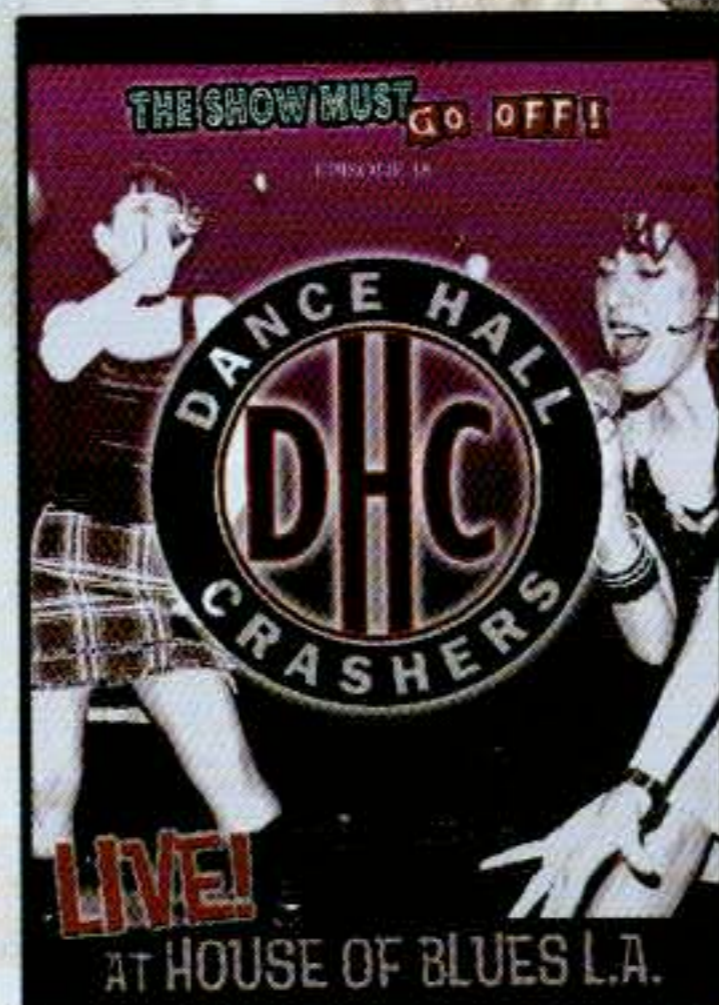
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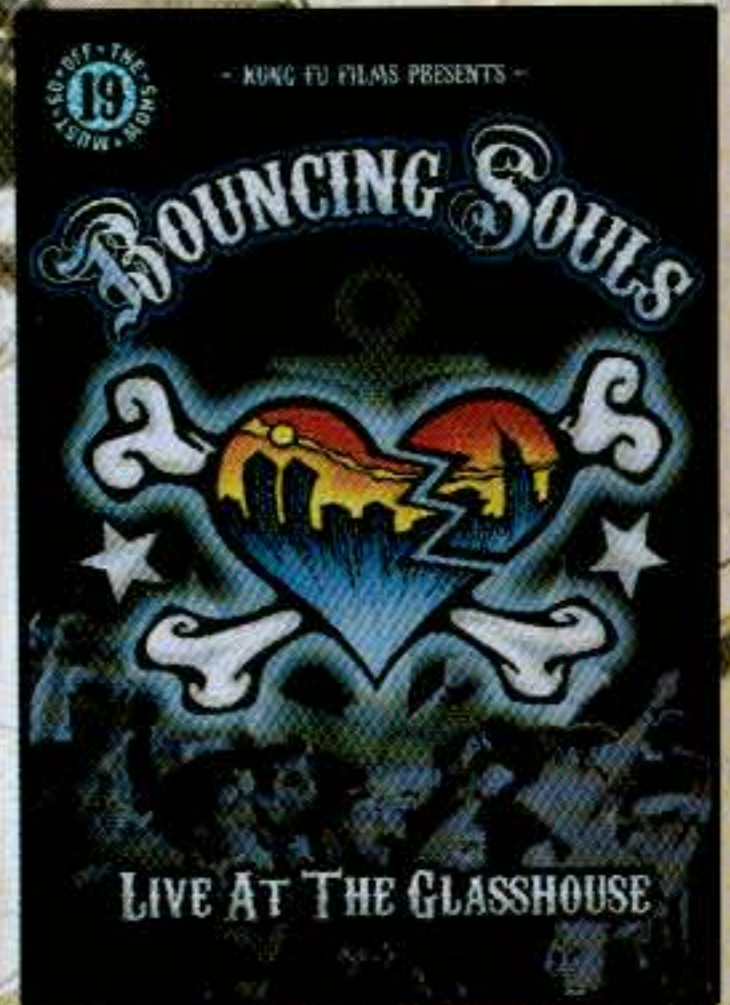
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