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Glenn Danzig

By Ron Garmon

After this month's Blackest of the Black tour, punk-metal pioneer Glenn Danzig will retire from active performing. His movie project is on hold due to the New Orleans flood damage, but we found the old monster in a nostalgic mood. The Samhain: Live 1984 At The Stardust Ballroom DVD is just out, which sent Glenn on a brief reverie about crimes past.

Did compiling the *Samhain* DVD bring back any memories?

It was our first trip to L.A. and it was like either the first or second Samhain tour. I don't think we made it out to L.A. on the first one. I won't say who was playing across the street at the Palladium, but we dusted them. They had like three hundred people paid and we had like 1,500 people paid. Seeing the DVD now, it's like pandemonium at the front of the stage. Probably like 10 or 15 security guards and some were just kids helping out and they were just throwing people back. It's kinda like an image of what was to come; things started to become really crazy at our shows and after it became Danzig, even crazier. If there was a barricade at that show, it was gone! When people push up onto the stage, things get knocked over and you can't play anymore.

There's a reason why that stuff is there now. Things were changing, lines were becoming less clear about what would be allowed in the punk underground or movement or whatever. Everything I did with the Misfits or Samhain was meant to blur the lines. I never liked that *Maximum Rock & Roll* uniform; you have to be this, you have to say this about politics. D'ya know what I mean?

Crap and more crap?

Basically that's what punk rock set out to destroy. No rules, be free and not be politically correct. Have your own opinion formed by you and not by somebody else.

The whole rebellion was about doing away with a society that handed you a ready-made image to live? Yeah! By this time, Misfits was being called "metal-punk" and I can't think of another band other than Mötörhead that was being called that. Right when everyone thought they knew what was happening, I changed it up with Samhain, made it more groove-oriented, a little slower here and there, more chunky. Darker. People accepted it and we got a nice following.

You have another Blackest of the Black tour coming up. As a concept, was Blackest of the Black a response to Ozzfest?

In the beginning it was, but before that it was... well, we go to Europe all the time and they have the greatest festivals over there. On one stage, they have all the mainstream artists and on others, they've got like black metal or darkwave. It was no coincidence that the year after the first Blackest of the Black, Ozzfest started to have all these black metal bands and darker bands, where before they had all nü-metal and pay-to-play. You know, "You wanna be on our second stage, give us sixty-thousand dollars" or whatever their deal is. I don't know. It's a lot like the early days of Danzig with these bands. No one thought we could sell tickets. We sold tickets. We sold records and nobody was playin' our stuff on the radio and MTV wouldn't touch us.

This upcoming Blackest of the Black is supposed to be your last.

For me it's gonna be the last, at least for a while. There's lots of stuff I wanna do. I'm still gonna do music,

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but I'm not gonna tour. I won't be on next year's tour, but I hope people will come out to see it. There's a varied bill and I hope everyone comes out.

On the web: danzigverotik.com

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