

MEET THE DAHMERS, SWEDEN'S HORROR PUNK ROCKERS

ENTER THE HORROR GARAGE

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THE TERM "HORROR PUNK" MIGHT DESCRIBE ANY NUMBER OF BANDS WITH A PENCHANT FOR B-MOVIES AND PUTTING FISTS IN THE AIR, but mostly it refers to those bands that use the look and sound of the Misfits as a template.

That formula is simple enough: take a soaring melody, add lyrics about a horror movie plot, and punctuate with a whoa-oh chorus. So when anyone decides to break out of that hardened horror mould, we take notice, and we've taken notice of the charmingly named The Dahmers, a band out of Bromölla, Sweden, with the moniker of North America's notorious cannibal. The Dahmers are horror punk all the way, but take influence in the pre-punk days of '60s garage rock, when bands often wrote fun, monster-themed novelty tunes. For added depth, The Dahmers sing songs about everyday life and feelings inspired by the atmosphere of classic horror films. The band is fond of peppering its musical stew with a host of lo-fi retro horror music videos that you can stream to your heart's content on their YouTube channel. The group's latest release, a new four-track EP called *Creepiest Creep*, marks their fifth record since forming in 2014 and is out now on Lövely Records.

"We probably have about 50 recorded demos of unreleased songs at the moment, so deciding not to properly record them and release them isn't really an option," says bassist Tobias Augustsson. "We're an active band and releasing music is a big part of it."

While garage rock forms the bedrock of The Dahmers' sound, the band adds a poisonous dose of modernity in the form of raw and fuzzed-out rawk riffs, clever hooks and bizarre vocal melodies. Think The Cramps meets fellow Swedes The Helicopters with a sprinkling of '70s rock and seasoned with horror movies.

"We actually never decided that we were going to be a 'horror punk' band, we just happen to have a common interest in horror flicks," says Augustsson. "We just wanted to play loud punk rock music inspired by whatever we liked and that's what we still do. Good melodies and songs is what we mainly care about."

Sure, the new EP's artwork, name and song titles all sound like something

straight out of a horror lover's poster collection, but The Dahmers are no mere cannibals; they also tackle somewhat esoteric topics. The track "Reoccurring Dreams" is about sleep paralysis and the various states of mind one can fall into when exhausted and/or intoxicated.

"The song 'Without A Face' is basically about feeling invisible and an outsider which I've done most of my life," allows vocalist/guitarist Christoffer Karlsson. "You can really take the whole horror theme and use similarities to handle those kinds of subjects. Frankenstein, for example, is a good icon as an outsider. I think it's cool when you can use similarities to cover up what you are actually saying in a song, but if you then listen close you can find a completely different meaning to it."

No self-respecting genre-themed band would be complete without paying tribute to the masters of horror, and The Dahmers do so on "Kiss of Dario" an homage to *giallo* king Dario Argento, though the song is hardly a movie synopsis.

"When I write lyrics I usually take them from a title or sentence that I come up with," explains drummer Karl-Oskar Hansson. "I watch a lot of horror movies, documentaries about murder, and mysteries, so when I find a catchy melody and good combination of chords I write the lyrics quite fast on the go. I guess somewhere in my subconsciousness all those horror stories mixed with my own experience becomes the final lyric."

Look for The Dahmers touring Poland and Germany this month, where they'll be spreading their gospel of rabid rock 'n' roll, hook-laden melodies, and spooky aesthetics.

"The horror aesthetics draw a variety of people," says Augustsson, "But we also believe that we make an interesting witches brew of '60s pop, classic rock, garage punk, and so on that is easy to get into because of the catchy melodies and adrenaline-filled live shows. We want to appeal to people both visually and musically, and put a lot of effort into everything we do, and I think it pays off." 🧛

