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Too High To Die – Meet The Meat Puppets

August 14, 2012 Christopher Duda [1 Comment \(http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/?p=5587#disqus_thread\)](http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/?p=5587#disqus_thread)

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MEET THE MEAT PUPPETS

<http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/meatpuppetsstop.jpg> Interview with Greg Prato author of

“Too High To Die – Meet The Meat Puppets”

Christopher Duda (sugarbuzzmagazine.com)

• *When did you first discover the Meat Puppets?*

In 1991/1992, my college roommate brought in a bunch of '80s era issues of Guitar Player Magazine, and one of which included a colorful interview w/ Mr. Curt Kirkwood. I then took a gamble and ordered 'Forbidden Places' from my monthly CD club (without hearing any of the music beforehand), and thoroughly enjoyed it. Soon, I was



going back and buying all [the Pups.](http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/Meat-Puppets-Book-Front-Cov.jpg)

[http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-](http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/Meat-Puppets-Book-Front-Cov.jpg)

•Did you know much of their story before compiling the interviews for the book?

Indeed I did. I've made it a point to read most every article and/or interview I could get my hands on with the band over the years. But still, I learned lots and heard plenty of stories I never came across before by doing the book.

•Were there any subjects that you could not track down or declined to be interviewed?

By and large, everyone we reached out to was willing to go to bat for the Meats.

•Was the lack of written word on The Meat Puppets one inspiration to write their story?

Yes. One of the main reasons why I wanted to do a book on the band is because as a fan, I found it frustrating and bewildering that their story had never told in book form – and that they are often skipped over in most books and documentaries that focus on punk rock history. This always struck me as strange, as I feel the Pups' music is every bit as good – in most cases, better – than the majority of the bands in those aforementioned items.

•In your opinion why do you feel that The Meat Puppets are not house hold names?

While they're not a house hold name on par with the Oprah Winfreys of the world, they're still pretty darn well



known with

<http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/photo2.jpg>) well-versed rock fans, due to their association with Mr. Cobain and company.

•How influential was “punk” and the d.i.y ethic to you as a person and an author?

Not so much as a teen – when the Pups were issuing such classic recordings as ‘Meat Puppets II,’ ‘Up on the Sun,’ and ‘Huevos,’ I was knee deep in heavy metal at the time. But later on, I fully embraced all the great punk bands of the ‘70s and ‘80s. And nowadays, you can say I very much embrace the “DIY ethic,” as I put out the majority of my books via a print-on-demand publisher, Lulu.com (meaning that I’m in full control of the final product, and don’t have to get the permission from a publisher on anything – I’m my own boss!).

•In the book your subjects are quite passionate about their favourite Meat Puppets album. Do you have a personal favourite? Personally, I found myself rediscovering a lot of my old Puppets vinyl while reading the book! I never, really subscribed to the notion of “island album essentials”. I think I would be more concerned about food or water or maybe that mirage of the naked mermaid with the big knockers luring me out to my watery grave. Hello, Davy Jones.. Do you really know Johnny Depp? I digress. I pick Meat Puppets II today. Tomorrow “Up On the Sun”.

I agree that my favorite Pups album changes. ‘II,’ ‘Sun,’ and ‘Too High to Die’ I’d put at the top of the list. But by doing the book, I re-discovered ‘Mirage,’ which although many people seemed off-put by the use of electronics on it, I think is a fantastic/original album. Also, you have to give the band credit that they’re still putting out really great/inspired albums, as evidenced by their latest, ‘Lollipop,’ which includes songs that definitely match up with



their

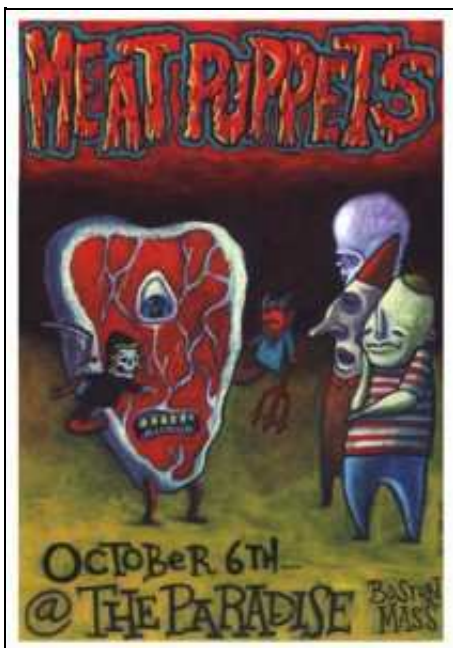
<http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/Meat+Puppets.jpg>) classics (check out the selections “Shave It,” “Lantern,” and “Baby Don’t,”

specifically).

- *Kim Thayil's comments were very passionate, detailed and amusing. Did you have to tell him to shut the fuck up? Ha Ha. Was there much that ended up on the "cutting room floor"?*

Not a lot ended up on the cutting room floor from Mr. Thayil. I've interviewed him a bunch in the past (the first time being for my earlier book, 'Grunge is Dead'). But interestingly, one of the contributing factors for me wanting to check out the Pups in the first place (in addition to the reasons I mentioned in my first answer above) was reading a Rip Magazine interview w/ Kim, and him saying that 'Meat Puppets II' was an album that he highly recommended. Being a huge Soundgarden fan (which I remain to this day), that also made me want to check out the Pups. But Kim still remains very passionate about his love for the Pups. In fact, an entire chapter in the book is comprised solely of his reflections on the group's first album.

- *The Meat Puppets essentially made music that they wanted to make. Sounds simple in theory but a lot bands don't follow that formula. Essentially, outside sources influence the shape or make up of the dynamics of the band. Do you think this hindered their success? Is success measured in sales or in how a record holds*



<http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/poster19.jpg> up

in the passage of time? To me a great band can defy time and categorization. The Meat Puppets do just that.

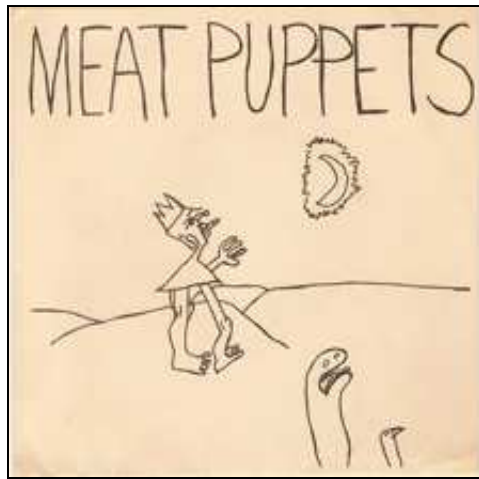
I don't think it hindered their success. Their success was halted due to the fact that their bassist became severely addicted to drugs, and according to several sources, the record company pulled promotion behind the album 'No Joke' – a solid album which many figured should have followed in the commercial success of their previous album, 'Too High to Die.' But an artist not following a formula isn't anything new – look at Neil Young and David Bowie as perfect examples, and they both were able to achieve great commercial success with their unpredictability.

- *Were The Kirkwood's pretty receptive to all subject matter being addressed in the book?*

Yes they were. In fact, a piece of advice that Curt gave me while I was interviewing him for the book was to keep 'His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra' by Kitty Kelley in mind while assembling the book!

- *Has the book been largely successful in reaching former fans and introducing new ones to the Meat Puppets output. It seems The Meat Puppets are on board and were from the beginning.*

It's far too early in the game to answer this question – the book hasn't even been out for 2 months yet! Ask me again in a year and I can give you a better answer.



• Are you working on new [projects](http://www.sugarbuzzmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/Meat_Puppets_-_In_A_Car1.jpg) or is this a highly guarded secret that will unleash hell bent fury to those who unlock the mystery within Greg Prato's grey matter.

I do have a few pots simmering on the stove, so to speak, but I can't divulge this top secret information just yet. My advice is to keep checking my Twitter page – <https://twitter.com/#!/gregpratowriter> – I'm always offering updates as to my latest writing bits.

• Does Greg Prato have groupies? Are literary groupies like those sexy librarian sex kittens that pounce on you like sex starved neophytes looking to gain another notch in the bedpost?

I've been happily married since 2008!

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