

Inside METAL'S DARKSIDE by Aaron Small

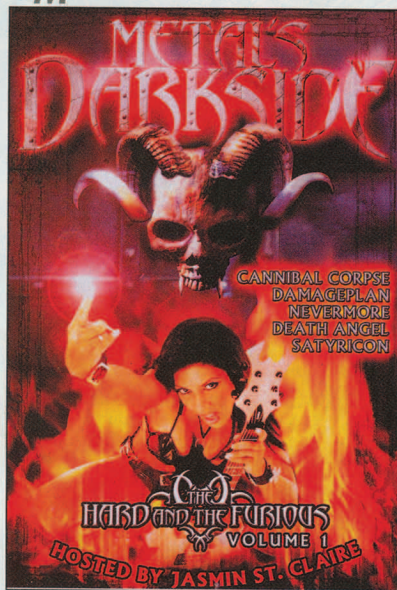
Metal's Darkside is a new monthly DVD-zine hosted by the completely unabashed and quite compelling Jasmin St. Claire. Volume One, dubbed *The Hard And The Furious*, features candid, off the wall interviews with members of Cannibal Corpse, Damageplan, Nevermore, Death Angel and Satyricon as well as music videos from those bands. Before delving into the raging guitars, provocative questions and revealing answers found on *Metal's Darkside*, the brunette bombshell hostess provides some background of her own.

"In about 1995 I got into the adult film business and I quit in 2000. Then I got into pro wrestling. I worked for the now defunct ECW. I've always liked metal. My favorite bands are Iron Maiden and Cannibal Corpse. I kind of like Alice Cooper, but I like King Diamond more. After ECW went bankrupt, I wanted to expand into other markets, things that I liked. While I was still involved in the adult business, I met [promoter] Jack Koshick who was running the Milwaukee and New Jersey Metallfests, a couple of which I hosted."

"I later started my own wrestling company called 3PW," she continues. "My degree is from Columbia University in business, so I decided to put it to use. Eventually I got sick and tired of dealing with these grown men and their steroids and egos. I was getting offers for small projects. The first one was called *Hollywood Rocks*. It's a documentary to accompany the box set [of the same name]; I hosted that. I was friends with the guys over at Cleopatra Records. I met them at my P.O. Box where I get my mail. They had an idea to do a DVD on the darker side of metal, and that's right up my alley. I'm all about that and I always have been. I've always liked extreme metal. I've always been a big fan of Suffocation and Morrician. I know a lot of people out there talk shit about me and say, 'what does she know?' I kind of feel bad for people like that because they're just challenged. When I started working [modeling] for BC Rich Guitars and Coffin Case [road cases], one thing that did agitate me was, if I want to look at porn girls with guitars, I'll go and pick up some slutty magazine. I wouldn't pick up a guitar magazine. That struck a raw nerve because those people don't give a fuck about music or metal. I always wanted to be a BC Rich model since I was a kid. That was a lifelong dream. I know it sounds really cheesy, but I always wanted to be on the cover of a heavy metal magazine."

Focusing in on *Metal's Darkside*, Jasmin discusses each of the five bands that appear on the DVD. "I'm a diehard Cannibal Corpse fan. I was literally *shaking* when I met [vocalist] George Fisher. So I handpicked that one myself, I had to. Death Angel: I was interested. Satyricon: I was curious. Nevermore: I've always liked them since Sanctuary [pre-Nevermore band featuring vocalist Warrel Dane and bassist Jim Sheppard]. That was handpicked but most importantly, I knew Warrel and [drummer] Van [Williams] are really funny people in front of the camera. And I think Jeff Loomis is one of the most talented guitarists out there. He's underrated in so many ways. I think he's fucking amazing! I had to do something with them. Damageplan: I really wanted to meet [late guitarist] Dime [Darrell] and that was the way to do it."

The Damageplan interview with drummer Vinnie Paul and vocalist Pat Lachman is quite old,



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Jasmin St. Claire with (from left): Steve Ashain and Glen Benton of Decide, Johan Hegg of Amon Amarth, Satyricon's Satyr, Terrance Hobbs of Suffocation and Candace Kuschnin and Aaron Ruby of Walls Of Jericho.

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filmed in 2004 prior to Dime's tragic murder. Yet the tribute that follows, featuring music composed by [ex-Himsa guitarist] Matt Wicklund and [ex-Anathema/Cradle Of Filth keyboardist] Martin Powell makes the segment current.

"I just thought that he deserved to be remembered," Jasmin explains when asked why she felt it was important to pay tribute to Dime. "Dime's amazing. He really set a standard in metal guitar playing and he was definitely one of the nicest people you could ever meet. He was a wonderful, wonderful person. Anyone that met him was very fortunate to be around him. As successful as he was, it never got to his head. I wanted to put that in there. It wasn't to capitalize on anything."

Serving as theme music for *Metal's Darkside* is "An Ancient Sign Of Coming Storm" by Amon Amarth from their album, *Fate Of Nations*. "I like Amon Amarth a lot," St. Claire says earnestly. "I think a lot of people don't give them as much credit as they deserve. I'm probably going to change it up for the next one though."

St. Claire's style on the job as well as her own personality is unique, a trait that translates into "you never know what's coming next." "Everyone interviews people differently. I like to add a fun side to things. This is what I like and the best part is that I get to meet the people I respect and idolize. Nothing is scripted. I'm near-sighted and I'm too lazy to wear contacts, so I can't read off a cue card. A lot of people wonder if these things are all set up? They're not. Everything's really just done spontaneously. Maybe my biggest downfall is that I always speak my mind? But I don't care. Everyone's entitled to an opinion. I go to metal shows not because I have to or because it's work. I go there because I want to be there and support the scene. It's important to have people that actually like the music involved in the scene. I know it sounds gay and I know it probably helps sell magazines to have some Vivid [adult video company] girl posing with a guitar by her coach, but who gives a fuck? Those girls are definitely the epitome of posers. You never see those girls at concerts. I'd much rather see [Arch Enemy vocalist] Angela [Gossow] or [Lucina Coil vocalist] Cristina [Scobbio]; someone who is actually involved in it."

Looking to expand upon her presence in metal, St. Claire shares her upcoming efforts. "Metal's Darkside has already branched out into other opportunities for me. I intend to stream a radio show off the website. It's going to be all death metal and I'll have live interviews. If you go to metalsdarkside.com, there'll be a lot of stuff you will not see on the DVD. I encourage fans to email us through the website."

Other projects on the horizon include Jasmin's autobiography, due out in late fall/early winter as well as her starring role in the National Lampoon movie, *Dorm Daze 2: Semester At Sea*, coming to theatres in September. [www.metalsdarkside.com]



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