

THE ULTIMATE REVENGE

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Impaler



PSYOPUS

THE HOLLYWOOD ALLSTARZ

TRACII GUNS

MOORE

SATAN'S HOST

GOATWHORE

APATHY



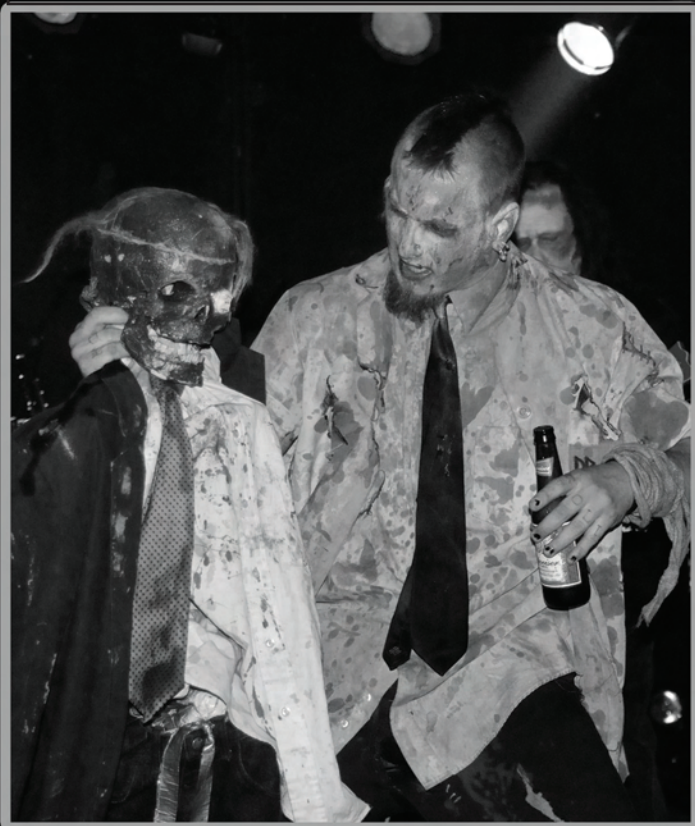
Shock rock band Impaler is a bit of a Cinderella story. Well Cinderella meets her worst nightmare. Known for their special mix of punk and heavy metal music, as well as their theatrical and horrific stage show, Impaler has been delighting and disgusting audiences for nearly 25 years.

Front man and lead singer Bill Lindsey has been with the band since the beginning, and what a ride it has been. Through lineup changes, censorship and label changes, Impaler has stayed true to the “mayhem and music” formula it started with.

Born in 1983 in St. Paul, Minnesota, Impaler started out like any other young band. A group of like-minded musicians with the desire to create something special got together and decided to play. But they were going to do it their own way. According to Lindsey, many of the gigging metal bands in the area were playing covers, and metal clubs were not interested in booking bands that wanted to play original material. Lindsey and his band mates decided to look elsewhere. Punk clubs were showcasing bands with original material, and were more than happy to give them the stage.

“We were inspired by the do it yourself attitude (of punk bands),” says Lindsey. “At first everyone said ‘you have to do it this way,’ but you don’t have to be a slave to that.” That attitude paid off, and Impaler began to develop a following. They kept writing and recorded some demos, ready to take the world by storm.

However, in the days before MySpace, YouTube, the internet, and even mainstream MTV, getting the word out about your band was difficult to say the least. Lindsey says the real interest came from the under ground tape trading community. Impaler gave demos to clubs to try to get a gig, but the tapes also made it into the mainstream of club goers and music lovers and started circulating. The metal clubs that had shunned them before now welcomed them with open arms. Then the fanzines picked up the buzz, and Impaler was doing interviews.



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“It was very grassroots back then,” says Lindsey. “There was something magical about that time.” But the clubs and press were not the only one’s noticing what was happening. The buzz and the demo piqued the interest of independent records labels such as New York-based Mongol Horde. When the label decided the band was too heavy, Lindsey and his band mates decided to just produce an album themselves. But it never got that far. In 1984, Combat Records signed the band and agreed to release their material. In 1985 on Combat’s sister label I.R.D., “Rise of the Mutants” was released as a four song EP. The cover, Lindsey with entrails hanging from his mouth, gave listeners a clue of what the band’s show may be like.

With an EP release and continued coverage in the fanzines, Impaler may have slowly gained popularity outside of their home base, but soon after “Rise of the Mutants” came out, events were set into motion that put them in front of a national audience and increased their popularity beyond what they could have hoped. In 1985, the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) was formed by four “Washington Wives,” among them Tipper Gore. The goal of the organization was to draw attention to what they said was the growing trends of explicit lyrics and violent content of rock music. Impaler, as luck would have it, made the PMRC’s list of questionable content.

With the national attention the organization’s campaign got, Impaler suddenly found themselves in the spotlight. “We were shuffled in with all these major label bands,” says Lindsey. “She (Tipper Gore) was holding our record up on prime time TV.” Impaler’s new found celebrity did nothing to hurt their album sales. In fact, Combat had to re-press “Rise of the Mutants” five times to keep up with demand.

The run in with the PMRC was not the last time Impaler’s theatrical album covers put them in the hot seat. More than a decade later, they would again find themselves in the middle of a media controversy over the cover of their album “Undead Things.” The image of Lindsey lying on an autopsy table with his chest cut open prompted chain stores such as Best Buy and Sam Goody to refuse to carry the album. The media, including the Minnesota Journal of Law and Politics, rush to the defense of Impaler, stating the hypocrisy of these stores carrying horror movies with graphic pictures, but refusing to stock “Undead Things.”

By: Jennifer Chance

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Lindsey laughs as he tells the story. "I guess if we are still pissing off idiots, we must be doing something right," he says.

After the success of *Rise of the Mutants*, Impaler set out to record a second album. This time with the help of Husker Du's Bob Mould. Impaler had played with Husker Du on their *Metal Circus* tour, and the band knew Mould understood them. Combat was delighted and jumped on board. In 1986, "If We Had Brains We'd Be Dangerous" became Impaler's first full length album. Tracks like "Blood Bath" and "Metal Messiah" continued to flaunt the band's metal edge. The album also included a cover of The Stooges' "Search and Destroy."

"If We Had Brains We'd Be Dangerous" was the last Impaler album produced by Combat. Creative differences and miscommunication were the main reasons the band and label parted ways. The people who had originally signed Impaler had moved on, and those who took their place did not share the passion for the band. Impaler trusted the label to support them, and felt that was not happening. With the knowledge of maturity, Lindsey says he should have done something differently, but that the band completely trusted the label to deliver, and they did not. "We were on tour," he says, "and nothing was getting taken care of that was promised."

Since Combat, Impaler has released 12 albums, including re-releases and compilations, as well as a recent DVD entitled "House Band at the Funeral Parlor."

In the two and half decades of Impaler, record labels are not the only things that have changed. The band has had several line up changes, sometimes with previous members returning. Lindsey, as the only consistent member, sees this as part of the process. "When you've been a band for 25 years, people have life changes and changes in tastes," he says. "But I've been really fortunate in finding people that are like-minded."

The latest like-minded addition was Kyle Skogquist, the guitar player who replaced Bradley Johnson. His first concert experience was seeing Impaler, and he was hooked. "What they were doing just clicked," says Skogquist. "I was an instant fan." When his previous band broke up, and he heard Impaler was looking, Skogquist signed on for his dream gig. Lindsey remembers seeing Skogquist with his previous band, and agrees that he was a perfect fit for Impaler. "There was Kyle being all theatrical and in makeup," says Lindsey. "And the other guys were not. He was great."

Theatrics is important to Impaler. Along with the rock metal sound of machine-gun drums and blistering guitar riffs, the stage show is a spectacle in itself. Blood, gore, and mayhem are part of the every day for Impaler, and they want their audience to experience everything full tilt.

The members of the band welcome their roles in the Impaler stage show, and do everything possible to live up to the expectation of their fans. Drummer Tom Croxton compares the show to a runaway train. "It has to be seen to be believed," he says. "People watch us like watching a house burn down."

Impaler has always been about the music, and about the show. From the days in the early 80s, when the props were homemade from Halloween masks, none of the intensity has gotten lost. The music still pushes forward, and the show still leaves the audience with what they want. "We just enjoy what we are doing," says bassist Court Hawley. "We don't care if there is one person or 1,000 people, we still put on the same show."

The show has changed a little with time. Lindsey's son Zach was added as Dr. Corpse, a sort of Master of Ceremonies and all around purveyor of mayhem and destruction. The props have gotten somewhat more sophisticated as well, just as everything evolves over time. Impaler also has to deal with the changes in rules on pyrotechnics. Since the tragedy with Great White in Rhode Island, clubs have very stringent codes about the use of pyro. "We were always responsible," says Lindsey. "We did it for years and never had a problem." But now, it is a consideration with every venue they play. Regardless of the changes over the years, Impaler has maintained its focus on delivering the best music and best stage show possible. It is this focus that drives them. A band that could have easily faded into obscurity if it so desired is still going strong.

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Impaler (Continued from pg. 15)

In addition to the recently released "Habeas Corpus" and the soon-to-be-released DVD "House Band at the Funeral Parlor," they are also planning a west coast tour for spring. The band continues to write, with strong collaboration and contribution from each member, and to plan the next album. Croxton thinks the sound is a little different, "less punk, and more metal." That may be due, in part, to the addition of Skogquist on guitar. "He's a lot younger," says Croxton.

"There's a lot of new blood, no pun intended." Skogquist hopes to be that new blood. He was the primary writer for his previous band, so the chance to collaborate with Impaler is a dream come true. He wants to make the most of it, bringing his style in and trying to mesh that with the other members of the band. He hopes this infusion of himself will help spark interest in Impaler while keeping the "nostalgic feel for people who know them."

Though the band is looking toward the future, they know how important the present is. They hope the upcoming tour goes well, and they encourage fans and other interested parties to come see the show. They do, however, give fair warning. Lindsey warns audience members to come prepared, not only for an unbelievable show, but also for the possibility of needing to change clothes after the show. After all, blood and gore is part of the experience, along with the music. Each of the band members looks forward to putting forth the best effort possible and sending audiences home happy (or terrified).

Ultimately, Impaler wants people to have a good time, and they put forth whatever effort is required to achieve this. As Lindsey puts it, "We'll blow your head off...in a good way."

To see one of the best shows you have ever seen, you can catch Impaler April 20 at Hubba's House of Rock and Roll in Aurora.



THE END OF MUSIC AS WE KNOW IT

THE END RECORDS



NOVEMBERS DOOM - The Novella Reservoir



PHAZM - Antebellum Death 'N' Roll



MELECHESH - Emissaries