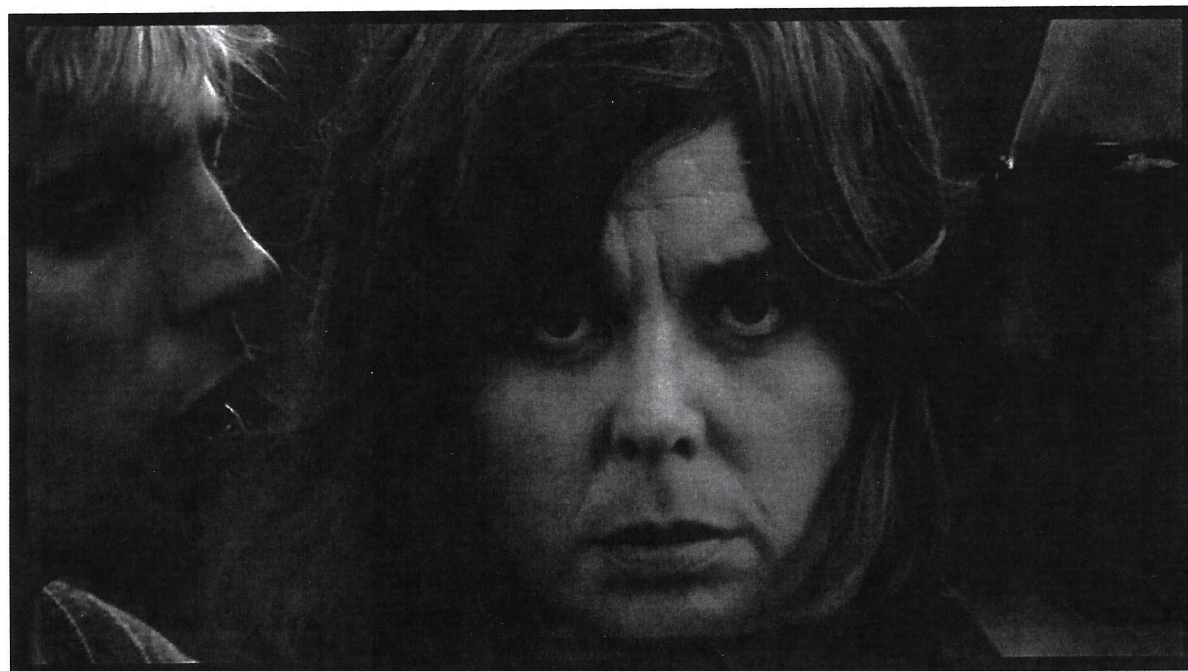


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**ALEISTER X/BATALJ/CARDIACS
GIVE PRAISE /NOD AND SMILE
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GIVE PRAISE RECORDS

When and where do you first set up Give Praise Records?

Well, I was living with my friend on Cape Cod, in Massachusetts - We were in a band together and it was pretty much coming to an end. I was never really that musically talented, as far as picking up a instrument, so I always just did vocals. I, didn't really want to start a new band, so decided to start a record label for some of my friends bands, and at first just did a local CDR / Tape label, for a few bands, and worked on that for about 2 years. It wasn't really going anywhere, so I started to read MRR and Short, Fast + Loud and would go through the reviews section and circle bands that sounded interesting. I would write them and see if they wanted to do a cassette release, since really that was all that I was doing at the time, and if they wanted to work with me. I got the first George Harrison demo (fastcore band from Russia) and loved it, they actually had a new band started called Frank Castle Gonna Break Your Neck, so I wrote to them, and they were really excited to find a label. They wanted to do a 7" EP, so I did that, and that was the start of it!

What were you original intentions for setting up the label?

Really my intentions were very little or nothing at all to start with. I really had no idea, what to expect and what to do, and the correct way to run a label was. I just got into it, to help a few local bands, that were not really doing anything recording wise, but that was really all it was. As, the label grew and got more involved I kept changing and setting goals for myself, releases to get out, get better distribution, stuff like that. I guess, the core intention would be, help get music out there, which is pretty close as to why I still do it.

What is the current roster of bands?

The current roster basically changes every week! So many bands, and records lined up - but right now, I am working with FUBAR, WAKE, REHASHED, AGE OF WOE, JACK, MURDER-SUICIDE PACT, BRODY'S MILITIA, BEYOND PINK, LYCANTHROPY, OSK, and of course the list goes on and changes every week!

What criteria do you use in choosing which bands to work with?

Honestly, it has changed a lot in the last year. With more and more labels popping up, and more and more bands working on their own, everything has changed since I started and how people are picking up new music. Really right now, the most important thing, is that, I can get along with the band well and we are on the same page as far as releases and plans for the release goes. After that, the main thing would be, touring, and I don't even really mean heading out for months on end, but just shows, that the band is playing out and getting their music heard. That of course, is after the fact of me liking the music and being into it. Usually, I won't just start working with a band after they send a demo, I usually find out about them and write them a letter or e-mail. I still check out the reviews section of a few magazines and circle the stuff that sounds good!

How does your output compare with other independent labels?

I like to think it stands up to the test when it comes to other labels. I know other labels, definitely have a bigger budget then I do - so that maybe slows my schedule down a little bit when other labels, can get stuff out there a little faster. I really try and make every record look and sound excellent though - I really like the graphic element of putting a record package together, so that is always very important to me.



What other music-based activities are you involved with besides Give Praise Records?

That really is pretty much it! I used to do vocals in a few local bands, and actually did a few fanzines here and there, I always have loved doing zines, so maybe one day I'll go back and start a magazine, but with the mail-order and label activities, that pretty much takes up most of my time. I used to travel with a few bands and help out on tours selling merchandise and running the table, stuff like that - I did that with: I HATE THIS, IN DEFENCE, and NERVOUS BREAKDOWN. That was always a lot of fun, but as the label gets more involved and takes more time, I like to focus on that. I'm usually pretty odd about how the label runs, so I like to make sure that everything that happens around here goes through me.

You've just returned from the New Jersey Deathfest: how important is an event like this to your label?

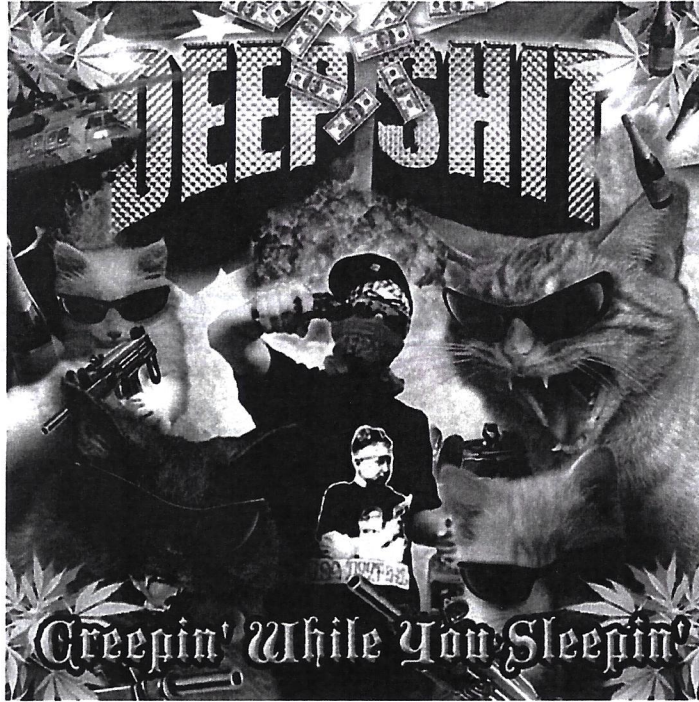
It is very important to the label - It really is the best way to promote and get the new music out there, is to go to festivals and shows like this and connect with people. You really get to hear what everyone thinks and check-out some newer bands and records, that you might not hear otherwise. Places like this are also really good to present new records and music to people, to see what their reactions are. So many times, you sell a record online, or in a store and never really get to see what people think.

You've released some amazing stuff by The Afternoon Gentlemen, an extraordinary Leeds-based grind band that happen to be good friends of mine? How did you first become aware from them and decide to work with them?

This was one of those rare occasions where a band sent me a demo and I loved it on first listen. Smith from the Gents sent me a letter and some music and I knew that I would really like to work with. I also had done some trading with Keep Screaming Records, and knew about them through that label as well. I think, the Gents were looking for a label in the USA to promote and release some of their music over here, as most of it was nestled into the UK scene. I was more than happy to oblige and ended up doing the discography CD. This was defiantly a good way to get them a little better recognized over here by presenting a whole 38 track disc! After the CD came out, I kept in touch, and did some more with them through a few co-releases. They also ended up touring with BACKSLIDER, who I have worked with and that is always cool when two of the bands you work with and get together and tour!

Which of your releases are you most proud of?

This is always a really hard question - and I am never sure of a good answer. I really am proud of all my releases. It's funny, I can look at the first few titles and years of Give Praise, and go down the list and it is almost all 7"s - I don't really even know how that ended up happening. I have come a long way since then in mixing up the formats, but I like to think that the spirit of the 7"s is still there. I don't really know if there is one record that I am the most proud of - but without a doubt, the most comments I ever got on a record was the cover for DEEP SHIT's ep 'Creepin' While You Sleepin'.



If you had the chance to sign any band or musician to Give Praise Records who would you choose?

Hhhhhmmm, there are a lot of bands I would love to work with! I think maybe (talking about current bands) I would love to work with FRIGHTMARE, GENERAL SURGERY, HAEMORRHAGE, or GRUESOME STUFF RELISH. I have always loved these bands, and also the artwork is always really excellent! I also really love horror movies and horror culture and always thought it is really cool, that bands can take classic horror movies and basically put them to music, visually and musically.

Can you tell me about your forthcoming releases?

There are always so many, the schedule basically changes daily with bands touring, pressing plants backing-up, artwork, and everything else! Right now, I have just released 3 new records - AGE OF WOE 'Inhumanform', FUBAR 'Lead Us To War', and WAKE / REHASHED 'Split.' I am working on records with MURDER-SUICIDE PACT (who just played their last show, and Bob (vocals) broke a wooden board with a chop!), BEYOND PINK (who are coming to tour the US in July), LYCANTHROPY (the US pressing for their LP), OSK (who just released a discography on To Live A Lie), SUFFERING MIND (will be my first record with a etching), and some more, the schedule is always evolving as I get to work with a ton of bands!

What does the future hold for Give Praise Records?

Hopefully I can keep moving forward! Sales have been kind of up-and-down lately, with the whole new digital influx. But, we stay in the game with a ton of vinyl releases, also offering CD versions for some really good stuff! I just hope to keep working with forward moving bands, and getting to put out new records! Also, I am in the starting stages of the new Give Praise magazine, Eruption - so hopefully that works out!