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Interview: HeWhoCanNotBeNamed

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by Corinne

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How are you?

I am pretty good, thanks. I have been busy moving which involves lots of carrying boxes up and down stairs.

Congratulations on "Sunday School Massacre," your new album, your first solo release! Could you offer some background or those unfamiliar with the concept of "Sunday School Massacre?"



The reason for the album is that I had several songs that I wanted to record. I started writing words and music for songs, besides a few in the early Dwarves days, in the late '90s. I actually had a band that I called "The Scum Kids" in '98. We only played two or three shows before the whole thing fell apart, but some of the songs stuck. "Runaway #2," which was recorded on "The Dwarves Must Die," was one of them. Anyway, I kept writing over the years and eventually had a group of them that I thought were worth presenting to the world, so I started a band again and that turned into an album. As for the concept of "Sunday School Massacre," I guess it just seemed like a good title for a collection of songs about demented children or regular children in an insane world.

Do you still hold the job that inspired the album?

No. I work with retarded adults now. I like them much more.

When did you decide you wanted to tackle your experiences with an album?

I think it was after I had written "Toxine." This was originally a song about a specific kid. Of course I couldn't use her name, but Toxine sounded better anyway. Around that time I was doing lots of shifts in the residential program where I worked. I would bring my guitar to work. I was always jamming with various kids there. In the '90s I had gotten a rock n roll music program started there. The place had gotten several thousand dollars in grants to get the program going, so we bought lots of gear. It was a good way to keep the kids busy and entertained. In the process I would write music to jam with them and teach them. I would also get ideas for songs like "Medication" (most of these kids were on psychotropic meds), or "Wake Up" (originally titled "DDAVP Wake Up" after a bed wetting medication), "Happy Suicide" (they were always trying to kill themselves to get attention), "Sinister Sal" (about the exploits of one particular warped resident).

How long did you physically spend working on it?

About three years. It took me way longer than it needed to because I did it in L.A. (I live in S.F.) and I was in no hurry.

How different was it making a solo album?

It was different in that I was in charge and got to make the final decisions on everything. It wasn't different in that I worked with all guys that I was used to working with. Pretty much everyone on this album played with The Dwarves at one time.

Have any of the patients you worked with heard the finished album? Have you gotten any feedback from them?

No I should send it to some of them. I occasionally keep in touch with a few via the internet.

What was it like working with Blag Dahlia, Nick Oliveri, and the others but with you being "in charge" this time around?

I think I already answered this one, but I'll just add that I love working with all those guys. They are not only amazing musicians, but good friends. The Fresh Prince Of Darkness, Saltpeter, and Dutch Ovens (Andy Selway) deserve special mention as they played on all tracks.

About a year ago, I interviewed Blag about Candy Now! and he offered an update on the Dwarves' upcoming album. What's the current status on the record?

It's going to be really good. I think it's in the final stages of being mixed now. It has songs written by just about everybody in the band.

Do you have any influences you think listeners would be surprised by?

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I don't know what listeners expect from me. I would guess they wouldn't be surprised by influences like The Ramones, Roky Erickson, or GG Allin and I love that stuff for sure, but I've always liked poppier music too. My absolute favorite band is The Beatles, but I really like The Replacements and more recently Elvis Costello. I've also been getting into some of the older Oi stuff, I especially like Cock Sparrer. I think Roy Orbison is possibly my favorite songwriter. I'm also a big classical music listener, especially choral music. I have a collection of Requiems.

Who are some underrated bands that you think we need to check out?

I don't know about how they rate, but I really like The Spittin Cobras. They are like sped up AC/DC and feature Andy Selway and Jules Hodgson from KMFDM.

What have you been listening to recently?

Lots of Elvis Costello and Ben Folds.

If you could have written any song what song do you wish you had written and why?

I always love Roy Orbison's "Crying." It's very heartfelt, but I really like how he uses the augmented chord in the chorus to climb up to the next chord before resolving the whole thing. Shit like that excites me.

Anything you would like to add?

Ride the Yellow Bus With Your Zipper Undone.

Thanks very much for your time!

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