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### DOA back in the Bow Valley

Posted 6 days ago

By Hamish MacLean

Banff Crag & Canyon

"Regrets, I've had a few, but then again too few to mention . . ."

Canadian punk rock icon, Joe Keithley, sang a couple lines of "My Way" to me over the phone from his Vancouver home last week. I'd just asked him if in his 30-year career, he had any regrets.

DOA will be releasing a new DVD on Sept. 25 — DOA The Men of Action 30th Anniversary DVD — at a hometown show at the Commodore Ballroom just days after playing Banff this Sunday. The DVD will include videos from year one, Keithley said, "really raw stuff in Stanley Park, up to videos shot today." The DVD comes with a commentary by Keithley and a retrospective CD of the band's work. Much of which has been politically motivated.

"Warmongering, racism, sexism . . . those kind of basic issues haven't stopped at all," Keithley said. "Some people might say, 'Why would DOA be going after 30 years, haven't they said what they were going to say?' But you know what? All these issues that sparked DOA and made it go in the first place have given it life to keep going, because this s--- is still going on."

The band though has also continued to find new audiences. A recent trip to China, opened Keithley's eyes to some of the new areas the band can still find fresh audiences.

"People drive on the same side of the street, they eat food and they go to shows and they work, but beyond that everything else was bizarre," Keithley said of his first trip to the People's Republic of China. Even reading the English-language newspapers there was a treat for DOA's frontman.

"It had some of the funniest stuff in there, they talked about crisis type things in other areas of the world and they just ridiculed everybody and then there'd be a couple pages . . . each day of the China Daily news . . . they'd be extolling the virtues of the miracle financial revolution, how people were doing great and everything. It was total propaganda but it was pretty interesting to read it," he said.

A few ex-pats in Singapore knew the band, but it was sort of like starting over with the fans in China. And winning over crowds is not really something DOA has had to do since the early 1980s when they emerged from the Vancouver, or West Coast, music scene as major players in punk rock. (Hardcore '81, DOA's second full-length is often credited as bringing the term, hardcore, which describes the second wave of American punk rock, bands like Minor Threat and Black Flag, into common usage.)

The band entered China on tourist visas, and had to send in some songs that were inspected by the authorities, but once inside he said he was pleased to find an underground, politically motivated community that's into punk rock.

Keithley said it reminded him of Poland: DOA toured there in 1985 while the country was still under communist rule. And at that time a punk underground was very politically motivated and sincere, it's just that they couldn't be overt, he said.

While the same issues that got DOA started do persist today, not everybody's into action, Keithley said. "Kids today" are more informed and open-minded, than in his day. For example, there were two different camps in music and the others were the enemy — take DOA's 1978 Disco Sucks EP as a case in point — While at the same time too in a lot of ways kids today don't have as strong opinions, and Keithley said he sees a real sense of apathy. Younger people need to wake up and realize they have a lot of power, he said. For that wake up call, go to Wild Bill's Sunday, Sept. 20.

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