

Cannibals gorge on controversy

musicpreview

Cannibal Corpse

With Red Chord, Goatwhore and Absence
Saturday, 22 September at 6pm
Dinwoodie Lounge

PAUL BLINOV
Arts & Entertainment Editor



Mothers of Edmonton, hide your children. Then, start petitioning the government to shut down the Dinwoodie Lounge, as Cannibal Corpse are tearing into town as part of Metal Blade Records' 25th anniversary tour. Your sons and daughters will surely be corrupted by the death-metal band's flaming pitchfork messages—after all, who but the devil himself would pen “Maggot-Smashed Face”?

That's the kind of warm welcome Cannibal Corpse is used to, and, after 19 years, they've gotten fairly comfortable with that. Given their penchant for graphically violent album covers and horror-movie lyrics, they've probably caused more than their fair share of parent-teacher meetings. But that hasn't slowed them down—in fact, the Buffalo-based act is basking in more popularity than ever.

“Well, there's no such thing as bad press,” guitarist Pat O'Brien quips. “We're not really trying to send out any kind of message; we just put lyrics to the theme of the music. Basically, we write dark, heavy music, and we put horror, gore-type lyrics because that's the kind of lyrics that best fits the music.”

O'Brien's a relatively new addition to the band, having joined up in 1997 to play alongside drummer Paul Mazurkiewicz, bassist Alex Webster, guitarist Rob Barrett, and screamer

George “Corpsegrinder” Fisher. Together, the band has managed to leap countless piles of controversy and keep on putting out punishing albums. They've even won a few battles: just recently, a ban on the live performance of their first three albums in Germany was lifted.

“Some kid came to school wearing a Cannibal Corpse T-shirt, and she found it offensive, and then ... I don't know the whole story, but we had to sign papers saying we wouldn't play songs from our first three albums,” O'Brien explains. “It was really a stupid ban.”

German fans were surely pleased at the ruling, although working with a reduced song-base wouldn't have slowed the band down. They've played everywhere from South America to Russia and have legions of devoted fans the world over to defend the merit of Cannibal Corpse's violent sound.

As to complaints that death-metal is a genre in which all bands sound alike, O'Brien is quick to point out the acute ear training that fans of

the genre have for picking out subtle differences in bands.

“Don't the blues [all] sound the same? Nobody rags on the blues,” he says, defending his chosen genre. “I mean, it is a certain kind of music, [but] if you're really into death-metal, you know it does not [all] sound the same.”

“I mean, we try to do different things on each album: push ourselves harder, become better songwriters and better players. [Bands] get boring for us if they play the same thing, and we know what we play. Now, what it sounds like to somebody who listens to it through their stereo, that's up to them to decide.”

Yet for all the devoted fans who spite parental approval to see their shows, O'Brien still seems surprised that Cannibal Corpse hasn't rotted away yet.

“I think Cannibal Corpse was one of those bands that was supposed to go away after the second album,” he admits. “You can never tell what's going to happen.”



albumreview

Bat for Lashes

Fur and Gold
EMI Records

LIZ DURDEN
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Right from the opening harpsichord sequence of “Horse and I,” Bat for Lashes' debut album *Fur and Gold* plunges listeners into a mysterious and vivid dreamland. With lines like “You're the chosen one,” you can't help but feel like you're being individually invited into the psyche of Natasha Khan, the architect behind the all-female band.

Fur and Gold features the story-

telling lyrics of Khan accompanied by richly layered instrumentals. The unique combination of harpsichord, viola, guitar, percussion, autoharp, and piano creates a gothic and luxurious sound, fitting in snugly with the album title.

Most songs on the album follow a similar pattern: emphatic beats or a musical rift leads in to the introduction of vocals. Khan's clear voice has a subtle

touch of sadness reminiscent of Björk. Ranging from a whisper to a bellow, Khan—along with the varied instruments—creates surprising diversity in her songs.

Strong dramatic tracks on the album include “Horse and I,” “Prescilla,” “Sarah,” and “What's a Girl to Do?” and while not objectionable, slower songs like “Seal Jubilee” are a bit harder to get into, lacking melodic variation. The melancholy “Sad Eyes,” on the other hand, gives a diversion from the fantasy tone of the rest of the album.

This album is a strong beginning for the band, which demonstrates Khan's impressive, level songwriting from start to finish. Grab some costume jewelry, lie back, and let *Fur and Gold* waltz through your consciousness.



albumreview

Martin Kerr

I Know You're Out There
Independent

BRYAN SAUNDERS
Arts & Entertainment Staff

If Jack Johnson was one day bitten by a radioactive Cat Stevens, the result would be a super-human being named Martin Kerr. Transplanted to Edmonton by marriage, this British singer-songwriter's music immediately evokes flashbacks to the days of peace, love, and protest songs, but in an idyllic kind of way.

Kerr's soothing voice lightly dancing over every note, *I Know You're*

Out There draws in listeners with its hopeful, remarkable lyrics and beautifully written instrumentals. A few tracks after the reflective lullaby “Chicken's Feet” comes “My Love's Been More than Two Hours Long,” a deliciously upbeat song that might make a Gaelic-music lover out of anyone within earshot.

As the tracks fly by, *I Know You're Out There* keeps on getting better and

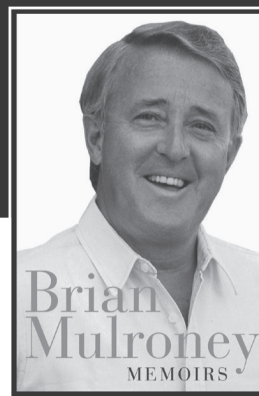
better. midway through the album is “You Two Can,” by far the best and catchiest song of the bunch—it's also the most hippie-esque, with lyrics like “If we're not famous / Think that no one will blame us / Letting injustice go on as it does / But the starving don't care / About the price of your haircut / Any true kindness will do.” Even those who don't buy into the socialist mindset will find themselves singing along to the chorus of “Bono can't change the world / Anymore than you two can.”

The end of the album, like the end of the anti-war movement, is bitter-sweet: the closing track, “In Hindsight,” is yet another gem, but as the album comes to a close, so does the beautiful world that Kerr has created—until the play button is quickly hit again, of course.

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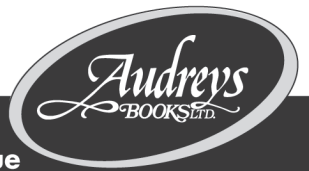
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