

DISPOSABLE UNDERGROUND

Issue 27

Championing the musically jaded for over a decade

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MAJORITY RULE'S NEW RECORD is called *Emergency Numbers*, and is out on Magic Bullet. So it's high time I wrote something about the band, one that is full of great musical talent and a history of playing shows and wowing people with the records they make, driving hometown crowds into a frenzy when they grace a stage. Majority Rule exudes passion and extremity, going full tilt and at the same time showing their audience they are playing their songs the way they are meant to be played. There are large helpings of melody and subdued areas in their songs which break into loud and piercing distortion, screams, and pummeled drums. Matt, the guitar player and one of the singers, kindly answered a few emailed questions.

DU: If you met someone at a record store that hypothetically stocked all of your releases, this person being curious about your band, which one would you recommend?

Matt: Right now I would recommend the [new] full length ... Really I think I would just be really excited to be in a record store that had all of our stuff.

There have been some changes in the Majority Rule sound over the years. Were some of these as a direct result of lineup changes?

Other than the vocals sounding different I don't know if the lineup changes really changed the sound. We did kind of change our sound when we became a three piece, but I think it was a natural change.

Did Majority Rule change with the times (change happening in any department of the band) or change irrespective of what was going on in your music scene(s)?

I think we have changed irrespectively of our "scene." The only thing in the scene that could have affected us would be the bands that inspire us, i.e. City of Caterpillar, pg.99.

Besides those bands, what bands, or musicians, inspire you guys individually or as a group to be good musicians yourselves?

That could be such a long list. Off the top of my head some bands I really love are His Hero is Gone, Fugazi, Blond Redhead, Botch, Strike Anywhere, Godspeed, and of course the long time favorites like Born Against and Megadeth. I can't really speak for Kevin and Pat but I think they would agree with some of those.



You string-slingers use multiple effects pedals. Pretend this is a guitar magazine: Please give a rundown of the effects you guys employ, as well as amplification and guitar and bass brands.

I feel funny answering this but it's a good kind of funny. I use a Marshall JCM 2000

amp with two 1960

4 x 1 2

Marshall

C a b s .

My guitar is a

Gibson

SG standard that

has been rewired

with an EMG-91

a c t i v e

p i c k u p .

As for pedals I

use a

B o s s

DD3 Delay, a Volume Pedal, a Boss Tremolo, a Boss Tuner, a Line 6 Delay, and a Boss

Phrase Sampler. Kevin uses a Fender Jazz Bass with a Ampeg SVT head and 8x10 cab.

For pedals he uses a Big Muff, A Boss Bass Overdrive, a Sans amp, a Volume pedal, and the same tuner as me.

Some bands talk at length about and put great emphasis on their lyrical content, some even to the point that the music takes a back seat. What's the balance between lyrics and music with Majority Rule?

Basically we just try to use lyrics that work with the song. I absolutely disagree with the music taking a back seat. Lately we haven't been able to find lyrics that work with the music so we are leaning toward instrumental stuff.

Will the lyrics become sparse on some songs, since at least for me it's easier to write a shorter lyric than a longer one, or are you foreseeing a future where whatever amount lyrics will appear on some songs and not at all on others?

I don't really know what will happen in the future, but in the songs we recorded recently there are actually more lyrics. Too many for me to memorize still.

But there is also an instrumental so I guess we are going in both directions.

The band members wear some politics on their sleeve (sporting buttons and stickers). Is showing these colors a band stance?

I think the best way to answer this is by saying that we write about the things that inspire us. Sometimes this comes from our personal lives, sometimes it comes from politics. Lately politics has been what's moving me so that's what I've been writing about. It's impossible to say we are not political, but I wouldn't call us a political band. I hope that makes sense. I guess what I'm trying to say is at times like these it's pretty difficult to separate the political from the personal.

Do you care at all what sort of show you guys play? In other words, is it important to play to a receptive audience, or do you try to seek out shows where the crowd will have to be won over?

That's a great question. Of course I care about the kind of shows we play but it's hard to describe the "perfect show." I guess it would be one where the person who set it up was just as excited as we are to play it. The things we never care about are the silly things like riders and guarantees. A receptive audience is nice but there is something fun in the challenge of playing to a new crowd.

I really enjoyed the shows in Europe this [past] summer when nobody knew who we were.

www.majrule.com ■



Majority Rule photos: Gary Fry

DISPOSABLE MUSIC REVIEWS

City of Caterpillar update

City of Caterpillar's debut full length (Level Plane, 2002) is an enrapturing seven song arrangement that is, in essence, a uniquely pervasive work of art. When giving it your full attention, this record will sweep you away into the extensions of its urgency and slap you around a bit, while enveloping you in its thick, moody atmosphere. The combination of the drums' spasmodic rhythms, hidden under tremulous layers of angular guitar, as well as the melodic, then elated, feel of the delicate intricacies found early in the songs' introductions, help to foster this effect. Though the lyrics are practically indecipherable, even they seem to hold some significant meaning when vocalized, raw and passionate, pressed against these cataclysmic melodies. Because most of the songs clock in at around seven minutes, I probably wouldn't recommend the album to the impatient listener. For those who have the time and patience to sit it though in one listening, they will understand just how well the songs play off one another to form a complete body of music that is entirely stimulating. As an album, in short, it goes without saying that this is a brilliant one which defies convention in its transcendental air. (by Taryn Wilkinson)

A band that has been receiving strong notices in many different places, City of Caterpillar is a powerful live unit, burning its way through sets with wide dynamics, volume, diverse music, and intelligent sounds. In the spring of 2003 City Of toured the land of the rising sun with Hot Cross. "Japan was the best time I've ever had in my whole life," said Kevin, the bassist and co-vocalist. He said the band's next undertaking will be to write and record another record, as they have a few new songs but not a release's worth. He explained that perhaps by late fall 2003 they will be finished with that work, and from then through the following spring will be their time to tour again. They have to take advantage of that time because City Of shares bandmembers, currently and in the past: Kevin and Brandon, co-vocalist and one of the guitarists, both used to play bass (concurrently) in pg.99, and Pat, the drummer, plays drums in Majority Rule. Kevin therefore is qualified to speak to the methods of dealing with scheduling conflicts among bands that share members. "The best way to do it is to be very nice as you possibly can about everything," he explained. In this way, he said, the bands can more easily accommodate each other and work together so that everyone's happy. jeph0514@aol.com

God Forsaken Electric Release (Ktok)

Ok, I about needed some no holds barred doom rock about now. God Forsaken from Finland has upped the ante on this ep, which I enjoyed better than their last demo (reviewed in #25). Heavy sound, strong playing, and vocals that work with the music. Good job! www.godforsaken.cjb.net

Misery Index update

A death metal band which has been collecting some rave reviews, the American Misery Index has recorded several releases and has collected their songs from them on a cd-r which they will burn for anyone that contacts them and asks. The band is interesting because they concentrate on writing good death

metal and don't bore the listener with pointless technicality like others in the genre. | First on the compilation is their 2003 demo, which sounds pretty good; the drums are too clicky but besides that you can hear everything and I have no other complaints. The vocals are kind of hardcore, which is a good mix with the metal, as well as some of the catchy hardcore style riffing in the guitar department. That's the thing with Misery Index. They have good death metal, some blasts, and memorable hardcore parts. This, their latest recording, shows that all the talk about the band is deserved. | Their material on the split ep with Structure of Lies, the next batch of songs, is solid, with some more death metal style in the vocals. There's lead guitar work to be found as well, unlike the demo songs. I think there's a little Dying Fetus influence in the slower parts, too. | On the Commit Suicide split, next on the cd-r, there isn't any lead work again, which is okay. I think this material is more grindcore influenced in the riffs (grindcore coming from hardcore). | Lastly there's five live tracks from a radio show appearance in Boston which are really fine quality. They clearly show this band has their music wired down perfectly, like they know their songs backwards and forwards. www.misery-index.com

Never Enough 2003 demo

A new band, one of those containing ex members of, Never Enough's pieces add up. They play it old school style with few and far between tough guy sections, awesome old Cro-Mags type breakdowns, and generally mid- to fast-paced Chain of Strength or their ilk hardcore. They lyrics are quite alright too, with some philosophical nods. They've since released a new demo, so get in touch with these Baltimore, Maryland mofos. www.never-enough.idz.net

Unholz Grave update

The Japanese grindcore band has recorded some material at different times in a year and spread them out over three more split 7"es. They've recorded themselves at their studio, and so the music sounds very rough and not especially clean. Their best songs out of the bunch is on the second split below, and the least remarkable is on the last split. So anyway, let's take a look, shall we? | On the split with Sabbat, with lovely colored vinyl, there's a Terrorizer cover, a Napalm Death cover, and the ragin', dirty hardcore grind there these guys play and are known for. Five songs on their side, with a good sense of humor along with their simplistic political message. Sabbat is a Japanese black metal band. These guys have real attitude, especially the bass player. On their side you'll find great, sloppy music; their one song is called "Hellfire," and has an '80s feel to it, like old Venom, very raw and poorly recorded, but pure gold. **The Sky is Red, 119 N Moore St, Ottumwa IA 52501, USA** | The next record we'll talk about is the split with Godstomper. Godstomper is a lot of fun because they roll into the studio, make up a bunch of music and play it all once, and then they break it into songs on the record. The music, then, has wild abandon and immediate harsh, raw, distorted freshness. **Rescued From Life, 6200 McCullar, Hallorn City TX 76117, USA** | Finally there's the

Gang Up On Against split. The GUOA stuff is awesome! Six tracks of totally insane, disjointed music, by a band that can play! They mix grindcore and rock 'n' roll with spastic vocals and flashy bass runs and guitar licks. On this record there's an appropriately crisp recording too. Great songs ... they don't let up for a second! **Mink, 17-59 Shimoimaie, Morioka, Higashiura-cho, Chita-gun, Aichi 470-2101, Japan**

Contamination Tour

The Ottobar, Baltimore, MD

Relapse's Contamination Tour presented the Ottobar crowd an impressive lineup which included the bands Swarm of the Lotus, Misery Index, Dysrhythmia, and Uphill Battle, with Mastodon as the headliner. | Equipped with capturing charisma, Swarm of the Lotus opened with a set that gave the crowd a potent taste of their metal edge. By drilling pieces that were solely instrumental in addition to their usual set, their talent was that much more pronounced. Unfortunately, one wouldn't have guessed by the general reaction of the crowd (an annoying phenomenon that would carry on until Mastodon came on stage!) that the band had been all that enjoyable, which I found somewhat bizarre. | Misery Index, though they gave a good performance as well, generated perhaps even less enthusiasm from the crowd. Personally, I didn't feel that their music fit the bill very well, especially with the absence of Cephalic Carnage, who might have complemented them better. | The crowd was still relatively sparse and even lethargic when Dysrhythmia performed, but that wasn't a large surprise, considering the band is purely instrumental. Naturally their style contrasted quite a bit to the other bands, as did Misery Index's, but I usually find their sets to be a pleasure, as they are undeniably talented musicians with a unique approach. | Winding down for the night, Uphill Battle approached the stage (this being around the time in which the crowd's concrete apathy really started to become a drag). It seemed to take a few songs for the band to get it fully together, but once they were warmed up and comfortable they definitely gave a powerful performance—my favorite of the show. I thought it especially interesting to catch the vocal diversity between the three singers; it was somewhat refreshing. | For the first time that night, everyone seemed to gather like eager fleas, once the samples (I believe one was taken from the film *Happiness*) leading up to Mastodon's performance began. Mastodon played a lengthy set which appeared to take the crowd quite thoroughly. With this new electricity of stimulation, things picked up and became more interesting by far. The band played incredibly well, demanding this energy from the crowd, while belting out their masculine riffs. To top off their set, Mastodon ended with a Thin Lizzy cover, which proved to be a definitive smash hit. (by Taryn)

If you didn't see your release reviewed here, it's because a) I didn't want to review it, or b) it didn't make it this issue and will appear next time. Thank you for your patience.

Disposable Underground by Richard Johnson unless otherwise noted. 2003. Contributors: Gary Fry, JR Hayes, Taryn Wilkinson. ■

Musical Darwinism with JR Hayes

We went "in the listening room" with JR and played him some records. Here are his first impressions of each...

Boris Amplifier Worship (Southern Lord)

"I would say great tones, solid production, very crushing as long as you've got the time to sit and get crushed. This record requires a lot of time, concentration, patience, but it's worth it. I can rock out to it." www.southernlord.com

Discoria 2002 demo

"This is a competent, well produced, well played, depressingly boring death metal demo. I don't know who wrote their bio but they really need to get over themselves. There's a lot of name dropping going on [in the bio], for example Morbid Angel, Nile, and Immolation, but this band opens for those bands, and probably always will." discoria666@aol.com

Hortus 2002 cdr

"Hortus is strange music created by bizarre men of science. Eccentric the way the Melvins are eccentric. It kinda sounds like Devo playing Swans covers. Awkward rhythms, crazy noises, lots of kookoo bass tones. At times the bass sounds like Moog synthesizers. Crazy, spacy shit." holyhortus@hotmail.com

Ludicra Hollow Psalms (Life is Abuse)

"It's pretty brutal. I'm not a big black metal connoisseur but I think I dig this. It's really fast, the vocals are very spiteful, but it's that thin black metal guitar, that Darkthorn guitar, that kinda drives me crazy. But it's definitely vicious in parts and the packaging's pretty rad. It's pretty good." www.lifeis-abuse.com

Magrudergrind demo

"Total pussy snare. Guitar tone is pretty sick. They've got some meaty riffs. The faster riffs are kinda nondescript. Vocals aren't bad. Need to put a little more sac in there. Recording as a whole: pretty good for a demo. This band has potential so I won't slag 'em." www.magrudergrind.tk

Mindflair Green Bakery (Bones Brigade)

"It's pretty hairy. It's kinda got the same swagger as the last Brutal Truth record. It's grind but then it's offbeat and obviously fueled by bong hits. The advantage of bonghit grind is that it's interesting because they take the bong hits and go off in strange directions, but the disadvantage of bonghit grind is that those directions don't seem to go anywhere. If you're patient with them they'll feed you a couple sick mosh parts." www.bonesbrigaderecords.com

Nigel Pepper Cock The New Way (Life is Abuse)

"Dude, that's messed up. Dude, what the fuck is wrong with this band? Dude, this is depraved. I remember Slayer's *Reign In Blood* scaring the piss out of me when I was 11 years old. Looking at the packaging of this record I'm maybe the most uncomfortable since. Honestly I have no idea what to say. I'm fuckin' speechless, dude. The music definitely doesn't live up to the packaging, but the packaging is out of control." (see Ludicra for address)

Paganizer Dead Unburied (Forever Underground)

"All right. Fuck. More well played, well produced, depressing as hell death metal. In Virginia this is what I call meat and

potatoes metal, and I only eat caviar." www.foreverunderground.com

Set Ablaze demo

"The band photos kinda look like a Bold record or a Gorilla Biscuits record, but these guys are a straight up death thrash band. At times they're trying to be melodic, at times they're trying to be heavy, but it kinda feels very middle of the road. I wish they'd make up their minds and go in one direction or the other. I'm not feeling the hate, I'm not feeling the mosh, so something's wrong. They're all definitely good musicians though. It is possible to be too eclectic." setablazehc@hotmail.com

Sut-Nam demo

"Dude, come on! This is somebody who's been listening to Slayer and Hatebreed at the same time. The vocals sound like a rabid dog but not a threatening dog if that makes any sense. Definitely not a cliché band. They're interesting enough. Some of the riffs are pretty good but I'm not diggin' the production or the arrangements. There's definitely some Floorpunch parts if you're into that. I wasn't really feelin' the vibe but definitely not a terrible band. Live they'd probably be fun to watch." killthat-noisemf@earthlink.net

Trap Them and Kill Them 2002 3" cd

"This fuckin' rules. It's good. They actually have good guitar riffs which is more than 90% of the grind bands out there. It's right, it's aggressive, it's mad as hell. What's not to like? ... The vocals are ragin' as hell. Listen to him: he's fuckin' pissed. Relentless as fuck, period." nonhosond@atbi.com ■