

COINMONSTER

Coinmonster has been a formable force in the music scene in this area for as long as I can remember. With an extremely tight sound, both live and in the studio. These guys are three very talented and accomplished musicians. They have been unfortunately lumped into the math and prog rock group categories most of the time, but the songs that spawn from this hometown band have much more depth and feeling. With Joh Riter on vocal and guitar, Rick Stoner on bass and Dave Galazia behind the kit, they are a force to be reckoned with. Don't believe me? Well catch 'em live, they always have a show somewhere in Ohio, or pick up any of their CDs. My personal favorite is still the old *Work, Sweet and Pain*, but you can't go wrong with 2002's *Tilton Johnson* or their most current release *The Schematic*.

We got the chance to sit down with Jon of Coinmonster a few weeks ago, so check out what he had to say about the band's history, lineup, the local scene and Buffy The Vampire Slayer.



I was first exposed to Coinmonster so long ago I can't remember what year it was. Somebody had *Work, Sweat And Pain Among Friends*, and I finally got a copy of my own and got to see you perform live at the good ole RJ Lounge. Do you look back at those days with fondness? How has the band grown in the 10 odd years since then?

I definitely look back on those years with fondness, actually I don't regret anything we've done.. We've been doing this for 13 years non-stop, and I've got a ton of great memories, diaries, flyers, all sorts of things laying around to constantly remind me about every show we've ever done, good or bad. I think the band keeps growing because we're always looking for something new to mess with, musically. People have pigeonholed us as some sort of "math metal, technical, blah blah" band for years, but we don't purposely write things in odd time signatures, or make things tricky for the listener intentionally.. it's just how we write.. You can spot a band who purposely tries to be different, and that embarrasses me more than anything. I've become a pro at spotting those bands, we play with them often as well. You talk to them before the show, and they're fairly normal, nice folks.. then they get on stage and start flopping around, alienating the crowd, it's silly..

Over the years I have heard so many bands come out of the western PA and Ohio areas that sound like Coinmonster. It seems you guys have created or at the very least exposed the kids around here to a new sound, how does it make you feel being such an influence on the music market?

well, it's a double edged sword. There are a lot of great bands in the area, and you're right, many of them have borrowed from us, but many also talk bad things about us as well. I get 10 e-mails a week from bands wanting to open shows and whatnot, then I hear from 5 people that they were bad mouthing us a week ago.. it's lame. I'm glad that people are possibly influenced by what we do, it does anger me when I see a band that BLATANTLY rips off us, and won't acknowledge us as an influence. Then again, we have no patent on what we do, nor were we the first to do what we do, but in 1990, in this area, as far as we knew, we were. People will say that we rip off Mr. Bungle, or Primus, or that I rip off Mike Patton, but they don't realize that we've sounded like this before anyone around this area of PA and OH even knew who those bands were, and I wasn't about to change what came naturally to us because it was comparable to another band. It's funny because the bands that say those things and make those comparisons, 99% of the time sound



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like Korn or Dillinger Escape Plan.. that's the new band to rip off.. Another thing that gets me angry is arrogance from certain musical genres.. let me explain.. let's take a certain group of bands, bands that literally set out to sound like Black Sabbath or Mountain or Blue Cheer, but you don't hear anyone throwing up a flag at them? Yet when a band like us comes along, honestly trying to do something a bit different, we're the ones who are ripping people off? I hate ignorance and arrogance..

The band has had a song used for an episode of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* , How did that come about and was it a good experience? ?

Our manager at the time had a contact in NYC with a guy who places music in TV and Film where it's suitable. He got a copy of "The Schematic" and was able to get "Body of Binky" on "Six Feet Under" , a show on HBO.. Then they snuck it onto "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" without telling us.. sort of shady, but luckily a fan in Boston e-mailed me asking if I had seen the episode. I had no clue, so we got to the bottom of it, and everything worked out fine.. Just got a royalty check yesterday, it helps with the groceries!



The rumor every year is Coinmonster is playing Ozzfest. What's up with that? ?

I've never heard that one.. we've never even had our hopes remotely that high. Once , about 2 years ago, I believe Sharon Osbourne called our then manager and talked to him about getting a CD to check out, but I really don't know whatever happened. No offense to anyone involved, I don't think we fit in with that stuff any longer. I can't distinguish between any new music anymore.. it's sad, and I'm getting old. I listen to mainly jazz and sappy 70's music, a lot of old 50's, 60's and 70's rock. I mean, we still write heavy heavy stuff, but when I'm driving in the car, it's Sammy Davis JR, baby.

You guys seem to play all over the place. Where have you gotten the best responses? And the worst? ?

We get good responses just about everywhere we go, thank goodness. Our fans are diehard, so that's cool. The best was probably opening for Coal Chamber.. it was one of those situations where you think the kids are going to hate you, then they end up loving you.. it was cool, and half the crowd left after Coal Chamber's first song, so maybe we did something right. The worst was Mushroomhead, at the Odeon in Cleveland - March 1997.. now that I think back, it really wasn't that bad, but the first 5 rows hated us, but the other 30 rows loved us, but you only hear the hate when you're up front.. they threw all sorts of shit at us, it was lame. I think after a few more shows with Mushroomhead, the crowd realized "hey, they only have 3 guys in their band and no stage show, and sure do make one hell of a racket" - eventually they loved us. I wish we could tour more, but our day jobs hog up all the extra time.

How about telling us one good road story from the eyes of a struggling independent band.

Here's a good one.. most clubs want you to load in at these ridiculously early times for a show that features 6 bands, and you're 5th. We had a show in Rochester NY (about 5 hours one way), and they wanted us to load in at 7 PM, we told our then manager to communicate with them that due to work schedules, etc, we would be there around 9 PM, in PLENTY of time to prepare for our slot (12 PM). Five hours later, we arrive at the club only to get kicked off the show because they wanted us there at 7. We jumped back in the van, drove straight back to New Castle. 10

hours driving, not one note played. It's unreal some of the shit you have to put up with, just to go up on a rickety stage, play through a shitty PA system to 15 people, but if you love music like we do, you don't complain.. plus no one wants to hear you complain, so save it! Basically, if you love to play, you'll stop at nothing to do it.

A while back you lost long time bassist John Troutman, only to have him replaced buy the tremendously talented Rick Stoner. It appears Rick has worked out nicely, has having Rick in the band affected the sound or writing?

oh hell yeah! Rick is a guitar player by nature, so he's got that style to his bass playing. He's got a certain style to his writing, too, so that added a whole new level to it. When we were writing for "The Schematic", Rick was still pretty fresh in the band, but he came up with some of the more memorable riffs , totally by accident. Then when he started writing piano parts for stuff, it really got interesting, and crazy.. we love that aspect now, we don't have to answer to anyone, musically, we can do whatever the hell we want.. it's a very relieving feeling. I think with the music we did on "Tilton Johnson", the maturity level of everyone in the band really jumped up a few notches because Rick was adding a sophisticated side to it.

When can we expect something new from Coinmonster?

We're about 5 songs into the writing process right now, all 5 are instrumentals and they may stay that way.. it's an avenue we've been talking about exploring lately. The

COINMONSTER

continued from page 31

The next album will have to outdo everything else we've done, so we have to challenge ourselves again. I would say maybe a year, probably less, you can expect another full length recording. We do most of our writing and demoing in the winter, so we've got a few months to get our shit together!

You have recorded every album at Mud Hut Studios, Can you tell us about that?

We met Bill Dodd back in 1991 when a fan of ours took one of our rehearsal recordings and gave it to him to check out. He loved what he heard, and invited us up as an experiment. He was just starting the studio up and his gear was minimal.. I remember he had an 8-track cassette recorder and some effects, and that was about it! We went up to the studio during a blizzard, which David highly discouraged. He was bitching that he didn't want to ride around in the snow and risk his life, but I talked him into it.. The session was great, and we really struck up an amazing friendship with Bill that we still have today. We actually had a singer at that point in time, every once in a while I listen back to that tape for a good laugh. It's funny, but it's cool to listen to now and again. We've come a LONG way since then.... We do our records at Mud Hut because Bill shares the same theory that we do: get as