

Q&A: "METALCALYPSE's" Brendon Small on "GALAKTIKON" and more

Written by Mister Smith
Thursday, 03 May 2012 08:45



Horror fans may recognize Brendon Small's name from the brutal, yet hilarious, Adult Swim series METALCALYPSE. As the mastermind behind the top-rated Adult Swim show and the best-selling death metal album of all-time, THE DETHALBUM, Small's talent knows no limits. A true fan of metal and the macabre, Fango caught up with Brendon to pick his brain on the subjects of the music, horror, and who he would cast as Dethklok manager, Charles Offdensen, in a live-action Dethklok movie.

FANGORIA: You have a new album coming out entitled BRENDON SMALL'S GALAKTIKON. Was this album something you had been itching to do for awhile now, or did this recently come together in-between projects?

BRENDON SMALL: This is a project that I did because I didn't know if DETHALBUM II was going to come out, and I wanted to keep Gene Hoglan and Ulrich Wild working. So, I gathered some music that I'd been messing around with in Pro Tools that I felt was a bit too "rock" and melodic for Dethklok and decided I was going to use the melodic singing style from the song "Hatredcopter," and see what happens. What I ended up with was something quite different.

FANG: Even with your signature guitar tones and rhythm on display, GALAKTIKON sounds like its own animal; but your melodic approach to the vocals are a nice surprise.

SMALL: I knew that I really liked melody in the vocal. Some of my favorite metal has incredibly melodic vocals, from Metallica to Maiden to Dio. But the big idea was for me to keep an open door policy to ALL of my influences. I drew from Queen, ELO, Soundgarden, Foo Fighters, there are Weezer moments, classic rock stuff, Metallica moments, and black metal moments; everything was fair game as far as I was concerned. So I needed to do this to put some melody that I couldn't in Dethklok. □



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FANG: Again, you collaborated with producer Ulrich Wild. What's the biggest contribution Ulrich brings to your music and to you as a musician, in general?

SMALL: Ulrich is great. He understands mixing in a way that I simply don't. Also, I give him a lot of layers to deal with. I harmonize a lot of guitars and vocals, and his job is to make sure they're all coming through in a mix which he does masterfully. I just don't have the mixing chops he does. He's a super talented and relaxed dude; I love working with people like that!

FANG: GALAKTIKON will be released right around the time when the fourth season of METALCALYPSE premieres. You've found away to combine the perfect mixture of music, humor, violence and animation. That's no easy task. How have you gone about writing for a project such as METALCALYPSE? Meaning, do you come up with the music first, then write an episode around the lyric content, or is it vice-versa?

SMALL: It's always story and character first, and then I scramble very quickly to put rough music together. By the time I come back to it to clean it up, a couple months have passed by and I get this new objectivity about the song, which is helpful. Only in the first season did I have a couple songs ready before the episodes. I work better (musically) with deadlines. . .

FANG: You've had the fortune of having some incredible musicians lend their voices to the show. As a true metal fan, how do you keep yourself from "geeking-out" in front of guys like James Hetfield?

SMALL: It was hard to not dork out. He's the big, tall intimidating super front man from Metallica, but he was incredibly down to earth and just wanted to be a good actor, so it was easy to relax and concentrate on the work. But yes, I'm glad I didn't blow it by dorking-out.

FANG: Being that you've been successful in both heavy metal music and cartoons, what was the last metal album that blew your mind? Are you a big fan of animation, in general?

SMALL: I really dig the new Meshuggah, Cannibal Corpse... I can't wait for the new Gojira, love the new Mastodon. Oh, and I really dig the new High on Fire! ☐

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FANG: Horror fans will no doubt continue to appreciate the violent, but hilarious, antics Dethklok attracts. As a writer, where do you pull the over-the-top violent humor from?

SMALL: When I pitched the show, I remember trying to coin a phrase "Extreme Slapstick" wherein it can be as violent as it can possibly be, as long as it's funny in nature—though we do reserve the right to be dramatically brutal. I remember talking about Monty Python and the Black Knight getting his arms and legs hacked off. I always loved that scene and wanted to try to do something like that. Ultimately, if we do our jobs right, it should get laughs. □

FANG: Besides being in the creative seat with your music and series, you've also started directing some music videos. Who are some current bands you'd like to provide visuals for in a video?

SMALL: Oh yeah, that was fun! I'd love to direct a video for any of the above mentioned bands. The tricky part is that music video budgets have gone way down and it's hard to do something with no money. □



FANG: Do you have the itch for directing live-action? Will we see you crossing over to do feature-films anytime soon? For example, is there a GALAKTIKON script currently being typed up?

SMALL: Yes. I love live action. I really dig acting too and have been studying it more intensely the past few years. I'm now developing a live action show for myself to produce, write, and act in. □

FANG: You get to cast the roles of Dethklok, Dr. Rockzo, and Charles Offdensen in a

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live-action Metalocalypse movie. Go!

SMALL: I don't know, I think the only thing that makes this show/band interesting is the fact that they don't exist. But I'll play your game; Charles Offdensen will be young Kyle McLaughlin. How's that? □

FANG: What were the last horror films that left an impression on you?

SMALL: I just got BASKET CASE and FRANKENHOOKER on Blu-ray. Hennenlotter rules!

FANG: Lastly, you're stuck with one metal album and one horror film for the rest of your life. What are they?

SMALL: I love POLTERGEIST. I love MASTER OF PUPPETS, but I'll go with BIRDEMIC and Chumbawumba just to be unique.

New episodes of Metalocalypse can be seen Sundays, on Adult Swim. To preview and purchase Brendon Small's Galaktikon, visit his [official site](#).