

Q&A: The Other's Rod Usher talks "THE DEVILS YOU KNOW"

Written by Ben Cortman
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Horror fans love rock 'n roll. That's a given, but sometimes the two mediums intertwine like Brundlefly DNA to make something new. That's what happened with Germany's horror punk band THE OTHER, a Misfits-inspired amalgam of all things ghoulishly quaint and blisteringly bloody.

Their new album, THE DEVILS YOU KNOW, is a tough disc filled with macabre lyrics, pummeling riffs and somehow, plenty of creepy charm. Much of that charm is due in no small part to frontman Rod Usher, a true genre fan who's managing to live his dream.

We spoke to Rod recently about movies, music and yes, their connection to The Misfits...

FANGORIA: Your music is alive with the love of the macabre. Was it always movies that moved you? When can you cite that love affair first beginning?

ROD USHER: My first taste of the horror genre was indeed a movie; a Frankenstein production from Hammer, with Peter Cushing—that much, I remember. I was about eight years old, frightened but also feeling sympathy for the monster. And shortly afterwards, at the age of nine, I started reading Stephen King and got into horror literature with THE SHINING. Those early experiences shaped my taste for horror. I still prefer movies that have an old school charm, that are not too one-dimensional and that include some social or political comments. The same goes for literature, and this influences our songs, lyrics and our artwork and outfits as well.

FANG: There is a clear link to the horror/punk of The Misfits, you even cite this yourself. Have

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you found that to be a blessing or a curse to you commercially?

USHER: At first it was a blessing, because people wanted new music in a Misfits-style, but the band didn't release anything after FAMOUS MONSTERS came out. So, we had a fast start and even played with the Misfits quite a few times. Now it's a little redundant to read "they sound like The Misfits" in every second review, because we don't anymore. We're still big fans of the Danzig and Graves-eras of the band, and you can still here the influence in our sound, but our music has lots of other influences as well, from Iron Maiden to Bauhaus. It hasn't become a curse, but I wish some journalist would be a little more creative.



FANG: Talk about your lyrics. They are dark, but there is a definite sense of play in them.

USHER: Thanks so much. That's exactly what we try to do and obviously, it's even harder for me since English is not my native language. I like to write my lyrics like I want a good book to be, with room for interpretation and the possibility of reading between the lines. Plus, it's also important to be not too serious all the time but have some fun and play with words. I'm always glad when people appreciate this because, for me, the lyrics are part of who we are as a band.

FANG: With the new album, are you adding anything to the stage show/tour to shock your audience?

USHER: We're not GWAR or Alice Cooper, and simply cannot afford huge theatrical shows, even though we'd love to work on more stuff. Right now we're working on things that don't have so much to do with the album, but with stage-decorations that fit our characters. Our Doc Caligari is building a kind of laboratory around his drum kit for example, with pipes full of blood and colored liquids and a machine that lets sparks fly. We'll see how that works out.

FANG: What kind of media support have you gotten from the horror world so far?

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USHER: Quite a bit actually and we're very proud of that. FANGORIA featured us online before, Rue Morgue just published an interview in the magazine. Bloody Disgusting, Fearnert, etc. supported us and the two big German magazine – Virus and Deadline – just have long stories in their new issue. We also had an appearance in Andreas Schnaas' movie VIOLENT SHIT 4. Our music was used in a few horror movies and we played live shows at the German "Weekend of Horrors" a couple of time and will sign autographs there this year. Hey, maybe Stephen King has even heard our song "Castle Rock" on NEW BLOOD, since I gave the CD to his son Joe Hill. And Rob Zombie wanted us as support on his last German tour, but the booking agency put another artist on the bill. I do hope there will be more things coming up, though. We'd love to play conventions in North America for example, and maybe work together with authors, filmmakers, comic-book artists.

FANG: The vision for The Other is distinct and clearly defined. Where do you plan to take the band next? Any plans to actually make a series of The Other-branded horror films?

USHER: Right now, a gifted German film student, Valerie Götz, is doing a stop-motion video for our song "Puppet on a String". But I really do have the dream that we can do a feature film on The Other some day. Like KISS did, only better and more serious. Jörg Buttgereit is a fan of The Other and wrote a preface to our new comic book. Maybe he's up for it. If not, I hope Tim Burton will leave Johnny Depp out for once and use The Other instead.

For more on The Other, head to their [official site](#) .