

THE COMET

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FEATURES

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Danzig; John Christ tells all about their tour

by Carolyn Fuss

Not so long ago he was just an average "John" in Catonsville High School; now, he is the John Christ that tours with the band Danzig. Christ (a surname that he uses as a pseudonym) is the band's guitarist.

While he was in high school, he played in some garage bands that barely did some gigs and battle of the bands with other groups from Odellawn, Landsdowne, and Catonsville.

As a senior at Catonsville High, he attended Catonsville Community College where he studied guitar and theory. After graduating from high school, he transferred to Towson State to major in jazz composition.

A few semesters short of his degree, the night before Christmas he received a call from a friend informing him of a band with a record that needed a guitar player. He auditioned once and got called back.

A week after getting the job, he moved all his things to New Jersey and dropped out of college. His parents "took me seriously when I said I was going to college, but they were used to death because it happened so often," noted Christ.

Christ believes that his addition to Danzig has caused the musical style

of the band to change. When he first got the job, the band was called Samhain. As Christ started working with them on some songs, the sound changed immediately because his style differed from their previous guitarist players.

Glenn Danzig, a former Misfit and now the lead singer and songwriter of Danzig, began to experiment in his songwriting which furthered the change in their music style to their current bluesy heavy rock form.

In Christ's opinion, Danzig's newest album *How the Gods Kill* is a definite progression from the previous two, *Danzig* and *Lucifuge*. He says,

"This one (album) has more of everything. It has simple songs that are just bluesy about certain themes, then the other songs are a lot more complicated—more changes, more dynamics. We've changed the sounds of the guitars and drums, and added keyboards in certain spots to enhance the sound."

He explains that one of the band's main goals during the production of the album was to sound more live than studio produced.

Christ's taste in music varies from heavy metal to classical. Some of his favorite groups and singers are Aerosmith, Ted Nugent, Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC, Alice in Chains, and Jimmy Hendrix. He also likes some jazz and the classical music of George Benson, John Coltrane, Bach, and Beethoven.

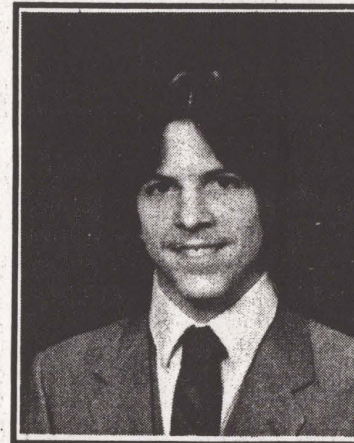
While on tour Danzig has opened for such bands as Slayer, Metallica, and Black Sabbath. In recent months, they've taken openers with them when they tour.

Danzig tours have taken him around America, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Norway, Denmark, France, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland. On tours to Southern Germany, a place where Danzig has had much success, he has found audiences to be especially loud and crazy. In other areas, the people are very polite or will even just stare up at the band with their mouths hanging down. In still other places, they spit on the band as a way of showing that they like them.

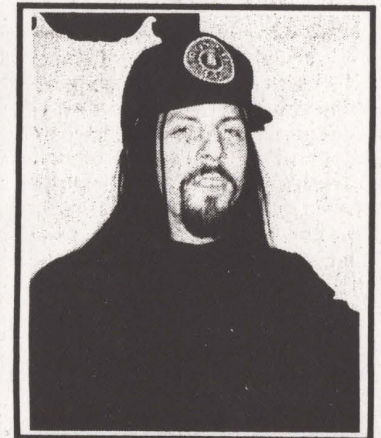
One specifically interesting concert that Christ recalls occurred in California this past Halloween. He remembers an over-packed outdoor amphitheater with wild teens dressed in all sorts of costumes, tossing burning logs up in the air with blankets, setting off firecrackers and bottle rockets, and smashing in the barricade by the stage.

"Immediately, 20 security guards were forced up onto the lip of the stage to keep the kids away. They were wrestling with the kids all night long, and we had to keep telling security to kneel down so people could see us. We're used to this, it happens quite often in tour, but usually in smaller places," Christ added.

Danzig's next step is to put out a video for "Sistinas" (a ballad on the



John Christ's senior year picture.



Christ, member of Danzig.

album) for MTV. They also plan to complete their next home video for "How the Gods Kill" which will include some videos, live footage, interviews with the band members, fans shots, location shots, and possibly a small booklet.

Christ admits that being in the music business isn't as easy and as glamorous as it looks. He describes being on the road as rough: "You get a little tour-happy living with the same guys day after day after day. At some point everybody hates everybody else, and you just have to get

through it." He remembers the days when he was struggling to make money as frustrating but also fun, since it was all new to him.

He advises all young, aspiring musicians to listen to a wide variety of music. He also suggests taking lessons, practicing, playing with the metronome, and going to see people perform.

"Buy all kinds of music. It's one of the best investments you can make in yourself. Everybody needs music; it's good for the soul, it's good for the mind."