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# DANZIG

## THE LEGACY

## CONTINUES

BY LORENA ALEXANDER & GREG FASOLINO

**D**anzig is power unleashed. It is a bridge between the supernatural and the carnal. It is also the most ferocious rock'n'roll your primal nightmares ever could have dreamed up, and all packed into one individual of unequalled intensity: Glenn Danzig.

Lodi, New Jersey's favorite son, Glenn first brought forth his inner demons with punk pioneers The Misfits some 12 years hence. Fusing roaring guitars with his melodic lionlike vocals and horror-movie obsessions, Danzig powered the band through one classic single ("Horror Business," "Bullet," and "Night Of The Living Dead" to name a few) after another, culminating in their Walk Among Us LP masterpiece. When he disintegrated The Misfits in 1983, he took the heart, soul and voice, gave it a new, more sinister body, and named it Samhain, after the pagan Halloween.

Samhain gave Glenn the chance to explore more complex musical ideas. More importantly, it freed his imagination to revel in mankind's ancient theories of the occult, via albums like November-Coming-Fire. Yet it too succumbed.

From the still-pulsing ashes has arisen the ultimate musical incarnation of this unman, the band Danzig. Richly metallic, a condensation of aggression, they are fated to awaken the mass consciousness to the frightening brilliance that bands such as Metallica have been adoring for years. Now is indeed the time for Glenn Danzig to reign, but in frenzied flesh ... not just blood. Stephen King would perhaps call him "The Interloper," noting his alien gaze and the dark pools of the macabre that well up inside his mind. I, however, just call him genius. — G.F.

**A**lthough it's nearing Halloween at the time of this encounter (how appropriate!), Greg and yours truly must resemble a pair of rambunctious kids waiting in line to meet Santa Claus. But this is no Macy's, and the dark, brawny figure stepping from the elevator and approaching us is no jolly old man with a white beard and red suit. It's Glenn Danzig — the infamous Glenn Danzig some might say. The legendary Glenn Danzig is more like it.

This is the man whose penetrating countenance some journalists have called monstrous, grim, frightening ... whose lyrical fascination with the macabre fans the flames of intrigue that shroud him ... whose musical legacy is filled with violent, lurid imagery. There are those who are wont to see Glenn Danzig as an angry creature born not of this earth, who tore his way out of the dank bowels of some rabid beast, a demon among us. But Glenn Danzig just happens to be a passionate singer whose songs show that he is a man who thinks about mortality, who thinks about worlds before and beyond the here and now, things on the dark side (perhaps exorcising a darker side of his own). Danzig is someone who thinks — period. He is a lone wolf, but the power that rages in his magnificent voice is not that of a heart filled with evil, but rather one that beats with an intensity which perhaps our numb and shallow world does not understand or accept.

Now at last we are face-to-face with the enigma himself. Even here in the reception area at Geffen Records the man has presence that could coax the wings off an angel. I recall the impact of that very first time these ears were seduced by his mighty vocal prowess. You see, Glenn Danzig's songs don't give me nightmares ... but the thought of what rock music would be without him does. — L.A.



**GF:** How did the change from Samhain to Danzig come about — how did you shift projects?

**GD:** Rick (Rubin, the band's producer) came down to the New Music Seminar which we (Samhain) were doing (1986) and he saw the band and he wanted to sign us and at that time we were talking to a bunch of labels. We decided to go with Def Jam (Rubin's label) 'cause we really liked the way Rick approached our band. He knew a lot of stuff about the band that the other labels didn't and there was really good commitment there. Eventually we knew we needed a new guitar player and I wanted to get rid of the drummer. We tried to make do with the drummer but it just couldn't happen so we got (Chuck) Biscuits, and then decided to do a name change because it wasn't Samhain any more. But we wanted to keep the style and some of the other stuff because it still had a relevance to what we were doing.

**LA:** What do you consider the biggest difference between Samhain and Danzig?

**GD:** I don't know. I wouldn't say there's that much difference. I think the songs are ... I won't say less experimental 'cause we're experimenting with a lot of different stuff, it's just different. But I'd say there's a bigger difference between The Misfits and Danzig. There you can see a real big difference. The stuff on the new record is more roots-oriented, and there's some of that in Samhain, but if you go all the way back to The Misfits, it's just fast, crazy. It's still brutal and dark but it's got an up-tempo feel to it, with the melody and all that stuff. You just have to take The Misfits and Danzig and, *phew!* Night and day.

**LA:** Did you ever feel like The Misfits became an albatross, that people would never let you go

beyond that phase?

**GD:** No.

**GF:** Do you see the Danzig project as more of a showcase for your voice than with previous ones? Now your voice has more prominence, but if you listen to old Misfits' live tapes, sometimes your voice got drowned out.

**GD:** Yeah, that was a problem in The Misfits. A lot of people were coming back and saying it just sounds like noise and we can't hear the vocals. I don't know what song you're doing. Stuff like that. The guys in the band

didn't care really; I mean they weren't tuning their guitars before they went onstage, and they didn't really care about any of that stuff. Somebody put it really well, they said the last year of The Misfits it was like watching an industrial band do The Misfits' songs. 'Cause it *was*. The amps were super loud, you couldn't tell what was what and there was something *kind* of like a vocal somewhere

in there. And that's one of the reasons that the band just eventually (*makes fizzling sound*), it was gone. With the new band, what we wanted is that people should be hearing what you're saying. And I agree.

A lot of people are really tuning into the whole band (bassist Eerie Von Stehman, ex-Circle Jerks/Black Flag/DOA drummer Chuck Biscuits, and guitarist John Christ). The buzz that I'm getting is that for once we have a real guitar player in the band and a real drummer, too. A great drummer. It's like a real band, you can't deny it. It doesn't rely on "Death! Murder! Destruction! Mosh!" (*He imitates speed riffs.*) People will relate to that.

**LA:** Does it matter to you whether commercial radio plays your stuff?

**GD:** Well, I'd rather let people hear us than f\*\*kin' Foreigner! Any station that wants to play our stuff, fine with me. Music is made for people to hear it, not to be buried somewhere. That's the thing I never liked about the punk thing — it was just like "This is punk and it's just for us." Well, who's us? It's everybody, it's not just for "these" people.

**GF:** With regard to your lyrics, what I like most about the lyrics on this album — I've noticed it on your work in the past, too — is how you have this persona of someone who's in the world but barely into it and somehow greater than human. Is that something that interests you, to be looking out at the world and being different, being stronger than that?

**GD:** Yeah. Well, songwriting is a lot of storytelling. But also, *your* world isn't *my* world. I don't know your world really, but it's not my world. This world isn't my idea of a world, so I just



## "Take The Misfits and Danzig and, *phew!* Night and day."



live in my own world. And I come into your world once in a while. And I bring my own reality with me. Your reality is not my reality. I don't want that reality, whatever the physical world out here is, I just don't like it so it just doesn't become my world any more. I create my own world for myself that I'm happy with.

**GF:** How do you feel about the way Metallica has championed you? Lots of kids who never knew The Misfits or Samhain and now Danzig see them wearing the shirts and covering your songs. How does that make you feel?

**GD:** (laughs) I don't really care. I mean it's great —

those guys are great guys, I'm friends with them.

And they've always wanted to do those covers.

**LA:** Do you like their covers of "Last Caress" and "Green Hell"?

**GD:** Yeah. Two nights in England (where Danzig was opening act on the Metallica tour) I went up and sang with 'em, which was kind of wild.

**GF:** People went crazy?

**GD:** Yeah!

**LA:** Have you considered writing something specifically for Metallica to do?

**GD:** No.

**GF:** Is being a songwriter something that means a lot to you? Do your songs just come out or do you

take a lot of time on them?

**GD:** I do. For every song that makes it to a record, there's probably about five to ten that get thrown out.

**GF:** When some people hear the Danzig record they hear a lot more Doors influence than on your previous records. Would you refute that?

**GD:** *Spin* thought it sounded like Elvis.

**LA:** You always sound like Elvis.

**GD:** My three favorite singers are Jim Morrison, Elvis Presley mainly, and Bill Medley from the Righteous Brothers, he's a great singer. So if anyone makes a connection there, that's fine.

**GF:** There really aren't many people in rock —

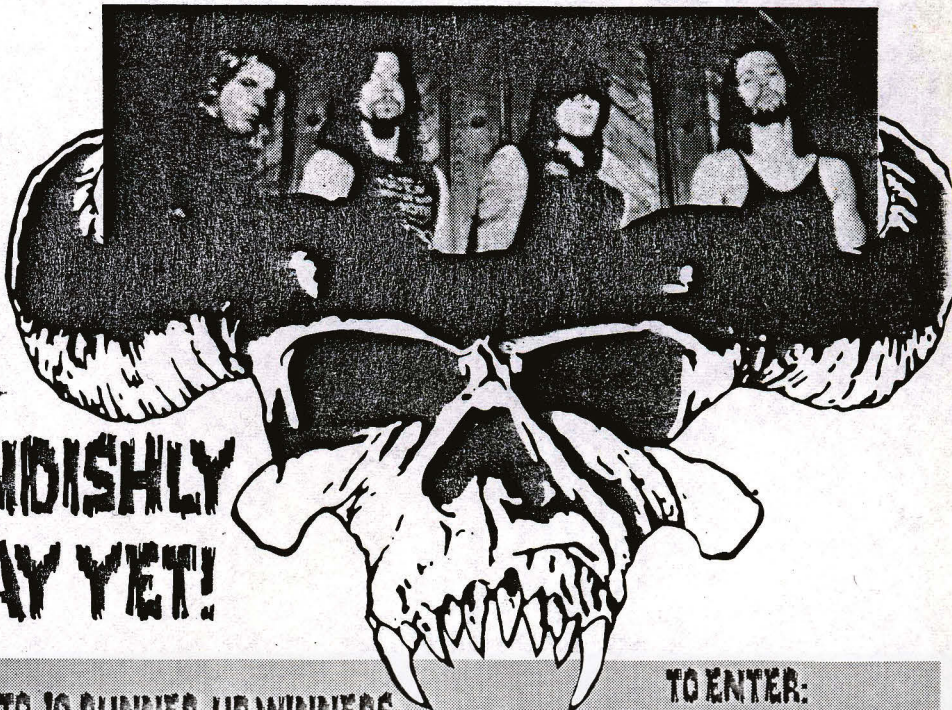
**GD:** That can sing! Because every heavy metal band, don't forget, their main influence is Dio! (We all laugh.) That sounds like Ethel Merman to me! (Imitates high-pitched Ethel Merman voice singing) "There's no business like show business!" It's the same f\*\*kin' thing!

**GF:** Now that your avenues are more open for this band, do you have any kind of longterm plan for it?

**GD:** Yeah, we want to be really successful at what we do and put out great albums, albums that'll just live forever. ■

# DANZIG CONTEST

## OUR MOST FIENDISHLY FUN GIVEAWAY YET!



### TO THE TOP PRIZE WINNER:

- From Glenn Danzig's very own collection, a genuine skull autographed by Glenn, Eerie, John and Chuck
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- A *FACES* t-shirt

### TO 10 RUNNER-UP WINNERS:

- An autographed cassette copy of "Danzig"
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### TO ENTER:

Tell us why you want to be the recipient of a skull from Glenn Danzig's personal collection. Keep it brief (under 30 words) and we'll have Glenn himself judge the most imaginative entries and decide who should be the grand prize winner. (Runner-up winners will be determined by a random drawing.) Please type or print your entry to ensure legibility. Don't forget to include your name, address, phone number and T-shirt size (S-M-L-XL). Mail to: Danzig Contest, *FACES Magazine*, 63 Grand Avenue, Suite 230, River Edge, NJ 07661. ONLY ONE ENTRY PER PERSON. All entries must be received by midnight March 3rd, 1989 to qualify. Prizewinners will be selected on March 6th, 1989.\*

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