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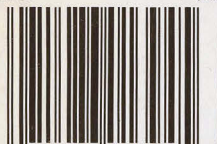
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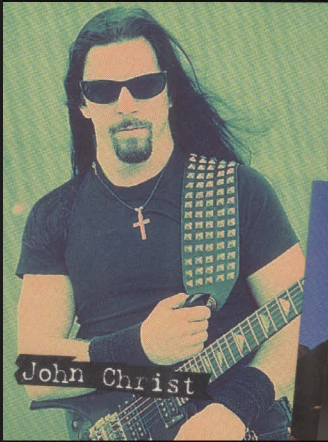
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DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **PASSING NOTES**
The readers respond.
- 8 **FUTURE SHOCKERS**
Stick, Paw and Life Of Agony!
- 10 **PRIME CUTS**
Danzig's John Christ:
More than just "Mother."
- 40 **RECORD REVIEWS**
Pantera, Crunt and more!
- 88 **THE PIT**
Concert Reviews: Aerosmith,
Black Sabbath and more!
- 129 **Marty Friedman's
FULL SHRED**
Dual-guitar harmony.
- 130 **BLUES POWER**
Double stops.
- 131 **WORLD GUITAR**
Son of the Claw.
- 132 **RIFFS**
The latest and greatest in
guitar gear, books & videos.
- 138 **END PAGE**
ADA Super Give-A-Way!

Cover: Chris Haskett and Henry Rollins of the Rollins Band by Michael Sexton

This page: Chris Haskett and Henry Rollins by Michael Sexton, John Christ of Danzig by Markus Cuff,
and Marty Friedman by Doug Crouch

PRIME CUTS

john christ

"People really don't
have a clue as to what
I'm all about"
-John Christ

DANZIG'S REPERTOIRE OF HEAVY HITS WILL HAVE YOU CRYING FOR YOUR MOTHER

BY JEFF KISS

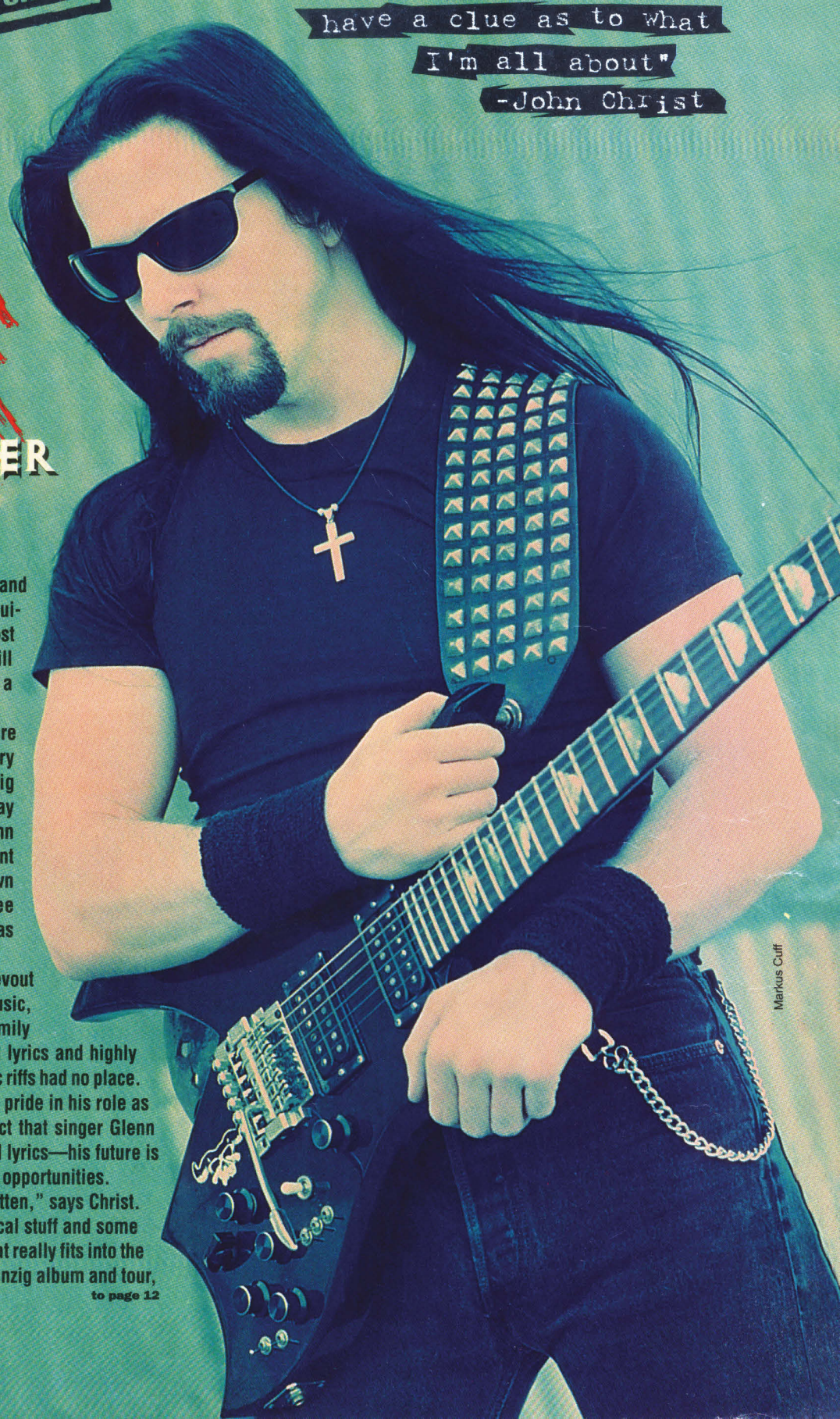
KNOWN FOR DARK, BROODING RIFFS and eerie, death-like guitar runs, Danzig guitarist John Christ is one of metal's most intriguing and respected players. But still the devilish-looking Christ feels he's a misunderstood musician.

"Danzig has always been a departure for me as a guitarist—my style is very much unlike what you hear on Danzig records," says Christ. "I pretty much play what's right for the song, or what Glenn [Danzig] and [producer] Rick Rubin want me to play. I save my own style for my own music. Even though we've done three albums, people really don't have a clue as to what I'm all about."

So what is John Christ all about? A devout student of blues, classical and jazz music, he grew up in a conservative musical family where inverted crosses, overtly sexual lyrics and highly amplified, Tony Iommi-inspired metallic riffs had no place. While Christ certainly enjoys and takes pride in his role as Danzig's sole axeman—despite the fact that singer Glenn Danzig writes most of the music and all lyrics—his future is ripe with other, more personal musical opportunities.

"I have a bunch of songs already written," says Christ. "There's some jazzy stuff, some classical stuff and some straight-ahead rock 'n' roll—nothing that really fits into the Danzig mold. I figure I'll do this next Danzig album and tour,

to page 12



Markus Cuff

JOHN CHRIST

then I'll start looking for a record deal. If no one wants it, I'll just record it and put it out myself.

"It'll just be a side-project in the beginning, but we'll see what it leads to. If it starts to take off, I'd go with it in a heartbeat."

But before Christ branches off on his own, he has to finish recording the next Danzig album. The album, the follow-up to 1992's *How The Gods Kill* and last year's *Thrall—Demonsweatlive* EP, is close to completion, and the band hopes to release it later this summer.

"To use Glenn's words, this album will be more 'cerebral,'" says Christ. "It'll be very vibe-oriented—not quite as involved as *How The Gods Kill*. Some of the songs are just one or two parts. You might here some acoustic guitar here and there and maybe a few other surprises, but generally it'll be a pretty heavy album."

John Christ recently took time out from Danzig's recording schedule to discuss some of the finer moments in the band's three-album catalog—from "Twist Of Cain" to "Her Black Wings" to "How The Gods Kill" and, of course, "Mother," a song that became a hit five years after its initial release.

"Music is a lot grungier today, more punk-rock influenced and less flashy by guitar standards," says Christ. "A song like 'Moth-

er' never would have been a hit five years ago—but now it fits right in."

"TWIST OF CAIN"

Danzig (American, 1988)

"At this point we're tired of playing that song—but it's still fun to do live. We like to pick up the tempo a bit and I'll add some cool whammy-bar stuff in the fills. It's got a real sing-along type of chorus so the kids really go nuts when we play it.

"We started writing that song even before Biscuits [Chuck, drums] joined the band. At first we started recording it in G, then at the last minute we decided that A was better. We kept the drum tracks as they were and re-recorded the guitars, bass and vocals. Not many people know this, but James Hetfield came down and recorded some backing vocals on that track."

"SHE RIDES"

Danzig (American, 1988)

"Our first sex song. [laughs] It's funny because it's such a stripped-down song—just a couple of guitar tracks and almost no bass. In fact, you can hardly hear the bass on our first album. "She Rides" probably has the best vocal performance on the album, though. There are also some really weird background noises and moaning sounds on it. It's nice to know that girls are still taking off their clothes to 'She Rides'

in strip clubs all across the country." [laughs]

"MOTHER"

Danzig (American, 1988)

"I think the reason why "Mother" has become a hit so many years after it first came out is because the music scene has changed so much. You never would have heard any Danzig song on the radio three years ago, let alone on a Top 40 station, which are all now playing 'Mother.' People's tastes have changed, and now that the old punk generation has switched over into the harder rock, the punk sound is popular again. I mean, a lot of those Seattle bands are old punk rockers—they just changed their style. And the fans have grown up with them and changed as well.

"'Mother' actually started out as a punk rock song—just a lot of down-strumming, going from B to A to G real quick. But Rick Rubin pretty much co-wrote the way it ended up on the record. He came in and totally changed the guitar riffs, the choruses and all the drum fills and beats—they were all Rick's. In fact, he was all over that first record, changing things around. And I think he changed things for the better.

"The remix of 'Mother' that's getting played all the time now is basically the same song, but with some crowd noises and a little

to page 134

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reverb thrown in. And they also let me fix the last note in the solo, which I didn't like on the original version.”

“LONG WAY BACK FROM HELL”

Danzig II—Lucifuge (American, 1990)

“It was interesting to start off a song with dive bombs. I hadn't done anything like that before. In fact, we worked on the beginning of that song for a long time before we finally got it right—it always sounded too empty. But when Eerie [*Von, bass*] came in with that galloping bass-line, it all kind of fell into place. It has a lot of energy to it and was probably one of the best songs on that album.”

“HER BLACK WINGS”

Danzig II—Lucifuge (American, 1990)

“People have told me that ‘Her Black Wings’ is a rip off of Black Sabbath’s ‘Zero The Hero,’ and they’re pretty much right. [*laughs*] We were even joking about it when we wrote the song. Sometimes in the studio I’d play the solo to ‘Zero The Hero’ and it would fit in ‘Her Black Wings’ perfectly. We knew it, but we went with it anyway. It basically came together in the studio, and Rick Rubin had a lot to do with it.”

“I’M THE ONE”

Danzig II—Lucifuge (American, 1990)

“We actually recorded ‘I’m The One’ for the first record, but we decided to save it for this record. It fit the mood of the second album much better. Glenn wanted to do that song for a long time—he even knew what kind of video he wanted it to have long before we did it. It’s a cool song: just some guitar and vocals and little a hi-hat in the background.”

“KILLER WOLF”

Danzig II—Lucifuge (American, 1990)

“Some of my favorite little guitar pieces are in ‘Killer Wolf.’ I use the neck pickup on it to go for a real interesting bluesy feel. Our engineer, Brendan O’Brien—who was just a peon at the time—really helped me out on this song. He gave me a lot of cool ideas for riffs and solos.”

“TIRED OF BEING ALIVE”

Danzig II—Lucifuge (American, 1990)

“The one thing I remember about ‘Tired Of Being Alive’ is the very last riff, the last phrase of the solo. I think I stole it from somebody, but I can’t remember who. [*laughs*] I like this song because I get to do back-up vocal harmonies. We also used some guitar sounds that we haven’t used since—bluesy, but a little cleaner and not quite as heavy as we wanted for the next album. I pretty much nailed the solo in a couple of takes, and though I wanted to keep trying to make it better, everyone thought it was fine the way it was, so we left it. Lyrically, I think the words are about the way

“HOW THE GODS KILL”

Danzig III—How The Gods Kill

(American, 1992)

“That was a real tricky song to write and record. It has so many level jumps and changes in the sound of the guitar. In fact, it was what prompted me to get a new rig. [*laughs*] I went from using just a couple of Marshall amps and a little eq pedal to a VHT Pit Bull head, a VHT power amp and a Rocktron Intelverb unit. I had to go from a very soft section to a very loud section to an in-between section, and I needed a good switching system to keep the voltages right. Now I just hit a button and I go up and down with no problem. If you listen closely, you can hear a hissing noise in the vocals in the intro because we were using a real noisy vocal preamp. We tried everything to get rid of it, but Glenn’s performance was so good that we decided to leave it—the mood was just right.”

“SISTINAS”

Danzig III—How The Gods Kill

(American, 1992)

“We were in the studio recording drum tracks, and while we were on a break Glenn picked up my guitar and started getting an idea for a song. Then I came up with a little chorus part, and in about an hour or two we had the basic structure of the song. He wanted it to have a Roy Orbison type of vibe with some timpani and keyboards. We used an old Fender amp with a vibrato on it, and we cranked up the vibrato to get those really big chords—it was perfect for that song. I don’t mind playing it, but when we do it live I really don’t get to do much. It’s basically just a C arpeggio.”

“IT’S COMING DOWN”

Thrall—Demonsweatlive

(American, 1993)

“The way that whole EP came together was pretty funny. We were off the road and Glenn called me one day and told me we were going into the studio to record an EP. There were very few overdubs on that record—we just went in and recorded real quick. To be honest, I hate the way that record sounds—the quality is horrible! [*laughs*] There’s some good chunk in the guitar on ‘It’s Coming Down,’ but it really does sound like it was done quickly. The cool thing about the record was that the band got to play together and record tracks together—that was fun.”