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# MUSICIAN

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## ROCK'S MAN OF MYSTERY

# DANZIG

DON WAS & GLYN JOHNS  
ON PRODUCING THE  
ROLLING STONES, BEATLES,  
DYLAN



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BY JON YOUNG

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PHOTOGRAPH BY NORMAN WATSON



DANZIG

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KNOWS THE POWER  
OF THE DARK SIDE

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HE SITS IN A DARK HOTEL ROOM IN SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY ON A WARM SPRING AFTERNOON. HE IS WEARING BLACK. HE IS ALWAYS WEARING BLACK, EXCEPT FOR THE MASSIVE TATTOO ON HIS MASSIVE LEFT ARM: "WOLFS BLOOD" READS THE INSCRIPTION (IN BLUE AND RED), UNDER WHICH ARE RENDERINGS OF

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HAND-LETTERING BY BERNARD MAISNER





various skeletal creatures and a vampire bat. Yet his features are surprisingly soft: the thin dark hair that splays toward his shoulders, the frown that strives to seem menacing but just as often suggests a pout, the speaking voice, somber but thoughtful as he quietly makes a point.

"If I take Satan or a murderer, and put him in a song, all of a sudden I'm supposed to *be* that person. Whatever happened to literary license?"

Who *is* this guy? In an age of instant celebrity, where the lines become ever more sharply drawn between the cynically fake and the achingly sincere, Glenn Danzig remains a figure of intrigue, and an enigma. His public persona is at once cartoonish and emotionally naked, his messages cryptic and clear, his band's music gutbucket primal and subtly sophisticated. Inhabiting that strange nether space between boomers and genXers, punk and pop, metal and melody, caveman and crooner, he grabs hold of the spotlight and sucks it into the black hole of his inscrutable self. He is, perhaps, rock's last mystery man.

It's a testimony to the power of his hellish visions that Danzig, man and band, has inspired adulation and antipathy over the course of six years, three LPs and last year's *Thrall-Demonsweatlive* EP, which contained the breakthrough hit "Mother." Backed by brutish henchmen John Christ (guitar), Eerie Von (bass) and Chuck Biscuits (drums), the singer spins dark, angry tales like "Twist of Cain," "Snakes of Christ," "How the Gods Kill" and "Am I Demon" with grim panache. As the players grind out brusque, bluesy hard rock, he conjures a spectre of blood, vengeance and supernatural possession in a deep, authoritative voice that prompts comparisons with Jim Morrison.

Given his fondness for otherworldly jive, it's not surprising that Danzig has been suspected even of Satanism, and that some have been frightened away by the group's aura. He recounts with amusement how one prominent producer was too scared to work with the group. Yet he shrugs off opportunities to explicate his image. "With this band, what you see is what you get," he smiles, deftly revealing nothing. Asked if he objects to being turned into a devilish caricature by the press, which is likely to occur with increasing frequency as Danzig infiltrates the pop mainstream, he seems momentarily taken aback. "You know I never really..." he says, then lets the thought go slack and shrugs. "I can only go, 'Typical.'"

The band's latest, *Danzig 4p*, won't clear the air at all. Featuring chillers like "When You Call on the Dark," "Goin' Down to Die" (under consideration for Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*) and "Invocation," which Glenn cheerfully describes as "about a demon

fucking somebody," the new album is a looser, less stylized, more accessible work that's sure to build on the popularity generated by "Mother." Pondering commercial success, he admits, "I wouldn't mind. All of us have worked really hard, and if we see something out of it, that'd be fine. But we're not gonna write a song to get on the radio. We're not gonna change what we do."

Danzig takes "Mother" with a grain of salt, since the song was six years old when the live EP version took off, and balks at crediting the song for the band's steadily growing audience. "I'm glad MTV played 'Mother,' but we had a loyal following already. Actually, I'd rather have it happen like that than the way it does with some bands, where MTV makes them. When they don't play the videos anymore, their popularity is gone. Thank God that won't happen to us. We got our fans the hard way, playing on the road."

Danzig, 35, has been doing that longer than some of his video-come-lately fans might surmise. In some ways he's the prototypical Jersey Guy, replete with muscles and plodding work ethic—the Bizarro World Springsteen. He went to high school in nearby Lodi from the late '70s to mid-'80s, he led the Misfits, a respected New York punk band that put out records on its own label, called Plan 9 in a nod to bad-movie auteur Ed Wood. "I'm reticent to talk about that stuff, because it was a long time ago. It should have been discussed when it was pertinent," he says dismissively, as if trying to wipe away tracks from his past. Still, he admits the group "was a lot of fun, although eventually it became very limiting"—partly because Glenn could sing melodies, a talent rarely in demand among punks.

Nearer to Danzig's heart was his next group, Samhain, named for a Celtic ritual. Including bassist Eerie Von, another Lodi alumnus, Samhain was "a coming of age, a deeper approach to music" that laid the groundwork for his current band. Samhain toured constantly, attracting up to 2000 people a night and generating a buzz at the 1986 New Music Seminar in New York. Following a midnight set, Danzig recalls, "we were talking to some labels in the dressing room after the show, and this wild card shows up, saying, 'You guys were incredible! I want to sign your band!' I didn't know who he was. He looked like somebody from ZZ Top."

He was Def American honcho Rick Rubin, who'd signed Slayer at the same venue one year before. Danzig came by Rubin's office on lower Broadway to learn more. "The company was still a street-level company and he was running it out of his loft apartment, which was a typical New York place: garbage everywhere, stacks of records tipped over, phones ringing constantly, speakers blasting. It was pretty cool.



"We went out, had some pizza, walked around town. He told me he saw us as a real band, not a trendy band, and though we could get a little more focused, he thought we had more to say than some groups. I liked that."

So Samhain became Danzig, and Rubin and Glenn set about sharpening the focus. Out went the deadwood and in came drummer Chuck Biscuits, a veteran of punk institutions Black Flag and the Circle Jerks, and guitarist John Christ, who was knocking around Baltimore in bar bands while pursuing a music degree. The lineup hasn't changed since.

Not that everyone's real chummy. There's obvious friction between Danzig and Christ, a tension that's been great for the band's musical vision, but hasn't exactly bonded their relationship. Control is essential to Glenn, who writes the songs alone and tells the others how to play, even the lead guitarist. "As far as John's ideas, I don't know of any ideas he has," he says baldly. "I write most of the guitar parts—always have, in every band. You might see that as control. I see it as more of a producer's role. Sometimes John does a bunch of different lead tracks and I piece them together. It's like conducting."

Others might think such dominance reflects a lack of confidence in his players. "We're not concerned with what some people think," he shoots back. "We know what works for the band. If someone wants to get his rocks off in a different way, he goes outside."

Love or loathe the music, there's no denying Danzig can strike a nerve. The horror-movie stuff is amusing enough, if you're attuned to the flamboyant excesses of "Hellraiser" or "Texas Chainsaw Massacre." But he's also adept at evoking the confusion, frustration and disappointment of mundane life. From "Mother's" invitation to an intimidating new world of adult experience, to the furious assault on mainstream religion in *How the Gods Kill's* "Godless," to the new "Can't Speak," a stunning depiction of helpless desperation, Danzig throws an emotional life preserver to those who feel overwhelmed or unloved, letting them know they're not alone.

He isn't surprised that his listeners, especially younger ones, relate to his evocations of rage and loneliness. "Most kids are really frustrated. They're living under things I didn't have to live under when I was a kid, like AIDS and guns in school. We had guns and knives in school, but not 9mm's. It wasn't like today. Why do you see so many people end their lives so young? Life looks bleak now."

He describes his own upbringing as stormy. "I wasn't a nice kid, but I wasn't the worst kid. The worst kids I knew are now dead or in jail. I could have been one of them if I'd made the wrong decision. I

ended up on that road on a number of occasions and had to steer myself back."

What made the difference? "Who knows? Maybe a force that you don't know about. I believe in controlling your destiny, but you hit crossroads where you have to make the ultimate decision. Destiny will try and take you in a certain direction, but you've gotta help it along." Today, he says, "I definitely believe in a yin and a yang, good and evil. My religion is a patchwork of whatever is real to me. If I can draw the inner strength to get through the day from something, that's religion." And the supernatural stuff? "There are definitely forces at play that people could tune into, but don't. If you think that all that exists is what you see here, you're not seeing it all.

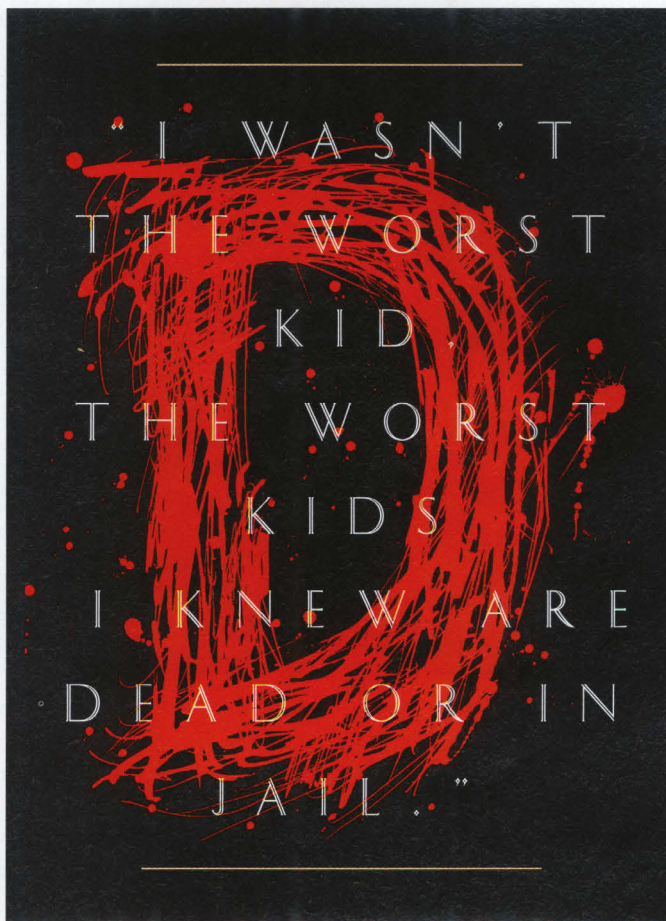
"Religion is such a big part of the world," he goes on more philosophically. "It's caused some great things and some terrible things. It motivates people to commit murder, to commit actions normal-thinking people wouldn't do. So any time you question religion, you're sticking a piece of metal in the spokes, stopping the wheel from turning. You want people to reevaluate things and think for themselves, and they want you to stop thinking before you realize it's all bullshit. If I accuse the Catholic church of genocide—and we have history to back it up—they don't want that known."

Does he really believe "they," meaning the powers in control, are monitoring what Danzig says?

"You better believe they are! That's why they'll try to write me and other people off as Satanists. You lose credibility if you're a cartoon character. If they'd found a way to market us like they did a lot of the alternative bands, nobody would be scared of us."

Informed that *Musician* stands to lose advertising for putting Danzig on its cover, he seems momentarily surprised, then grumbles, "That's typical of America, a repressive society bordering on a fascist society. That's covert censorship, where people don't know that things are being censored around them."

Danzig espouses an elaborate network of theories, some of which will be familiar to conspiracy buffs, to explain our screwed-up world. But we digress. He's equally passionate about music. "I like so many different singers. Roy Orbison [who recorded Danzig's 'Life Fades Away' for the *Less Than Zero* soundtrack], Bill Medley, Johnny Cash, of course. I remember as a kid being in a record store and seeing this Cash album. He had a guitar slung over his shoulder, a scar on his chin and he was all in black. Even then I could tell he had been through some shit. There was a rebelliousness there that you knew wasn't hype."



# CAREFUL WITH THAT AXE, JOHN CHRIST

PLAYING GUITAR with Danzig is a fairly simple matter, says John Christ. All you have to do is understand what Glenn Danzig doesn't like, and work around it.

For instance? "If it sounds too normal, he doesn't like it," explains Christ. "If it sounds too rock 'n' roll, he doesn't like it. If it sounds too happy, he doesn't like it."

Which leaves—what? "The guitar parts in Danzig are all very simple," he explains. "But once the basic idea is there, then I make it Danzig—which means an extra chord change here and there, short fills to break up the parts, and some of the artificial harmonic things in single notes and in the chord structure with some sustained feedback thrown in, to make the individual parts a bit more interesting and full."

Things start with Danzig's demos, which are, erm, basic. "Well, the way he did it this time, he'd have a song on one of those little microcassette recorders, just his voice going *dubnn-dubnn-dubdubdub-DUHNN-dubnn-dubdubdub*—you know, stuff like that. Then he and I would sit there with guitars; once we got one or two guitar parts, Eerie [Von] and Chuck [Biscuits] would come in, and they'd kinda start jamming to it. We do a lot of mid-tempo songs," he notes. "Danzig likes to go from really soft to really loud. We like the big power that comes when everything is crashing in."

But the band can throw curves. "On 'Son of the Morning Star,' we actually start out with jazz chords and a funky jazz beat. All of a sudden, we kick



into this heavy riff pattern. Then we come back to the original jazz feel, but in a rock version. It's nice for me, because out of all this powerchord stuff, there's some real harmony going on."

Christ, it turns out, is a harmony fiend. Glenn, of course, is not. "Once in a while, he'll throw in some harmony vocals, but it's not like Alice in Chains, where it's built on that minor-third vocal harmony sound. Also, when you get into powerchords, it's hard to inject a whole lot of harmony."

So Christ opts for color instead. "The parts that I do are almost afterthoughts, to highlight some of the implied keys and harmonies that do exist. Slightly dissonant harmonies are what work with Danzig, usually 7ths and 4ths. I'll also throw in some dissonant type of patterns—half-steps, weird diminished 5th intervals. Every record, we have a diminished 5th in there somewhere. 'Brand New God,' from the new album, is the same thing; that B to D to B to the F is the tritone that gives it that sound. So there are a lot of weird things in there."

Except in the solos, which are generally straight pentatonic blues. "It doesn't always start out that way, but that's really Glenn's favorite style. Sometimes I'll play the blues scale, and put in variations which imply different modes that apply to the chord structure, just so you'll hear something different. It's funny, because when I see people transcribe some of the solos, they'll say, 'Well, here he shifted to such-and-such mode.'" Christ laughs. "No, I just played a couple half-steps in between. But you can notate it any way you want."

J.D. CONSIDINE

He was understandably delighted when the Man in Black included Danzig's "Thirteen" on his recent *American Recordings*, produced, not so coincidentally, by Rick Rubin. Glenn beams, "I wrote another song for him recently and he liked it too."

Elvis Presley also rings Danzig's bell. "Eerie's the big Elvis fan, but I really like his voice. For me, the best record is the Memphis record, when he had to prove he wasn't a joke. The Sun stuff is good, but his voice is better on the Memphis record. There's real maturity there."

As for comparisons to other singers, he says, "The Morrison thing I can see. Orbison, maybe, in some of the phrasing. Howlin' Wolf would be more accurate than all of them, 'cause I don't think any of those other guys ever screamed the way I scream, and Howlin' Wolf did."

Danzig's got other irons in the fire these days. A comics fanatic, he's starting his own company, beginning with a book of illustrations by Frank Frazetta. "He's a very cool guy and he's been dicked over by a lot of people. I'm gonna make sure he gets paid." He speaks proudly of his friendship with the late Jack Kirby, of "Fantastic Four" and "Captain America" fame, recalling how he gave the legendary illustrator moral support in his legal battles with Marvel. At the same time he seems oddly defensive about his passion, taking pains to explain that he reads books, too.

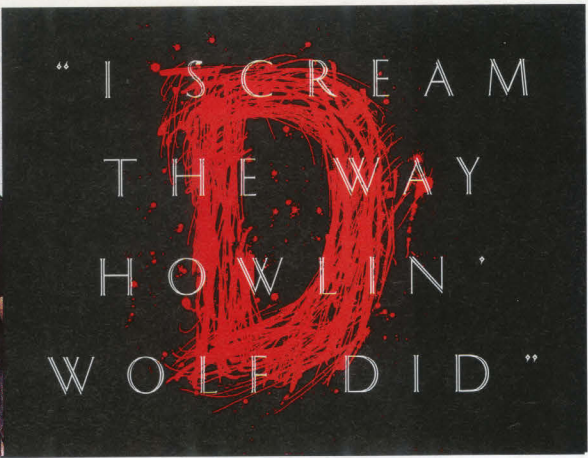
The phone rings, twice. The rest of the band is waiting on the tour bus, ready for the soundcheck at the Garden State Art Center a few

miles down the turnpike in Holmdel. By the time Danzig arrives at the open-air amphitheater, however, four hours before their scheduled 8:30 p.m. set sandwiched between opening act Suicidal Tendencies and top-billed Metallica, the odds of getting a soundcheck are still sorting out their own mix, scrambling to cope after seeing a fancy new digital system crash.

Looking around the room dominated by Metallica's bustling staff, which seems to be in a state of mild panic, he muses, "My oldest brother—I have two older and one younger brother—used to be a road manager, so I can see how much things have changed. Back then a roadie just moved the equipment; there was no high-tech stuff. Metallica has a 50- or 60-man crew. That used to be an audience," he laughs.

I ask Glenn how his parents feel about his career. "When I was a kid, they didn't want me to be in music. Now they're proud," he says, adding that he got his dad an autographed photo of Johnny Cash. Will the folks attend the show? "I won't let 'em," he says tersely. "They wouldn't get it."

Polishing off his greens, Danzig heads for the upstairs dressing room. "We've gotta go over a new song we're gonna play for Eerie's deceased uncle." The rest of the band mills around the building, shooting the breeze with the worker bees and schmoozers. In the tiny Danzig dressing room, where a modest buffet of fresh fruit and candy



bars brightens the scene, I grill laconic drummer Chuck Biscuits.

He scoffs at the likelihood of big-time success. "We'll see. I've heard that so many times. People are expecting a big explosion after 'Mother,' but it never seems to work that way." He's happy with his contribution to the new album, however. "I've had problems with the drum sounds on previous records.

They've been too flat, too controlled. In the past, Rick has been into that dry, tight AC/DC sound. This one was looser, with more spaces, more noise—all the good shit I like."

Chuck and Glenn go back to the days when Black Flag and the Misfits shared a bill. Asked to compare playing behind Danzig and former Flag frontman Henry Rollins, he snickers. "It's like the difference between night and day. Henry doesn't really sing, does he? This band has melodies."

He feels closer to his current bandmates—some of 'em, anyway. "Me and Eerie and Glenn have a certain amount in common because we all collect toys and we were all punk-rockers. But we would never have known John. We come from two totally different worlds. When I was in punk bands, he was in heavy metal bar bands. If I'd gone to Baltimore and met him on a bus, he and his friends would've beat the shit out of me."

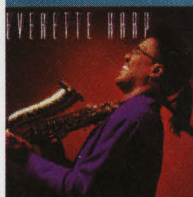
As we talk, a member of the Danzig crew decorates the dressing room with brightly colored Elvis Presley tapestries, the kind found at cheesy roadside souvenir stands, as well as a portrait of Christ (Jesus, not John) with arms outstretched. Some zany graffiti artist has drawn a cigarette in the Savior's hand.

Glenn's oldest friend in the band, Eerie Von, is responsible for the portable Elvis shrine. The two go back to the latter days of the Misfits, when Eerie drummed with his own band, Rosemary's Babies. Eerie switched to bass at Danzig's behest—"He said I had too much personality and ought to be out front"—and hasn't budged since, though he's lost some of his youthful zing over the years. "I used to headbang like a maniac, but now I have to wear a back brace onstage. If I made a lot of sudden movements, I'd probably kill myself."

More than a dozen of Eerie's relatives are on the guest list for the evening's show. "My Uncle

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Tony would have been here, but he just died, which is a drag," he says softly. "He was a big fan of the band and promoted us everywhere

## "MOTHER"'S LITTLE HELPERS

**J**OHN CHRIST's main guitar is a 1983 B.C. Rich Rich Bitch, strung with custom D'Aquisto strings. "It's a freak, a really good-sounding B.C. Rich," he says. "When they were originally coming out, they were loaded with DiMarzio Super Distortions, which was the style at the time. But the sound was a little bit too hot, so I loaded it up with some Paul Reed Smith pickups, and all of a sudden, that guitar came to life."

The Bitch goes through a Custom Audio 4x4 Audio Controller (with a Boss GE-7 seven-band graphic EQ in the effect loop, integral to Christ's sound) on its way to a VHT Pitbull built by Stevie Freyette. "It has a really strong low end and good, full power," he observes. The 4x4 is connected to a Rocktron Patchmate, a switcher/processor that handles audio routing to Christ's effects, channel switching for his amp, noise reduction and pedal-activated volume control.

A Custom Audio RS-10 MIDI Foot Control Pedal controls the Patchmate, allowing Christ to switch in and out of his Boss SE-70 and Rocktron Intelliverb multieffect units. Audio outputs from the effects are routed (via the Patchmate) to a Custom Audio Dual Stereo Mini Mixer whose stereo outputs are fed to a two-channel VHT 2150 power amp.

Reproducing the sound of the Pitbull and the 2150's stereo output requires three cabinets, each loaded with four Celestion Vintage 30 speakers. Onstage, Pitbull's sits in the center, flanked on either side by the wet stereo mix. A tap on the foot controller can change Christ's sound from a dry mono blast to an echoing cathedral. "I can program in sounds for *How the Gods Kill* and make it sound almost exactly like the record," he says. "I just have to hit one switch there, and boom! The changes are as tight as they can be."

EERIE VON plays a Fender Jazz Bass strung with D'Addarios, plugged into an Ampeg amp paired with an SVT speaker cabinet.

Gripping Promark sticks, CHUCK BISCUITS pounds away on a '70s-era Ludwig kit with a Ludwig piccolo snare drum and Zildjian Earthride cymbals.

GLENN DANZIG sings through whatever mike is available.

he went. But my crazy Aunt Barbara, his wife, will be here. They've been behind me since I started playing. They always said to me, 'You're gonna be big some day.' If that ever happens, I'm gonna come back with a car carrier full of Cadillacs and say, 'Pick your favorite one.' There's a lot of people I'd love to do that for." Just like Elvis!

Does Eerie's family have a problem with Danzig's more gruesome songs?

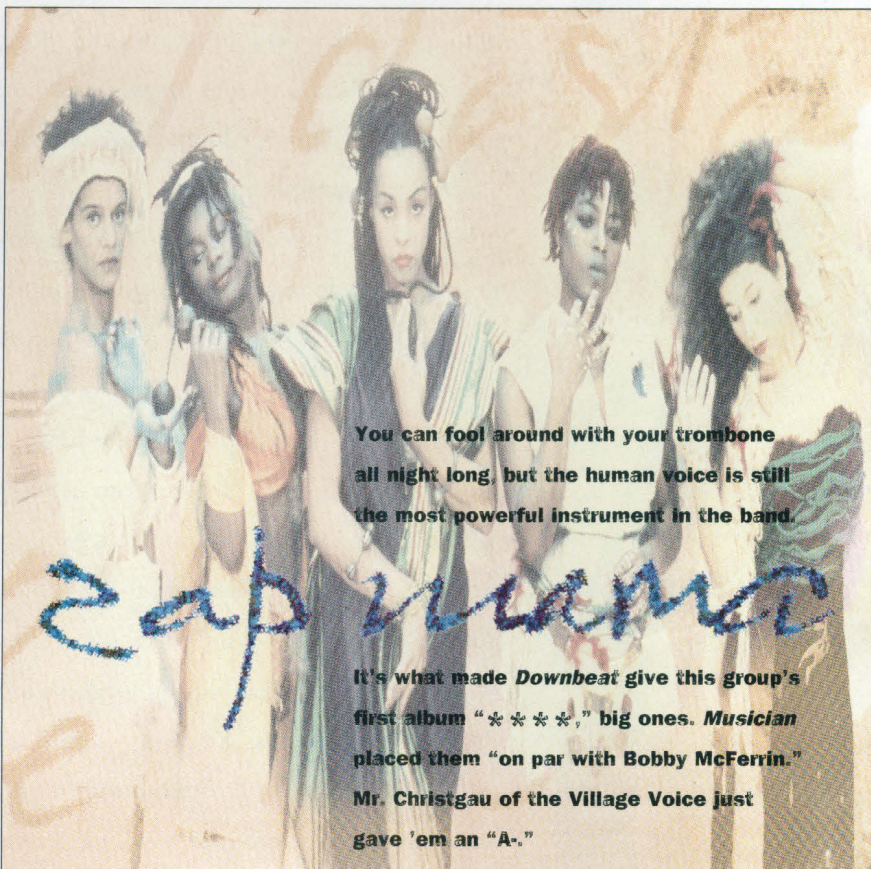
"I told 'em to ignore that. My mom's pretty high up in her church—I think she's an elder—and I told her, 'You might hear some-

body say something bad about us, but you know what I'm about.'"

Just before they're set to go on, Glenn storms into the dressing room to rally the troops. "We're doing our full set and if anyone wants us offstage, let them come and get us! You guys know we're doing 'Goin' Down to Die' for Uncle Tony, right?"

"All right, let's do Eerie's relatives proud!"

Despite no soundcheck, the show cooks. Limited to less than an hour, Danzig storms through old stuff like "She Rides" and, of course, "Mother," and a [cont'd on page 95]



You can fool around with your trombone all night long, but the human voice is still the most powerful instrument in the band.

It's what made *Downbeat* give this group's first album "\*\*\*\*," big ones. *Musician* placed them "on par with Bobby McFerrin." Mr. Christgau of the *Village Voice* just gave 'em an "A-."

And Jon Pareles of the *New York Times* went to see Zap Mama and reported that the audience walked out singing.

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more subdued—first reluctant to leave the academy, then later anxious to get off the road. And through it all, he remains determinedly cryptic and often literally indecipherable, though almost always emotionally intelligible; an original who will surely come back from the protracted “art” diddle of *Last Day*. —Richard C. Walls

## NAS

*Illmatic*

(COLUMBIA)

**N**AS'S DEBUT ALBUM *ILLMATIC* DOESN'T excel by the standards that great hip-hop albums are commonly judged: no new palettes of colors are introduced, as they were with Public Enemy's *Nation of Millions* or A Tribe Called Quest's *Low End Theory*, nor any new attitudes, concepts or lyrical styles (his cadences recall Lord Finesse and Kool G. Rap). The all-star team of producers engaged—Q-Tip, Pete Rock, Large Professor, Premier (of Gang Starr) and newcomer L.E.S.—have churned out 11 songs of hard, jazz-flavored East Coast funk, but the album as a whole suffers from the “more is better” school of rap producer-recruiting. If *Illmatic* doesn't feel schizophrenic, it lacks the consistency of a masterpiece, which is what it has been called by critics and hip-hop heads hungry for a culture hero.

That said, *Illmatic* could be one of the finest conventional hip-hop albums ever made, up there with EPMD's *Business as Usual* and Naughty by Nature's debut. Nas is a dark, compelling lyricist who enunciates cleanly and quickly, leaving the listener able to hear everything he says, but racing to follow the meaning (one particularly dizzying passage: “Word to Christ, a disciple of streets/Trifle on beats/I decipher prophesies through a mike and say peace”). Themes of a sad, lost youth run through the album, from the picture of Nas as a serious-faced child on the cover to the brilliant, brooding “New York State of Mind” (“I never sleep/ 'Cause sleep is the cousin of death/I lay puzzled as I backtrack to earlier times/Nothing's equivalent/To the New York state of mind”), to the tragic “One Love,” which recounts a handful of stories of imprisoned friends and wasted lives. If anything sets Nas apart from hip-hop's gruff hardcore mainstream beyond his superior microphone skills, it's the palpable, fleshed-out pain of his lyrics, another page in the book started by Grandmaster Flash's “The Message,” but populated with real people with faces instead of “junkies in the alley with a baseball bat.”

Which doesn't change the fact that hip-hop needs a constant flow of, among other things, jazz licks, Black Flag riffs, Kung Fu yells and, most importantly, new MCs and producers with fresh

ideas to keep the music vital. Ominously, in recent years rap's world of reference points seems to have narrowed, between the dangerous nostalgia for the music's old school, the inescapable, identical “ruffneck” poses, the gun-centric lyrics and ghettoization of “alternative rap.” Nas hasn't changed the rules of the game, and only a fool would fault him for that. Nevertheless, it's troubling to consider that a music renowned for reinventing pop culture in its own image may be turning in on itself. —Nathan Brackett

## DANZIG

[cont'd from page 97] few new ones, including the first-ever live rendition of “Goin' Down to Die,” which he dedicates to Uncle Tony. The crowd may be there mainly to see Metallica, but Glenn and his posse compel their attention.

Back in the dressing room after the encore, Glenn is shirtless, drenched in sweat and feeling cranky. “All I could hear was Chuck's cymbals and Eerie's bass,” he growls. “I didn't hear much guitar or snare. There wasn't much beat for me to get into. It sounded like shit!

“All in all, I guess it could have been worse. We're real critical of ourselves,” he adds, accenting the obvious.

As the room empties, guitarist John Christ agrees to talk. The “serious” musician in Danzig, the quiet Mr. Christ—a surname bestowed by his disrespectful mates—is the odd man out. Sitting apart from the others on the bus, he's the one who perks up when the new Boston album comes on the radio. Where the others went to school on punk, John admits, “I like the guitar gods, even the ones nobody else likes, such as Yngwie Malmsteen. I grew up in the era of Ted Nugent, Angus Young, Frank Marino, Eddie Van Halen, Tom Scholz. That's what I wanna hear; that's what I wanna write.”

There's no room for that kind of flash in Danzig, though. Glenn won't permit extended solos and dictates what the guitarist plays [see sidebar]. Asked if the lack of freedom is frustrating, John concedes, “It used to be. But it doesn't bother me anymore. If I do a good job and everybody's happy, fine. It's not my band. I have to keep reminding myself, ‘It's not my band. It's not my band. It's not my band...’

“When I first joined the group, I was so technical they'd laugh at me. I had to completely restructure the way I played. I got really raw and dissonant, stopped playing complete scales, made sure I dropped notes at weird intervals and started playing more diminished intervals. I'll practice for hours and hours before entering the studio, then Glenn will say, ‘Too much. Play fewer notes.’ He likes the talking guitar

stuff, bluesy string-bending, things like that.”

Having written TV promo music for ABC, Christ is looking for more work in that vein, and pursuing soundtrack gigs. Then, a record of his own. “I want to do an EP first, and see how it goes from there. It'll be a totally different vibe—my own thing. I need to do something in my own style,” he says, sounding almost desperate. “If everyone hates it, fine, but at least I'll have gotten it out of my system.”

In the darkness outside Danzig's tour bus, Eerie's Aunt Barbara runs up to Glenn, gushing thanks for the dedication to her husband. If the sight of this middle-aged woman in a Danzig T-shirt sharing a hug with the Master of Darkness seems odd, so be it. Glenn Danzig unselfconsciously embodies many such contradictions, portraying primal villains yet remaining scrupulously polite to awed fans, reveling in sensationalism while encouraging audiences to look beyond the obvious, simultaneously projecting empathy and paranoia.

It's all part of the eternal wonder of rock 'n' roll, where nice boys project scary shadows and vice-versa. With Danzig, more than most, what you see is up to you. That's the way he wants it. 