

MUSIC

Come into Danzig's world of God, sex and the devil

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PHILADELPHIA — Glenn Danzig knows why his band is so hard to market. Once sold as a heavy metal band, Danzig is now being labeled alternative and "Can'tspeak," from its

new album, "Danzig 4," is receiving play on alternative and rock radio.

"How do you market a revolution?" he said.

When it's pointed out that a way was found to market the current punk explosion, the former singer of the

influential punk band the Misfits gets irate.

"That's not punk," he growled. "I was involved in punk, OK? They found a way to market watered-down pop punk."

So why does he think Danzig is so hard to sell, despite the success it had in 1993 with the revamped version of "Mother," originally from the band's first album and redone for the live EP, "Thrall — Demonsweat Live?"

"Because we won't sell out," he said. "I've chosen my path in life, and I deal with whatever I get from going on that path. I knew I was going to get a lot of (grief), but that's OK. . . . The other people are going to take the pop route and they'll make all the money."

"That's not me. I don't want to be that. I don't need to be that. I'd rather not do it than be that."

Aboard the band's comfortable tour bus, the "Master of Darkness" looked more vulnerable and a little road-weary as he curled up on a couch, occasionally resting his dark head back on the cushions. He wore his customary black.

The songs on the band's latest album, "Danzig 4," combine blues and metal with Mr. Danzig's sometimes crooning seductive, sometimes violently roaring voice. All are rooted in his frustration with society.

"I have no friends, and I am not politically correct with anybody," said Mr. Danzig, 35.

His image has often been labeled

cartoonish.

"I don't like the way things are going with the world," he said. "I don't want to just be top No. 1 record. Let the fools play the game — I'm not a fool. They can say what they want. . . . I'm a cartoon, I'm the devil, I'm a revolutionary, I can't sing, whatever they want to say."

In a lot of his material, including current songs such as "Dominion," Mr. Danzig plays the role of tempter, offering an outstretched hand to his listeners.

"Is it tempter?" he asked. "I don't think it is — it's not meant to be, really. I think it's more of a soothing thing."

But that soothing comes at some price, he says.

"All soothing does, usually," he said with a smile. "Very rarely does it not."

His music is covertly sexual, often tinged with sadomasochistic overtones. He says he specifically tries to address a female audience, urging them to be, as he says, "in touch with their sexuality."

A man outside the venue carrying a crucifix in silent protest is typical of the reaction Mr. Danzig tends to receive. He's also had fans beg him to kill them.

"I think it's funny," he said. "I just laugh and go, 'Get out of here.' I treat it as a joke, even though they're serious."

Despite a lackluster crowd, Mr. Danzig still stirred the Tower Theater mosh pit as a witch would stir a cauldron, sweeping it into motion with each gesture, each mighty roar. He tore his shirt to bits after a few songs, doing the rest of the show bare-chested and glistening with sweat.

He opened the show with two new songs, "Brand New God" and the Jim Morrison-esque "Little Whip." They wrapped things up with several older tracks, including "Mother," "She Rides" and "Killer Wolf."

Mr. Danzig has taken on the comic book industry with the same defiance he brings to music. He's working on several adult comics, including one called "Satanica," about what he calls a "very powerful female character."

"I started this line of comics with all the best writers and the artists are all the best artists that there are," he said. "It's scaring a lot of people because there's no censorship in it."

Just prior to taking the stage, amiable guitarist John Christ sat on a backstage couch also clad in black — leather blazer, hat pulled low over his eyes, and a silver cross at his throat.

He's the eternal student. Classically trained at Peabody Prep and Towson State in Baltimore, he has a passion for jazz and classical guitar as well as the minor-key blues stylings for which he's known.

Where Mr. Danzig has his comics project and one solo album under his belt, Mr. Christ has worked on several ABC promo spots for TV movies.

There's also a compilation CD put out by *Guitar for the Practicing Musician* magazine. He contributes a lively hard rock instrumental called "For Christ's Sake" that's full of the burning runs and blissful soloing he doesn't get to explore in Danzig.

"Many times I'll blow right through a solo," Mr. Christ said. "Other times, I'll play solos that I like and he (Mr. Danzig) won't like them because they're too fancy. He likes slower blues stuff, so then I come back and play slower blues type of stuff and he's happy and we go with that."

"The flashier stuff, the more polished, melodic and exciting guitar work, I save for my own stuff."

Mr. Christ is working on a solo album, but plans are incomplete.