

ENTERTAINMENT

Die Cheerleader

by Michael Edwards
Brunswickan Entertainment

Now that the students are back in town, it seems like concert season is upon us once more - not only is the Harvest Jazz and Blues festival rapidly approaching, but there are also going to be a whole bunch of concerts up at the Pyramid Warehouse. And the first of those is this Saturday when Die Cheerleader come to town.

Die Cheerleader are quite a cosmopolitan bunch with members coming from Scotland, England, Ireland and Italy, but are more or less based in the musical centre of the UK - London. Their first album was released over there at the end of 1993, but nothing came out in North America until April of this year when *Son Of Filth* appeared. It compiles several tracks which were previously only found on European releases, and also has some new material which they recorded with Henry Rollins earlier in 1995.

I talked to the lone male in the band, drummer Andy Semple, last week and asked him what it is like being the only male in a band of women. He said that it was no big deal, after all "when there is a women in a band of men, nobody asks her for the female angle. It is more usual for bands to be made of men, so when there is something else some people are bound to ask questions. But basically it is like being in a band with your best friends."

The band has been touring practically non-stop for the past three months. Their latest stint started back in June



The glory and splendor that is Die Cheerleader (l-r Andy Semple, Sam Ireland, Debbie Quagnolo and Rita Blazyca)

when they supported soon-to-be-huge-band Filter as they toured the east coast and also through the central region too. They were booked on the tour just before Filter started to take off, and so it was a welcome surprise when all the dates started to sell out.

But this worked to Die Cheerleader's advantage as straight after the Filter tour, they set off again headlining on a tour playing in some of the same towns again. As Andy said, "it was great to see people actually turning out to see us this time." Some people in those towns even turned up to pass on copies of their own demos, something which

Andy really enjoyed; "There's a really great one by a Cleveland band called Disengaged." He even suggested that there might be a chance for these local bands to support Die Cheerleader on their next tour - support for the Fredericton gig will be provided by local band NFA.

Die Cheerleader have been rather lucky with the breaks they have been given. The first came through supporting Iggy Pop in Europe, something that the band really enjoyed being huge fans of the Stooges. The second, more recent break came from Henry Rollins who became the band's self-proclaimed number one fan after they toured with the Rollins Band. He was in the process of setting up a

publishing company ('Human Pitbull'), and offered to publish the band's music in North America. A record contract was signed with London records, and *Son Of Filth* appeared complete with a Rollins-penned press release singing the praises of the band.

From what Henry Rollins has to say, the band really do put on a memorable live show. Andy's opinion was that "we don't really plan that someone will do something at a specific time - we just get on with it and try to lose ourselves in the music." And do they enjoy touring? "We wouldn't have spent the past three months doing it if we didn't" was the rather obvious answer. I really should have seen that one coming really.

The band's music has been linked to various scenes and fads by the UK music press who always seem keen to categorize people. As Andy commented, "If it has loud guitars then it must be grunge. And if there are women in the band then it must be Riot Grrl. But we have always tried to avoid this sort of thing as the fads come and go, and you end up asking 'where are they now?' about the bands. We always intended to be around for a very long time." It seems rather unusual that they were called grunge or even punk as amidst the guitars and vocals the band is very listenable - "Loud is a very easy option for any band. We are lucky enough to have Sam whose vocals can go from a scream to something sweet and syrupy without any problem." And that is something that is very obvious when listening to *Son Of Filth* as some songs even have some rather nice vocal harmonies, and even, shock horror, melodies. Its a damned good album.

So if you are willing to trust Henry Rollins judgement (and I would - honest) then get yourself along to the Pyramid Warehouse on Saturday night to check out Die Cheerleader - it will be the perfect cure to that bad case of Spiritofthewestitis that UNB seems to have caught.

BONUS!!!

Win a copy of the Die Cheerleader album *Son Of Filth* in the competition on the next page!

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