

Horror and humiliation — a Headstones interview

by James Beddington

Hugh Dillon, lead singer of the Canadian "hard-rock" band The Headstones, has earned himself a reputation as an abrasive and impossible interviewee. When people found out I was due to interview him over the phone most of them just wished me luck. The notorious "bad boy of Canadian 'rock'" phoned twenty minutes late. Although flustered by people's warnings about him I was determined not to let this get to me. I acted unconcerned and fumbled with the unfamiliar recording gear as Hugh got increasingly frantic. At last we got started.

Interview Hugh (H.) vs. James (G.)

To summarize the interview, Dillon has a fascination with death, and falls just short of paranoia about his own demise. Even so, The Headstones have a powerful stage presence and put on a good show.

G: Hugh, can you hear me?
H: Yes James, I can hear you
G: Oooooo-k. First question: How did you meet the other members of the band?
H: I met the other members of the band by fluke. They're just friends of mine. We got very lucky y'know. We met...blah blah blah.
G: There's a lot of stuff in the media about you as the central figure of The Headstones.
H: I AM the central figure of The Headstones....I'm kiddin' ya James. That's media. Who gives a shit really.

You've never seen us live have you?
G: I have actually.
H: Oh you have! I'm starting to love you already. I'm falling in love with you. Where'd you see us?
G: Thorhold Ontario, near St. Catherine's at a place called Front 54.
H: Oh yeah, that was a great gig.
G: I actually had your cd autographed after that.
H: Was I in a good mood or was I...
G: You were a little bit frantic
H: Hell I'm a little frantic most of the time James. That was a good gig. I loved those gigs. Any Ontario gigs are spectacular y'know. We just flew back from Newfoundland.
G: How was Newfoundland?
H: It was funny y'know. Like the people treated us well. The gigs were good. It's just the plane rides I o.d. on. I can't get on this plane, it's gonna crash!
G: I guess that'll make it hard to do international tours.
H: Well I'll have to do it. You know, money is money. If I don't do it I don't get paid.
G: Are you involved in writing the music for the Headstones?
H: James?
G: Yeah?
H: Use your head. Are we live on air now?
G: No, we're not live on air.
H: (aside) Here's what he just said to me: Are you involved in writing... no I don't write the goddamn songs James, use your head. (laughter in the background).
G: Yeah I know you write the songs, I was wondering how much involvement you have specifically with the actual notes, the chords...
H: Right, sorry, go on.

G: Obviously you have an involvement with that, but do you actually write the, say all the guitar pieces as well as doing the...
H: I work with the melodies and I work with the lyrics. You know Trent is my right hand man, that's the guy that comes up with the guitar stuff. Like I'm a mediocre guitar player.
G: OK, let's change course here for a bit. The movie that you're in "Dance Me Outside"
H: One *movie* James, not *movies*. I was in one crummy little movie. Canadian movie. It was a great time. Bruce MacDonald used two of our songs.
G: Did you have any experience with acting before this?
H: No I'm just a natural born actor.
G: Uhhh, do you feel that when you do a live show - how much of an element of acting is involved with that?

H: James, take a deep breath.
G: Pardon?
H: Take a deep breath. There we go...
G: With the next album, what's going to be different from *Picture Of Health*?
H: You gotta listen to it. I mean I could sit here and brag. It's just a great record. We made it. It's ours. It belongs to us. I wish I could give it to you so you could hear it and go, "Hey, that's cool" but you just gotta hear it. Are you writing this shit down?
G: No, I'm just recording it. I may not be the person transcribing it.
H: James.
G: Yeah?
H: *Buuuuuuurrrrrrrp*
G: I'll bet they're gonna wonder how to spell that.
H: Yeah, you can't spell that.
G: They'll probably try.
H: Tell them to fuck off. Sorry.

lot of influences from them and it was all that kind of music. I was just fascinated by it. I can't believe I'm a guy in a band now doing an interview with you. Y'know what I mean?
G: Yeah.
H: I love that whole thing. The idea of playing in a band and being in a band and whatever. But I just couldn't play bass and I was useless at drums and I really couldn't play guitar. Hey, I'll be the front guy! Luckily I could write. You know what I'm saying?
G: Yeah, ummmm...in terms of success, how is it affecting your lifestyle.
H: It doesn't affect my lifestyle that much.
G: Have you been travelling quite a bit lately?
H: I've been travelling my whole fucking life, James.
G: What about life on the road?
H: Life on the road? It's just fucking something you deal with. It's a fun little gig.
G: How does being on the road doing a lot of gigs affect you both mentally and physically?
H: It's one thing. It's called gig-to-gig. You have to do as well as you can. It's constantly winning. It's like a hockey player. Like the stage is the ice. Once you're on the ice you score goals. You win. You take that fucking gig and nothing else matters. Showtime is showtime.
G: One last question, anything you want to say?
H: I love life.

Well, I finally got through the interview, and unscathed to boot. Dillon lived up to his reputation; antagonistic, loving life by courting death, and dancing with his private demons. The Headstones are playing in Halifax this weekend at the Grawood.

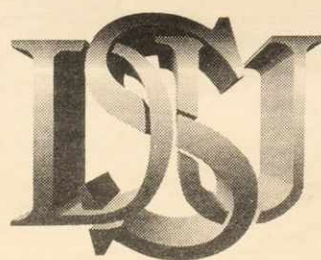
H: James.
G: Yeah?
H: *Buuuuuuurrrrrrrp*

H: It's just called my life and the band's life. Y'know we hit the stage and it belongs to us. If people like it then like it. If they don't, fuck, I don't really care. I just know when we're good. Am I answering your questions properly?
G: Yes, just fine. Is there another album in the works?
H: Yes, it's due February 27th.
G: OK Ummm...

G: Ummm, what about influences on your work?
H: James you have to learn how to speak better English. "What are my influences," that's what you're saying.
G: Yeah, well...
H: I love The Doors, I love Stones-shit, Bob Dylan. Y'know I had a couple of sisters and brothers. Y'know I didn't just get here today, I descended. I got a

Any motion passed by the majority of students present at the AGM is binding upon the entire Student Union.

The Dalhousie Student Union will be holding an Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday, March 23 at noon in the Green Room. The purpose of the Annual General Meeting will be to amend the constitution. However, other motions may be made at that time. Anyone who wishes to amend the constitution must submit the text of their changes by February 9 for it to be discussed for the February 12 Council meeting. It will be deliberated at the March 5 Council meeting and referred to the March 23 AGM.



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