LIFESTYLE

BEHIND THE SCENES OF OUR CLEOPATRA RECORDS INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN PERERA

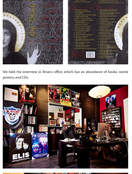
JANUARY 1, 2014 ELIZABETH RHODES

For the Summer issue issue we met with Cleopatra Records founder Brian Perera at the label's headquarters in Los Angeles. Sarah Christina shot images of the of Rio as well as portraits of Brian for the feature and editor Elizabeth Rhodes conducted the interview.

Photo Sarah Christina for Auxiliary Magazine

A tour of the Cleopatra office revealed lots of treasures including classic print vinyl pressings of Dandy Dogs Dirt, vintage toys as well their "vintage" new's compilations that put Cleopatra Records on the map for many young listeners and a sprawling warehouse of vinyl. Since the pandemic began, the office has become a shipping headquarters.

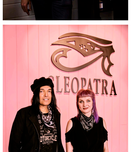
Or the triple of so-called "second wave" darkwave music and Cleopatra's music compilations that capture those bands while longevity. "Not never" postpunk and what would eventually be called "goth" artists. Brian told us, "I was into that stuff. Even the Goatsnoot shows they were doing in the US, they were playing with bands like Fetish. So there was even a drummer from The Cure that was in Goatsnoot, Andy Anderson. The whole punk/rebellion goth thing in the UK really influenced us in the 80's. It really wasn't that stereotypical stuffness."



A favorite from my own collection is Cleopatra's *The Black Bible* (1996) compilation.

We held the interview in Brian's office, which has an abundance of books, movie posters and CDs.

Brian graciously allowed us to photograph him around the office. We listed the at Ivan, Eric, and Ryan artwork seen around the space and wanted to capture that in his portraits, hence Brian's a Fantastic Gary Numan flyer!



Since Brian has been around the Los Angeles scene since the heyday of the hard rock era on the Sunset Strip, we had to ask for a story or two about his memories of that time. He told us about the early days of Guns N Roses and how the music scene looked, saying "In a couple of those guys like Izzy Stradlin and a few others, they would come to the office and we would hang out with them. I'd see them and they were just hanging out, you know, maybe sleep-over at the Roxy and it was the first time where you would see people looking like Izzy were Christian Death fans (at their shows). The first gen of Guns N Roses I remember being a lot darker. When I ran into it, it was more the speedos crowd started coming into their shows."

During the interviews, the topic of musical heroes came up a few times with the big sections Johnny Thunders and Sylvi Sutcliff's mentioned among others. There's an up-close-and-personal photo of Sylvi Sutcliff's Christian Christian of Dead Boys performing a cover of The Rolling Stones' "Dead Flowers" at Brian's memorial tribute show.

One of the highlights of this interview was seeing the connections among music fans and artists. Brian Perera and Cleopatra Records are examples of this intersection. Brian was asked to DJ a lot of at an artist's work here a business that further connects the art and the fan base.

Thank you to Brian Perera for the rare glimpse into the world of Cleopatra Records and for sharing more insight with Auxiliary Magazine readers on how it all began!

Check out Cleopatra Records' website for more information. To read the full interview, check out the Summer issue online.

~Elizabeth Rhodes

Elizabeth Rhodes is the Associate Editor of Auxiliary. Based in Los Angeles, she is a writer, DJ, modern classic, and amateur pug junkie.

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