

Rotten UK

Roll Call

James Von Sinn : Mad Doomsday Vocal Preacher

Matt Sexx : Backup Vocals

Anarchy Jake : Bass Slinger

Frän Damäge : Drums

When did the band get started and what was the original intention of the band?

Rotten UK : We started in 2011 with a vision to revive classic underground 80s UK sounds. We were noticing the punk scene had become stagnant revolving mostly around crust punk or American h/c along with a worship of the band Discharge. We wanted to rebel against that with a mindset of, "there's way more British punk bands worth ripping off," instead of just the same redundant sound. Along with that we wanted an actual political anarchist message that was true to the times while reflecting the past by drawing influence from anarcho punk, post punk, oi and more.

Tell us more about your name. How does it communicate the sound or vibe of the band?

RUK : It started with being just Rotten and the idea came from a worship of Johnny Rotten and a mockery of the name Rancid. There also was an embrace of how the world views punks coupled with our view of the music scene. The UK tag started as a joke making fun of bands who put "DIS" in front of their bands. Then there was the hoax that we were pretending to be from Rochester, England which then just evolved into representing a tribute to the influences of our sound, aesthetic, message... all coming from Britain. We would say, "if rock and rollers from England in the 60s can rip off American blues artists, why can't a bunch of weirdos rip off British punk from the 80s?!" We figured the full name just had a good ring to it like Chaos UK, UK Subs, The Mission UK, and so on. There also actually was already a Sex Pistols cover band in England called Rotten. We always thought we would drop it but it stuck. It comes down to just how it looks on a flyer or cover art if we are going to have the "UK" added on kind of like GBH is sometimes known as Charged GBH. Now it's just a fun thing to cause confusion! We've had people attempt to fight us over our band name! One guy in Montreal was in a rage and just couldn't grasp it, saying we are a good band, but the name is, "sooo stupid why would we do such a thing?" We just responded, "we do it just to piss you off."

How would you describe your music to someone who has not yet checked you out?

RUK : Lovecraftian anarchist spooky h/c punk... I try to come up with deep descriptions but they all fall short. It's complicated because we appease punks, goths and metalheads, a lot like Misfits I guess yet we are nothing like them.

What inspires you to create this style of music?

RUK : Pure rebellion, heart, magic then disillusionment with the world... we definitely go into things just with a vibe and feeling trying to capture our current outlooks on life. It sounds very nihilistic but there's a lot of spirituality attached to what we are about. There has to be to have any hope. We are definitely a silver lining band, but the rain cloud is always the forefront. We live in a world that is balancing anger, sadness and total chaos, so that's what we try to capture in style of music, which is mainly why we end up having heavy goth influence one moment

then a metal feel the next minute. We are a time machine trapped in a time loop trying to find a place in a world of madness while hoping to inspire a revolutionary ideal that the corroded mirror can break, and I think this [Andrew] Eldritch ideal comes through in all that we do.

What influences in fashion, literature and culture impact your creativity?

RUK : We are a cauldron of Dickens and Lovecraft stirred with *The Lost Boys*, *Mad Max* and a blood vial of Stoker all in fashion and ideal. We weave a fantasy world around us that in the end shows that our dreams and nightmares are a reality. The 80s, in our opinion, was the height of alternative fashion that we try to embrace, specifically European fashion and Japanese fashion when everything was still actually a unique creative artistic expression and not viewed as being shallow, as many people seem to think when you look different. We want people to see the depth again knowing that embracing the extremities of how you want to look can be self-empowering as a reflection of your fantasies. This is a concept that shouldn't be condemned and is for everyone!

What other bands are inspiring you right now?

RUK : That's hard because we try not to draw from many modern influences. There are some bands currently that are inspiring in their career: I'm very proud of Devil Master with their mix of punk, deathrock and black metal. They are touring nonstop and blowing up. The Wraith from California are making strong moves out there, HO9909 are paving the way for the future of punk as the most unique thing going with their anarchist mix of punk, industrial and hip hop, which I think is beyond inspiring for everyone that there can actually be a new sound that reaches such diverse crowds. Totenwald from Germany are doing great things also along with Instinct of Survival who are the best long-running crust goth mix. I recently heard a band called Final Gasp from Boston that blew me away: heavy Samhain worship done correctly. Boston has a lot of cool bands right now! I'm a big fan of Anatomy out of NYC which is the solo industrial project from one of the members of Pawns. Also from NYC is Overdose, probably one of the best Motörhead worship bands! I guess I can go on and on. We live in a great time for new underground music of all classic genres! As for classic bands influencing us currently, all I can think of is Killing Joke and Bathory.

How would you describe the current alternative music scene where you live?

RUK : It's interesting that not one genre is super strong, it's like all the freaks come out to support each style. The metal scene is thriving the most but even at those shows it's an eclectic mix of maniacs there to show support! That's always been the beauty of Rochester, NY's underground music. We come together to prove that we are a wild city with fans that appreciate good tunes and a good time. If you reach out to the alternative community then grab on and hold hard! There will always be those that move on, striving for a more digestible sound, hoping to appease wider, less exclusive audiences by being the hot local band in the town's hip bars, but they always have a shelf life. The true Rochester die-hards will be raging to the grave! A few great bands right now keeping things alive are Fatal Curse, Kryst, Komrads, Jamie Veins & the Quick Fix, Hallucination Realized, Malachor, Warlover, and Governess. All are dramatically different but all out to support each other.

What are your favorite tour or stage stories? Share 'em here.

RUK : We have a billion that are all out of control but most are becoming a blur now. What comes to mind foremost is when we played in Asbury Park, NJ in a town I hadn't been in since Holidays in the Sun punk fest in 2002 where punks literally took over the city. It was lawless and things I saw were out of an 80s

movie, down to full hotels being destroyed and buildings being burnt, so I think this set a bar for what we were expecting, except it is nothing like that now! The show was in a local brewery venue/bar and had a great turn out. Before we were supposed to go on, there was a long bathroom line because some girls were in there doing drugs and holding everyone up, so our bassist Jake decides to piss in a bucket on a loading dock. Some girl who works there sees this and throws a fit, calling the owner to tell him. So we finally hit the stage and one song in, there is a voice over the PA telling us we are done, to pack up our shit and get the fuck out. The place was packed and we were the headlining band so there was a lot of people who had traveled to see us. A bunch of people start yelling to let us play and were getting pissed. Jake is then trying to rile the crowd up to riot until we can play. The house speakers get smashed to the ground which results in some Jersey h/c tough guys trying to fight us. That gets broken up quickly and we just go and pack our shit up. Jake and our drummer are on the loading docks and the same huge bro dudes come up and jump Jake! He cracks the dude in the head with his ammo case trying to defend himself and they take off, meanwhile there's other brawls in the parking lot of people pissed the show was shut down. The cops came and arrested Jake after saying they only wanted to question him. It was all bullshit and so much chaos ensued because a venue couldn't manage a situation properly. I guess it's not a favorite moment but memorable. All the madness sticks. I got my front teeth shattered playing a house party in Oklahoma after playing the FYWROK fest out there. I've had glasses smashed on my head having me bleed everywhere causing fights with venues. We played a show in Buffalo, NY where our bass player couldn't make it so we had our legendary friend/roadie/mascot Tony Bastard (R.I.P.) fill in and more than halfway through the set people noticed he wasn't even plugged in! We are misfit idiots and fuck ups, but champions for idiot fuck ups at the same time. If freaks like us can get as far as we have and still put an intelligent message out there, then anyone can!

Tell us about your latest release.

RUK : Our last LP was *That Is Not Dead* on Hells Headbangers. It's a couple of

years old now but it perfectly embraced all of our genre influences and created a formula we don't want to stray from. At times we think we want to lean in one direction but then remember the main focus of all our positive reviews of the last album is how well we mixed goth, punk, h/c, metal and legit sounded like a classic band thanks to recording analog. We are currently writing our new LP *Age Of Chaos* that I think will have a better flow as it's all being written at once instead of a collection of songs composed over time. The structure will be more sound with a stronger concept, being that of the belief that we truly have entered into an *Age Of Chaos*. We will be releasing a couple of singles to hype up the LP that will also be on Hells Headbangers. Look out for the "Dying World" and "Baphomet Rising" singles coming this year!

What's next for your band?

RUK : We are currently about to hit the road on a tour with old label mates Midnight who are probably the best rock and roll band in the world right now! Also on that tour is Savage Master whose singer Stacy Savage is one of my favorite female vocalists in metal right now. We just plan on touring a lot more, shooting to do a Texas tour and west coast tour late this year but our main focus is to get the new LP wrapped up.

Where can people find out more about your band and any other projects members are involved in?

RUK : We have a Facebook and I'm addicted to Instagram. We are also on Bandcamp. Jake and Fran have a noisier h/c band project Unorder with a demo tape coming soon and nothing online because they are technophobes. Matt is in an oi band called Mörbund who just released a demo. I am currently working on a harsh noise black metal project called Disgraced while writing songs for my first solo record, which I'm hoping is a mix between Danzig, Sisters of Mercy, Billy Idol, and Alice Cooper. We all have a million other fantastical new band side project ideas that I do believe we will eventually spit out. facebook.com/rotten.uk, rottenuk.bandcamp.com, morbundpunks.bandcamp.com



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