



Photography, left & right by Shannon Hemmett

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# Leathers

Interview by Liz Rhodes

**Roll Call**

LEATHERS is the solo project of Vancouver musician and tattoo artist Shannon Hemmett. I am also the synth player and backing vocalist for the Canadian post punk band, ACTORS.

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

**SH** : When I released the first single "Missing Scene" in 2016, the project had a 90s shoegaze influence, but as I wrote and released some different material, I've pursued a modern synthpop sound with a sleek visual aesthetic.

The musical and lyrical content of ACTORS has a dystopian, post-punk atmosphere whereas LEATHERS exists in a dreamier, dark-romantic realm. I've always loved to sing, and LEATHERS provided an opportunity to showcase my voice and explore my interest in writing synth-based music. The lyrics tap into ideas of surrealism

and illusion, there's a mirage-like state between wakefulness and dreaming where the conscious and subconscious overlap, and I enjoy writing from that place.

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

**SH** : Stylish goth melodies meet 80s pop sweetness.

**What inspires you to create this style of music?**

**SH** : There's a fascination with contrasts; lightness/darkness, feminine/masculine, fantasy/reality, creation/destruction. I love pop music from the 80s that has a darker sensibility.

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

**SH** : Joan Didion, Patrick Nagel, Helmut Newton. Joan Didion's writing has a swift elegance, she can say so much in a single sentence. Her writings about the sinister side of glamour in Hollywood are particularly good, and were a huge inspiration to Bret Easton Ellis (who's another favorite author of mine). Patrick Nagel's iconic illustrations of women in the 80s inspires my own style, visually in my artwork/tattooing and aesthetically in the clothes I like to wear. Helmut Newton's photographs show women

in positions of power and dominance. I identified with the pictures as a young woman, I used to be quite shy and their fierceness empowered me to access the extroverted parts of my personality.

**What other bands are inspiring you right now?**

**SH** : Hole, Roxy Music, Odonis Odonis, PJ Harvey, Bat For Lashes.

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

**SH** : Despite the lack of live music everywhere this past year due to the pandemic, Vancouver is thriving with talented, hard working musicians from all genres. Be sure to check out Louise Burns, Blue J, and Devours. The Fox Cabaret and the Rickshaw Theatre are both wonderful venues to see live music in Vancouver. Rufus Guitar Shop is the place to pick up some cool music gear. Red Cat Records for records, Pulp Fiction for books, Kafka Coffee for my morning caffeine ritual.

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

**SH** : LEATHERS hasn't been performing recently, but prior to the pandemic I toured all over the world with ACTORS. While in the UK we visited the hometown and final resting place of Ian Curtis, which was meaningful to us as Joy Division fans. One funny story though, is arriving at a venue in Boise, Idaho to find that there was a pet goat in pyjamas sitting at the bar...

**Tell us about your latest release.**

**SH** : The Reckless EP just came out on Artobject Records and compiles our musical output from the last few years. Some listeners are just discovering these songs, and that's really exciting for me. You can download and listen to the EP at [leathers.bandcamp.com](http://leathers.bandcamp.com).

**What's next for your band?**

**SH** : I'm currently writing new material and recording with producer Jason Corbett at Jackknife Sound in Vancouver, Canada. A full length album is in the works and the first single will be released in Spring 2022 on Artobject Records.

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

[leathers.bandcamp.com](http://leathers.bandcamp.com)  
[actors.bandcamp.com](http://actors.bandcamp.com)

[@leathersmusic](https://www.instagram.com/leathersmusic)  
[@actorsmusic](https://www.instagram.com/actorsmusic)  
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