



Jacket: Hazmat Design

LIFESTYLE PROFILE

Welcome to Profile, a new recurring feature that is an evolution of our long-standing feature The PinUp. This is our

retake on the idea of the pinup: candy for your eyes, mind, and soul. Each installment, you can expect a photo series with

a creative or influencer paired with an interview offering a glimpse into their life, their style, their views, and their

projects. This installment features model and Second Salem vocalist Gerard D'Lor.

# GERARD D'LOR

Model and Vocalist, Second Salem

Interview by Elizabeth Rhodes | Photographer Wil Foster | Model and Makeup by Gerard D'Lor

**How have you been taking care of yourself over the past year? Have you had anything unique or positive come out of this time period?**

**GDL :** Despite the numerous unfortunate events that have occurred over the last year, I feel like I've been doing pretty alright, all things considered. I haven't made as much progress as I initially hoped I would with so much free time and that's definitely created a lot of internal struggle, but being able to still have band practice and create art has kept hope up and that's about the most I could really ask for. My family and loved ones have all gotten closer, in a lot of ways because of quarantine, and I'm thankful that most of us are still around. As far as positive things go, my band Second Salem has a brand new lineup and I couldn't be more thrilled about the direction we're going. The feedback we've gotten has been amazing and I think everyone is going to be just as excited as we are when they see what's coming up soon.

**What projects are you currently working on?**

**GDL :** Currently I'm doing a lot of preparation work with Second Salem. We have some pretty big opportunities knocking on our door and I'm so eager to grab them by the horns, but there's some behind the scenes work that needs to happen before we can say anything quite yet. I'm also about to move, so I'll have my hands full with painting and decorating my new space, which is totally fine by me.

**Who are some of your favorite designers, photographers, and collaborators to work with and why?**

**GDL :** Well, working with Wil [Foster] for this issue was probably one of the best experiences I've ever had working with a photographer; I can't talk highly enough about him and his work and I look forward to getting back together with him. As far as other creatives go: Doomvana, Talcott.Photography, Jay Misanthropia, Moon.Flaws, DeadWitxh, and Crune (all on Instagram) have been some of the coolest people and greatest inspirations to me. I haven't gotten the chance to work with many designers, but I absolutely love the idea of it. There's so many people I want to work with though, the list is always growing.

**Tell us your backstory a bit: what was your path to where you are now?**

**GDL :** I grew up in Upstate New York, lucky enough to be raised by a goth parent, so my exposure to the subculture was very early and being a strange and sentimental child, I took to it. Some of my earliest memories involve spending time with my father and listening to Siouxsie and the Banshees or watching horror movies. It's a core part of who I am. In my late childhood, I experienced an unfortunate amount of trauma for many years that left me struggling to cope at all. I dealt with being autistic my whole life despite both of my parents swearing up and down their children were too perfect to have anything wrong with them and developed severe PTSD and



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BPD that up until a few years ago completely destroyed my life, but I suppose in a way I'm even grateful for these things, because they've given me an even greater understanding of what beauty and evil are. The nightmares that have come from those experiences are really what make up my art. I've known I was transgender since I was very little, maybe about six or so, and I socially transitioned very early to the dismay of the majority of my family. I think my grandmother was the only person that accepted me for the longest time. I rebelled against goth—well, everything, really—for a while in my early teens; it's what I grew up on so of course to be edgy I have to do something else, right? My emo phase was raging and to even call it a phase is somewhat laughable. I've definitely held onto many, many parts of it. I think it was probably around eighteen or nineteen when I really started finding my footing with myself again, growing into my transition and starting to get a grasp on what all my diagnoses were, attempting to create something of myself. Making art and music have become more than just dreams and really something I strived to make my life about.

**What is your experience and education as an artist and creator? Have you had a lot of formal education or are you mostly self-taught?**

**GDL:** Nearly all of my experience and education is from being up close and personal to the scenes I'm working in, from the art shows and band practices my father was



having in our basement when I was a child and onward. I literally dropped out of high school to start a band and practice witchcraft, it doesn't get much more self-taught than that.

**What are some tips you have for fellow artists regarding continually creating new work and developing your skills?**

**GDL :** Work with people that you think are out of your league. You don't get better by being a big fish in a little pond, if you want to expand your capabilities and push yourself to be better, playing with musicians that are above your skill level or models that have been in the game a while will really push you to reach for the higher bar. Oh, and never ever ever stop believing in yourself. Nothing is ever impossible.

**What are some of your favorite activities and what are you watching or listening to right now? Do you have any recommendations?**

**GDL :** I'm not much of a TV person, but I'm huge into true crime, so the majority of the time if I'm listening to something it's a podcast. My girlfriend got me hooked on [the podcast] Crime Junkie, so if I'm missing her, that's what I'll throw on.

**How would you describe your current fashion and sense of style?**

**GDL :** I find myself toying with the line between some of the newer goth styles and classic Victorian vampire goth. I think half the fun of self-expression is trying new things and literally doing just whatever makes you happy, so finding new ways to combine different elements is super fun. I've become more

comfortable with the idea of playing with androgyny, too. Clothing and styles have ceased to have gender and I live for it. I think giving up on caring what other people think opened a lot of doors for me.

**How would you describe your personal style versus your style as a model? Do you feel they're pretty much the same or do you feel you have a bit of a professional persona?**

**GDL :** I think to some degree everyone in the public eye puts on a bit of a face. We're trained by society from an early age to appear nearly perfect to gain acceptance. I think the key is to learn how to balance quality content while maintaining a deep level of authenticity. It can be hard, I struggle with my mental health heavily sometimes and it can be really vulnerable to share that with the world. I try to keep my social media pages a good blend of a safe space people can escape to and a look into what I actually deal with. Would I call it a persona? Absolutely not, I don't try to pretend to be someone I'm not. In some ways, I do feel like I'm able to be the most "me" I've ever been by having some control over the art I make and putting a part of my soul and story out in everything I present.

**What does an average day look like for you right now?**

**GDL :** My life is currently so crazy. I'm driving to one city to be at a photoshoot, then I'm driving to another to see some friends, then another to go to one of the goth clubs, then another for band practice. I'm all over the place. My new normal is learning how to go with the flow and be comfortable with it, how to create solutions on the fly and be comfortable with it... and I have been comfortable with neither for the longest time. That's changing quickly though. I've definitely learned a lot from what the universe is throwing my way.

**What are some of the pros and cons you've experienced with having a large following on social media?**

**GDL :** I've definitely experienced some intense criticism when it comes to that, being trans, loud about it, and looking the way that I do. I guess even going into 2022 people don't grasp the concept of a man having long hair and wearing makeup. It's weird. I've been called a narcissist and full of myself for posting pictures of myself so often, honestly. When you have a large following online, people forget you're just another human being. I don't do it because I think I'm hot shit, trust me. All the positives come from the communities

I'm involved in and the amazingly talented and beautiful people I've met. I'm never at a loss for inspiration in any way and it's wonderful to feel such a sense of belonging.

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**Are there any projects you've dreamed about doing but haven't realized yet? What are they?**

**GDL :** Oh my gosh, there's so many. My vision for Second Salem is full of concept albums. I've always wanted to own an old Victorian house so I can run a coffee shop and music venue out of it, that's probably the biggest one that I hope to actualize. I don't know, I'm constantly coming up with weird projects and small business ideas that will probably never see the light of day.

**What are your plans for this year?**

**GDL :** I'm planning that we will have our first single out by mid-February with a music video right behind it, that's probably the largest and most exciting one. I've got a ton of plans that involve not being in Michigan, which is cool. I'm hoping to travel quite a bit and visit some friends I haven't seen in a long time, maybe start playing shows out of state, even? I think really I'd like to just get through 2022 happy and healthy with my friends and partner all likewise.

**Let this question be a blank page, what's something you want to talk about right now?**

**GDL :** There's a lot I could say, but I think I really just want to take a minute to say thank you to everyone who's supported

myself and Second Salem this far. I wouldn't be where I am without all of you, and I'm beyond grateful!

**What do you hope people get from following your journey?**

**GDL :** I hope that I can offer some kind of inspiration to others. Whether that's encouraging someone to be their truest self, helping someone through their transition, or just enjoying some dope ass art. If my music can make someone smile or help one person feel less alone, my job is done. || A

**Follow Gerard D'Lor on Instagram at @bvt.prince and follow Second Salem @secondsaalem.**