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Motorpsychos: Keepin' It Together

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Motorpsychos

Pittsburgh metal band, *Motorpsychos*, have evolved over the years, but one thing remains the same – their love of making music. The solid lineup of Pamela Simmons on guitar, Amy Bianco on bass and Dennis Brown on drums recently released the group's fourth album, *Sheppard's File*. We talked to Pamela about longevity in music.

Keeping a band together 12 years, let alone 12 months is a huge accomplishment. What's the secret?

I think the secret for us is not harboring anything. If something needs to be fleshed out, it's brought up and discussed. We don't leave it to fester and create other problems. Sometimes we work it out with raised voices, sometimes calmly, but one way or another, everybody's feelings and views are presented and a solution is

reached. After this long we are like siblings. I love those guys like family so no matter how aggravated one gets, the love is always there. Plus we all still like writing and playing together. Our writing keeps evolving so we're not doing the same thing over and over again. Always moving in a new direction keeps it interesting.

You went from a four-piece to a power trio. How has that changed the dynamic in the band?

Drastically. The three of us have been together from the beginning, and provided all of the instrumentation for the first four years. As a three-piece we are more focused and we sound tighter, too. We all shoot straight from the hip. No games, no weird moods to deal with, just the truth.

I read that each successive Motorpsychos album gets heavier and heavier. Is that a conscious decision?

It's a direction. The first (self-titled) album was the first line-up; pop song structures with heavy treatment. The second album, *Piston Whipped*, was the first with the second guitarist added and vocals going from a single lead vocalist to three of us sharing. We each contributed our own angles and began to gel as a writing group so some stuff was heavier than other stuff.

We were a more cohesive writing body on the third album, *Coming of Rage*, and took that one in a heavier direction. That's what evolved. We have always tuned down a whole step, but on some *Coming of Rage* songs we started tuning the sixth string down an extra step.

This album, *Sheppard's File*, is totally tuned down that way. Heavy, heavy, heavy writing. Intentional? Not totally conscious on my part.

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How often do you guys gig?

It depends what stage of production we're in. If we've released a recent CD and everybody's personal life complies, we play every weekend. If we're knee-deep in recording, we don't play at all – and everywhere in between.

What is the Pittsburgh scene like in regards to metal?

Fabulous. There is a very tight community and support network. There are a lot of really good Pittsburgh metal bands on the scene right now with tons of great shows, great bands and great friends.

What do you three do in your "real life" when you are not playing?

I am director of marketing and content at a publishing company. We publish content for the industrial and commercial painting industries. We have three comprehensive websites, two daily eNewsletters with almost 100,000 subscribers, and two print magazines that are considered to be the industry authority publications.

Amy has multiple jobs all in her field of choice: nature. She is obsessed with living things (that aren't people) with a special fondness for the reptile and insect worlds. She can identify any spider, hosts regular educational spider walks through local organizations, and people are constantly texting her photos of bugs they find (myself included) to find out whether they should be ignored or feared.



Dennis is a meticulous carpenter/remodeler with an uncanny ability to engineer anything mechanical. He is amazing to watch. He solves mechanical problems calmly and perceptively. His work is swift and meticulous. He has done a lot of work on my house, our kitchen in particular.

What is your favorite song on the new album?

From a spectator's point of view, probably "Victim." From a writing point of view, definitely "Scratch Fight." It's about my mother's world getting smaller and smaller – being sized down outside of her control by her reduced ability to do things for herself. She died this past May. It was peaceful considering how death can go. "Scratch Fight" was my homage to her.

How often do you tour?

What works best for us are long weekends of up to four consecutive shows.

Anything coming up you'd like to share?

We've recently formed a partnership with Innervenus (www.innervenus.org) a local metal music collective. They represent, support, record, publicize, and generally do wonderful things for a stable of Pittsburgh metal bands. Also, January 2013 will be the 13th anniversary for the Motorpsychos. I can't believe it. When we started I had two goals: to make a CD (we have four) and to play at the [31st Street Pub](#), Pittsburgh's coolest local punk/rock/metal club. We've played there more times than I can count. So anything else that's happened along the way has been gravy.

We've played awesome shows all over the country at awesome clubs with awesome bands and we've had awesome times with each other, our friends and fans. And we're still going strong. We have several songs written for the next CD and lots more on the way. We are truly blessed and very grateful.

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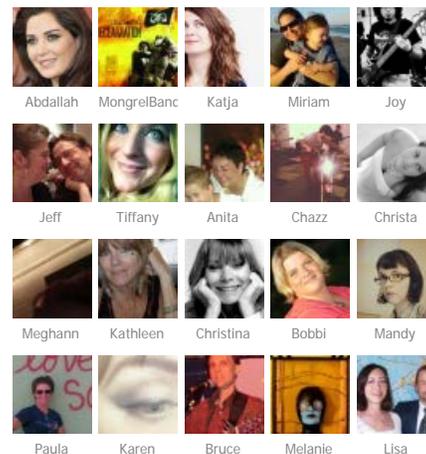
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