

MOTORPSYCHOS



Some bands eat, drink, talk, walk, teach, play and breath rock and roll. It's in their veins and you can't get rid of it, no matter how you try. The MOTORPSYCHOS are such an example here. The band hails from Pittsburgh, PA and they sound like a cross between THE SEX PISTOLS, L7 & MOTORHEAD. If you like the sound and the attitude of a pure rock band, then this interview is definitely for you. Away with the so-called heroes that dominate the scene with their plastic throwaway sound. Make room for the real masters (or mistresses!) of filthy rock and roll. It's time for MOTORPSYCHOS!

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Please introduce the bandmembers to us and the instrument(s) they play.

Rachel Cassidy-vocals, Pamela Simmons-guitar, Amy Blanco-bass, backing vocals, and Dennis Brown-drums.

Can you tell us a little about the band's history and how you first got together?

Amy: "I was looking for something solid and constant that wasn't just a basement, house party band. I had met Pam before GO TO HELEN for a bass try out, but it didn't work at the time because of my schedule and we went our own ways. When I called Rachel's number on a flyer in the local guitar store a few years later, Pam answered. I thought what comes around full circle must be right! I fit right in at tryouts and this time, I was ready."

Pam: "Rachel and I met from an ad and formed GO TO HELEN with various other people. Coincidentally, Amy was the first bassist we auditioned for that band, but she had some schedule and transportation constraints so we kept auditioning. Amy ended up answering an ad that we'd placed years later for a MOTORPSYCHOS bassist. Dennis came to us through an online ad. He replaced Tom Venturino, our original drummer."

Pam, what about GO TO HELEN and why did you break up?

Pam: "GO TO HELEN ended after almost a year of practice, auditioning twenty-six bass players (#26 worked) and only four live shows. Rachel and I were individually going through some personal stuff, and started some other musical projects but within six months from the demise of GO TO HELEN, we were together again forming MOTORPSYCHOS."

Did Amy and Dennis play in other band(s) before MOTORPSYCHOS?

Amy: "I wasn't in any serious bands before the MOTORPSYCHOS. I played in a couple of punk rock bands, that spent more time partying than promoting. I spent a year playing in a basement blues band with some older guys and my uncle, which was a huge learning experience for me. Currently, I play in a side band, called REDUCER. REDUCER is a three piece, which includes my boyfriend Chris on drums and our close friend Frank on guitar. I play bass and scream. It's metal. It's anger. It's excess steam and expression. I do most of the writing. We play out occasionally. It's fun!"

Dennis: "I fooled around with a lot of bands. That was the most fun time of the whole learning experience. I moved out of that scene because all the different musicians that I played with wanted to be in bands, but no one wanted to put forth the effort. So I placed an ad and replied to a lot of ads. I auditioned for about five different bands, before coming across the ad for MOTORPSYCHOS. I learned the six songs and did audition. They must have liked me, because here I am!"

Who came up with the name MOTORPSYCHOS? And do you ride a motorcycle yourself?

Amy: "Actually, my boyfriend Chris (from REDUCER) came up with the name over a couple of drinks one night. It sounded good and fits the band well. I don't ride or own a motorcycle. I always picture a big muscle car with a maniac behind the wheel, when I hear 'motorpsycho'."

Pam: "We were looking for a name which described the music, heavy, frenetic, always moving, moving, moving."

Rachel: "Yeah, it fits our music style and our look. Harley's are great, but I don't own one."

Dennis: "I come from a biker family, that have been members of A.B.A.T.E for twenty years and I ride a 1992-883 sportster!"

Who are your biggest examples (or influences) in music as a band and of each bandmember individual?

Amy: "From a musical perspective, I've always been influenced by heavy, rhythm-based music, that is strong and has substance. Performance-wise, I like energy and movement. I went through my teenage years listening to SLAYER, METALLICA, MEGADETH, all the thrash metal stuff. I was really into punk rock for a while; I love THE EXPLOITED and THE MISFITS. I don't try to emulate any particular person. What comes out of me is a combination of all I see and hear, my own interpretation of it."

Pam: "Speaking for myself, my favorite music is heavy girl band stuff. L7 is by far, my ultra-favorite band. I love BABES IN TOYLAND, JOAN JETT AND THE LUNACHICKS. Gina Volpe's (LUNACHICKS) current band, BANTAM is really good."

Rachel: "As a band, MOTORHEAD and THE MISFITS. Personally, Glenn Danzig, Glenn Benton, Layne Staley, Jan Astbury from THE CULT, Mike Muir and Tom Araya (SLAYER) to name a few."

Dennis: "LED ZEPPELIN was the biggest but mostly ANTHRAX, METALLICA, SLAYER and PANTERA. Now a lot of newer bands got my attention like GODSMACK, BLACK LABEL SOCIE-

TY, KORN, NOTHINGFACE, the list goes on. But I have to admit I also love break beats, jungle and many other forms of techno."

How would you describe the music of MOTORPSYCHOS?

Amy: "I would describe our music as being tight and chunky enough to fall into the metal category, yet catchy and fast enough to be called punk. It never lacks in energy or intent. It's meant to rock your ass off with a firm grip."

Who writes your lyrics and what are they about?

Rachel: "I write the lyrics. They're about real life and make believe. You decide."

Why did you get yourself a male drummer? Aren't there any good female drummers in Pittsburgh or did this just happen?

Amy: "Good female drummers in Pittsburgh exist, but they're rare and usually spoken for. After our old drummer left, we really wanted a female drummer, but the best drummer out of the bunch was Dennis, so we asked him to join. He didn't agree to the wig and dress idea, but he's really good for a guy."

Pam: "Initially, I would have rather had a girl drummer, but we couldn't find one. There are good girl drummers in Pittsburgh, but when the other variables come into play (musical preference, schedule, present commitments, etc.) the list gets shorter and shorter. The bottom line on drummer gender is, I'd rather have a really good guy drummer than a mediocre girl drummer."

Having three female musicians in the band, is this an advantage for you or just the opposite? In other words: are you being accepted as female rockers?

Amy: "I would say we are being accepted as female rockers. People can't deny that we're good when they see a show. We're tight, we rock out, and we're comfortable on stage. If anything, the femme-fronted stuff gets us a little more attention. People seem to be extra blown away when they see girls fuckin' shit up, being loud, and aggressive. One time, this guy says to me after a show, 'I was out by the bar and thought, 'wow, these guys sound good', then I saw there were three girls on the band and I was like, 'Holy Shit!' So there you have it."

Pam: "It's a double-edged sword. We get attention and gigs we might not get if we were just another boy band, but on the other hand, there's the perception of a certain amount of 'novelty' going against us. Sometimes we are asked to play because the

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booker wants a "sexy girl band" on the bill and sometimes we don't feel we're taken seriously because we're women."

Rachel: "Yes, we're being accepted but the advantages and disadvantages are still a bit blurry. I'll get back to you."

Dennis: "I think it helps out at times, because people want to see chicks try to rock out so they can say they suck. But after we are finished with a set, they have this look like they just saw something that was not real. We always get a great response and will continue to, because our fans are the best thing we have."

Please describe your live show. Do you play any cover songs?

Amy: "Live show: smoke, orange and red lighting, Rachel locks in with the crowd, right up front, persistent. We're loud, animated. There's little time between songs, it's a flurry of hair, net stockings (Pam), and drumsticks. There's a lot of sweat onstage, a lot of energy. As far as crowd goes, we have the occasional rowdies that start moshing (I would like to see that all the time). People come up close. I see some of them smiling. Everyone's there to rock. We do it both aurally and visually. As far as covers, we've done a few. We've covered MOTORHEAD, FLUFFY, ALICE COOPER, and THE MISFITS."

Pam: "Our live shows are intense and energetic. We don't like space between songs. We grab hold of the audience, shake the shit out of them for about thirty-five minutes, and leave them bleeding. Every once in a while we might throw in a cover but 99% of the time, our shows are all original music."

Rachel: "Visually and soundwise we're heavy, energetic and confident."

What's been your biggest gig so far and when/where was that?

Amy: "As far as importance, I'd say CBGB's in NYC. It's great for exposure and networking, plus fun as hell. As far as turnout, I'd say the Graffiti Rock Challenge in Pittsburgh. Our friends and fans came out in droves. It was a great feeling to see all those people there for us!"

Pam: "If you mean biggest in terms of coolest, we're playing at CBGB's in August with a bunch of other hard girl bands, most of which we're friends with, so that should be one really good time. If you mean in terms of audience size, it would have to be a band competition in Pittsburgh at a venue, called Rosebud."

Are there any bands, you'd like to share the stage with in the near future?

Pam: "I'd love to play with L7 but since they're on an 'indefinite hiatus', I'm not getting my hopes up. I'd love to play with BANTAM, though..."

Rachel: "DANZIG."

Dennis: "COAL CHAMBER or GWAR. So many bands to even think about."

What's your goal with MOTORPSYCHOS?

Amy: "Our goals change as we go. When we started out, our primary goals were to get in the studio, record our first album, then start playing out of state. With that accomplished, our goal are getting a label, tours, opening for big names, and putting out another album."

Pam: "I don't think I have a goal other than simple stuff like have a satisfying creative experience, musically-speaking, go to fun places, meet cool people, and produce something I'm proud of. Anything beyond that is a bonus."

Rachel: "To keep it together creatively in the soundroom and on stage."

Dennis: "I would like to just prove to myself that hard work and good music can be the coolest job ever. I would love to have the chance to be someone else's influence."

How are the reactions towards your S/T CD?

Amy: "They are very good. I haven't read or heard a bad comment yet!"

Pam: "Not to gloat, but everyone seems to love it. I'm really happy with it."

Rachel: "They've been great! More than we could hope for."

Dennis: "I think we got a real good response from the CD. People are constantly telling us how our CD has been in their CD player for a week or more."

Did you already get any offers from record labels?

Rachel: "We've presented ourselves to a few and hopefully we'll hear back from them in the future."

One of your songs is called "Insane". How "insane" are you?

Amy: "Hmmm..."

Pam: "I try to keep it at bay with medication."

Rachel: "No comment."

What are your plans for the future?

Amy: "Stick with it, keep working with the band and see what happens. The music industry is so unpredictable, it seems to boil down to someone's opinion of marketability. As long as we keep setting reasonable goals, writing music, and having fun, the future shall bring good things."

Dennis: "To release a new CD and make some small tours across the States and possibly overseas."

Did you already write songs for a new CD?

Amy: "Yes, we have a number of songs we can put out in our next CD, but we don't have any plans for recording at this time."

Will the new material be much different from your previous stuff?

Amy: "I think the new material has more of a metal influence than the songs off the CD, we have out now."

Pam: "It's like when you're in the middle of a whirlpool and you can't see it clearly. I think it's more metal but in any case, it's a natural transition whatever it is."

Dennis: "The new CD should be close to the old stuff, but the chemistry has been changed a bit."

What's your opinion about today's metal scene?

Amy: "You have to go underground to find the good bands. I like the old school stuff, that I listened to in the 80's. I don't like the nu-metal. It's not harsh enough. And that seems to be the thing right now."

Rachel: "It's underrated, underappreciated and underground at this point (real metal that is). Vendors don't want to give them a say in how their live shows are presented. Metal bands are more censored than any other."

Dennis: "I think the Metal scene is great here in the States. Everywhere you look, a new band with some killer stuff is out."

Pam, I saw your photos with L7, JOAN JETT, BROADZILLA, KITTIE, LUNACHICKS, THE DONNAS and many other female artists on the internet. Is there still anybody famous you'd like to have your photo taken with?

Pam: "I don't know. All of my idols are there. Maybe BIF NAKED?"

Amy, I see that you love spiders, geckos and your lizard called Zigzag. Can you tell us something more about these rather strange hobbies of yours?

Amy: "(Deep breath because of continuous rambling...) Since I was about seven, I used to keep spiders in jars with pet name labels taped to them. I've had countless numbers of garter snakes (a harmless snake common to Western PA) and toads. I'd tell my mom I was going to the creek and I'd come back with a bucket of crayfish and salamanders that I'd insist on having live in my one foot kid's pool. I've always been fascinated with spiders in particular. The more I learn about them, the more interesting they get. Along with two tarantulas, I have a small collection of spiders I've collected outside and around the house so I can study the individual species. I'm currently breeding a pair of spitting spiders, that I caught in the basement where I work. The lizards, I'm not as in depth about scientifically. They're more visual. I think all reptiles are striking in appearance. Zig Zag, the iguana, is the dragon I've always wanted as a kid minus the bat wings. Even though he's not a ferocious carnivore, he's big enough to give a nasty bite. Unfortunately, I've had stitches. I also have an eastern box turtle and a couple of small frogs. Keeping a myriad of bugs and reptiles around keeps me stimulated and satisfies my curiosities. It keeps me out of trouble, although I do get strange looks from the neighbors when I creep around outside bent over with a jar and a magnifying glass. I don't know... It's just something I've always been into."

Rachel, you are the one that is very interested in the dark side of magic, the occult. You also display a page with artwork of Adam Geyer. Can you tell us a bit more about him?

Rachel: "He's one of the upcoming horror artists of his time. For more information on his damned vision, visit: <http://www.adamgeyer.cjb.net>"

What's the strangest question, people have ever asked you?

Amy: "I cannot think of anything entertaining for this one."

Pam: "If my breasts were real."

Rachel: "If we ever considered dressing Dennis up like a girl to draw 'girl band attention'. And of course the answer is "NO"! All of my major influences are men."

Is there anything you'd like to add to this interview?

Amy: "Stick with what you believe in, never give up and if you find yourself in a bad situation, fart then leave."

Pam: "Gear: I play a Les Paul Standard Anniversary Series amp. Marshall 6100LM bring in a riff or a combination of riffs, that I feel make a song (verse, chorus, and maybe bridge). Sometimes Amy will. We get together and play and revise and sometimes rewrite. Then we tape it all with guitar, bass, and drums and Rachel and lyrics. Our website: <http://www.motorpsychosrock.com>"

Rachel: "Hail to the King, baby!"

CURRENT CD: "Motorpsychos" (2002-indie)