

CATZ 'N' CLAWZ

by Nicky Baldrian

Welcome to CATZ 'N' CLAWZ. This column is aimed to bring attention to female artists who, by and large, get ignored by the main press. There are many good bands and artists out there of which you can listen to on our special CD with this issue. I hope to deliver a new column to you every couple of issues and hopefully continue to bring you a CD too. Our thanks also to Dave Smith from Ravenheart music for the Xandria interview elsewhere in the issue.



If you enjoy bands like Nightwish and Xandria then you will love this Dutch band **IMPERIA**. Helena Iren Michaelson got into music at an early age, taking private singing lessons, and at seventeen she started a band called Trail of Tears. Helena is inspired by her past and the people that surround her life. A tragic event occurred when Helena's mother was brutally killed by her boyfriend but Helena has kept head strong and now has a daughter Angel who is just over a year old and is Helena's life and inspiration.

The new Imperia CD 'Queen of Light' was recorded in Germany and the response from the press has been 'amazing' says Helena. 'I'm also proud that my CD has been released in many countries'

Music is not the only thing that motivates her, like myself Helena is a keen horse rider. We discussed our passion for horses at length – she has two Shetland ponies 'and some rabbits, it's like a mini zoo at home' she laughs.

On the live front Imperia have already been out supporting Nightwish and plan to hit the UK sometime during 2008.

At the moment Helena is in Norway relaxing at her cabin in the forest with her children. 'It's very cold in Norway right now' she says with a shiver. 'So I guess I will be walking around in a sleeping bag' she laughs.

Imperia are awesome, make sure you check them out at www.myspace.com/imperiaband

From Sweden comes **SOFIA**, whom some of you may already be aware of as her album 'Lifetraveller' was released in 2005. The album is fantastic slab of catchy hard rock songs and you can listen on our CD for yourselves or via Sofia's myspace page at www.myspace.com/sofiamusik

'I wanted to become a rockstar, that was my dream,' she says. 'I don't really know what my parents thought about that, but they knew I had talent so I ended up going to music school and when I was sixteen I started to record songs that were written by others, even though I've always been writing songs by myself.'

'In those days it was more pop, and I didn't really feel like that was my kind of music. So I started more and more to write by myself and searching for producers that could give me the sound that I wanted, the music that I loved and could stand up for. I want to do my kind of music and my type of songs! I do it because it's my dream and I really love to be on stage and meet the crowd!'

Sofia's songs are based on real life occurrences. 'It's almost like therapy' she says. 'I want to write what I feel inside so that my fans can get touched and moved by my lyrics and music and hopefully help them to feel happy, sad, recognised etc.'

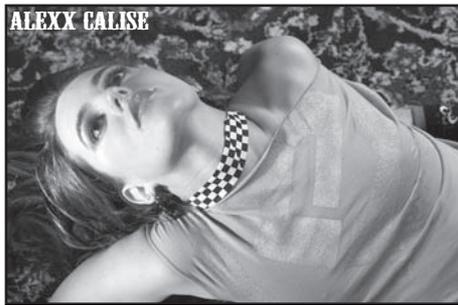
Sofia is a huge fan of Butch Walker. 'His lyrics and music and personality are great. I also love Anouk, Billie Myers, Bon Jovi, Seether, Metallica, Iron Maiden, Skid Row, Pink, The Fray, Keith Urban, Lenny Kravitz,

Motley Crue. And of course the one and only Jimi Hendrix!'

'Lifetraveller' was recorded in Stockholm and she had a helping hand in the song writing from one Cliff Magness. 'I have never met Cliff,' adds Sofia. 'I got a song from him called 'My Bad' that also became the single. He's a really good songwriter! I also got two songs from Butch Walker!'

'Here in Sweden the radio stations here thought that my single was too much rock for them to play, but I was up on the selling charts anyway, and got very high as well! I've got more fans in the States and UK than I have in Sweden! I also got to sing with Sebastian Bach at the Sweden Rock Festival and that was a once in a lifetime experience! He's a true sweetheart!'

Sofia is currently writing songs for a new album and is trying to find a new producer and a label, and you should visit her myspace page to keep up to date. If you have not heard 'Lifetraveller' yet, then get it bought - it rocks.



Florida's **ALEXX CALISE** is an excellent songwriter, and also a lady with a very powerful voice. Her songs are in the pop/rock vein with a slightly alternative twist. Alexx has always written about poetry and as a young kid sung in her local church choir. 'This really helped me develop my pitch and harmonisation,' explains Alexx.

Most of her material is inspired by life, the environment, her family and friends. 'I'm not entirely religious,' she adds, 'I'm extremely spiritual, and I believe in the forces of nature. Depending on which style of song I want to write, I tap into a particular time in my life when I was feeling a certain way and I emot and go where the song takes me.'

This year Alexx explains that she has gone through a lot of dramatic changes in her life. Leaving her comfort zone of Florida and now residing in L.A has made her self-reliant and independent 'I'm very inspired at this point in my life because I feel like I'm seeing the world through new eyes.'

'Morning Pill' is Alexx's excellent new album. It was recorded at Mercury Studios in Florida and also at Jim Henson's studio in West Hollywood. Alexx is inspired by Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Heart, Buckcherry, through to Aerosmith and Soundgarden and also pop bands like Snoop Dogg and Justin Timberlake.

'I know the latter probably comes as a shock to some being that I'm a rocker,' she laughs 'but I find that there are certain lyrical and rhythmic elements characteristic of those genres that are extremely interesting and entirely applicable to any musical style.'

Indeed, I have always said that music should not be based upon genres it should bases as music and the song, and if the song captivates you then does it really matter who has performed it?

'Morning Pill' has been gaining a good reaction stateside. 'It's tremendous. I'm completely honest and I think that people have been craving something real and tangible for some time now. I write, play and sing all of my own material which, I think, in this day and age of ghost-writers and ghost vocalists and smoke and mirrors, sets me apart.' She beams with confidence, and rightly so as when you listen to tracks like 'Give It To Me' and 'Falling' you can tell where Alexx is coming from right away.

'I'm prepping for my tour early next year in Australia / New Zealand, and I have some great tracks in the works that I'll be unleashing in 2008. Look out world, Alexx Calise is taking over!' She couldn't have said it better.

Check Alexx out at www.alexscalise.com

TONI ROWLAND



South Africa's **TONI ROWLAND** recently released her debut CD that also features the amazing **KEN HENSLEY**.

Toni grew up singing in the house, inspired by her mother who was an opera singer. Her father was also a songwriter, '... so music has pretty much always been a part of my life,' Toni explains. 'It was the death of my hero, blues-rock guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan that finally pushed me into the music scene, and I wrote my first song the day after he died.'

Toni is a sensitive soul and spiritually aware of the environment, which reflects on her song writing. 'My songs reflect various timeframes in my life, moods and aspects of others and myself around me. These experiences inspire me in my song writing. I feel that people will be able to relate to the songs because the music is about everyday issues.'

Indeed, Toni's music is damn fine, the songs are all excellent and flow with passion – check out the track on the CD for clear evidence. Her inspirations also show throughout her album 'Unfolded'. Toni is into Fleetwood Mac – perhaps one of the more obvious inspirations of the record – as well as being inspired by Kate Bush, Tori Amos, Sting and a South African artist called Johnny Clegg (Le Zulu Blanc).

'I also enjoy 'Pink', I think, she rocks!! And then there are the masters of song writing like Ken Hensley who has just been a constant inspiration and whose guidance has been invaluable to me. Once again, great songs, great harmonies. Ken speaks though both his lyrics and music. Artists inspire me like that. But it does not necessarily even have to be rock music or the same language for that matter that I find inspirational. Music is a universal language. If one cannot reach the listener through the lyrics, the rhythm and instrumentation must speak to the listener.'

She is happy with the reaction towards her music. 'I am curious to see what the reaction will be once the full CD is released because one or two of the tracks on the CD are quite different and have a slightly more pop feel to them. I think there is something for everyone on this CD because the music has many different aspects to it and is quite diverse.'

About a year ago Tori hooked up with Ken Hensley. As she explain, 'Ken liked the songs and saw a lot of potential in them and me. He invited me to come and record my debut album with him in Spain. He assembled a team of top musicians and engineers to assist with the production of the album, so I was very fortunate. My sister Bronwyn, who wrote two of the tracks on the album, also joined us to sing backing vocals. It was a huge privilege working with Ken and I received invaluable guidance from him regarding my singing and song writing.'

Right now Tori is involved with a huge campaign known as 'The Sole Of Africa' which is an initiative of the Mineseeker Foundation for the detection, removal of landmines and supporting the affected communities. 'I have just returned from Mozambique as a part of the campaign' she explains 'and the experience really touched me deeply. It has given me a lot of food for thought and spiritual inspiration to write songs. I cannot wait to get back home to pick up my guitar. Also Ken has invited me to record my second album with him in the near future so I need to be fully focused. I am very thankful for everything that has been happening to me and I am just trying my best everyday to reach for the future in a positive frame of mind!'

Check Tori Rowland out at www.tonirrowland.com



St. Louis' **SHAUNA YOUNG** always loved singing from a very young age. 'It just came to me naturally,' she says. 'I would grab a microphone and perform for my parents in the living room. My mother would ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up, and with my sunglasses on I responded, I want to be a star!'

Shauna has the potential to be a star with excellent catchy songs like the powerhouse rocker 'Given Enough' with its guitar cranking riffs and smooth high powered vocals.

Shauna is inspired by Pat Benatar, Mariah Carey, and Journey. 'So many singers don't seem to exhume the passion of these artists,' she explains. 'I think Benatar brought female fronted rock to new level. She was a rocker, but had a wonderful melodic voice. Carey has amazing vocal talent. My style and persona has definitely been crafted by their influence. Journey is Journey, what can I say? I just love 'Faithfully', one of my all time favourites. I almost feel like I am floating when I listen to it.'

The reaction to Shauna's music has taken her by surprise, as she is yet to release her debut album 'The labels so often control the destiny of any aspiring artist. I have attempted to create melodic but edgy pop/rock songs. I think this style of music is missing in the 'scene' today. The generation before me grew up on rock. My generation has listened to everything from Pop, Pop/Rock, Alternative to Urban. I am looking for that magical mix somewhere between it all.'

'Like so many artists, I am looking for the finances to produce a truly professional album,' she explains. 'I continue to hope my current demo will attract the right people and things will take off from there'

You can check Shauna Young out at www.myspace.com/shaunayoung85



Sweden's Johnny Roxxy has been playing guitar since he was 15. 'I started in front of the mirror,' he laughs. Influenced by glam he played in bands like Plastic Dolls. Unfortunately their frontman passed away but Johnny didn't give up on music. He teamed up with vocalist Julia and drummer Daniel Jackzin, guitarist Geoff Lawrence, bassist Carl Thunberg and formed **GLITZY GLOW** and he now feels he is making the music he always wanted to. Julia is inspired by the likes of Tori Amos and Kate Bush through to Paul Stanley and 'the bone breaking aggressions of Entombed' she enthuses. I ask Julia about the band's songs. "Now is Never Later' is my favourite song right now. I simply love it! It's a heavy song. Musically it's very dark but it's also an almost psychotic touch of happiness to it, which makes the whole thing very surrealistic and very G.G.'

Indeed G.G.'s music is catchy and fun yet melodic, check out the brilliance of the hard hitting catchy 'Black And Sunny Day', a song that cranks along in the vein of Phantom Blue and Hanoi Rocks.

Julia explains that a full album is ready and will be out soon. 'We're tall and dark and we look like we could eat you alive,' she laughs. Watch out for the band on the road and keep an eye on updates for the album at www.glitzyglow.com

BLIND SHOT from Greece are led by singer Chrisanthi and multi-instrumentalist Constantine. The band are influenced by the likes of Europe, Journey, Robin Beck, Vixen and Dare as evident on the very catchy keyboard soaked 'Haunted Heart', a song that fits the above criteria with ease, especially the high powered vocals.

'We had a lot of fun making this song,' says Constantine. 'I'm really proud of 'Haunted Heart' which I wrote on my own,' continues Chrisanthi. 'When I write songs alone it doesn't really come out as AOR/hard rock but this one did'. And the result is wonderful – a really fantastic catchy song.

It wasn't until 2004 however that she discovered AOR and met Constantine. 'I knew a few bands and names growing up but I never really went deep with it! I knew Robin Beck, Europe, Survivor, Foreigner and all the classics. In the past year I started taking vocal lessons. Singing rock music though really helps me express my true emotions on certain things; I have tender moments and moments of rage. I LOVE IT! When I met Constantine everything clicked and I was the singer of their band. We matched so much musically that we decided to do our own thing. So that's when we started buying recording equipment and started jotting down ideas.'

'Ever since I can remember I really liked instrumental music like Tony MacAlpine,' continues Constantine. 'Since I play both keyboards and guitar he is most inspiring because his music is very lyrical. I'm inspired by artists ranging from Symphony X to FM, to whatever is melodic and keyboard or guitar oriented.'

The band is in the process of recording but it's a slow process. 'We have day jobs that require a lot of time and energy. We are working very hard to make it happen. Now we have enough material for an album we just need finishing touches and to find a contract.'

So look out for Blind Shot during 2008 and check them out at www.myspace.com/blindshotband



French artist **EILERA** recently released her superb new album 'Fusion' through Spinefarm. Eilera is a very spiritual lady, with a deep understanding of spiritual energy.

'Fusion' was recorded at Eilera's home studio and also at Finnvox studios in Helsinki. 'Lots of sweat and energy in the air,' explains Eilera. Joining the project is guitarist Loïc Tézénas, of whom Eilera reveals, 'We have this special chemical musical reaction between us and it's always fun and exciting working with Loïc.'

'Fusion' is inspired by deep emotions and Celtic themes mixed around rock. I asked Eilera where she draws her inspiration from. 'I just follow my instincts! I have these two obsessions in life and work which are freedom and beauty. Whichever song I work on, these two have to intrude and say, 'Hey! Don't you forget us!' Yet they were not the only ones to drive me. For one of the central elements in this album is passion, followed closely by my attraction to contrasts: warmth/cold, strength/frailty, girl/woman. So it just made sense that the music would follow in this direction – modern metal-rock and electronic sounds with old, genuine Celtic folk music.'

Prior to going solo Eilera was in a band called Chrysalis who released a CD that was in the melodic metal vein mixed with jazz and electronics. 'The CD was very well received on the underground scene,' she says, 'but when the time came to record the full length album I was already in another place. I did not want to work within the limits of the band anymore. And I wanted to sing my songs. Actually I think I needed it.'

Her first album as solo artist was called 'Facettes' and I asked Eilera if it was in the same style as 'Fusion'? 'It's more pop,' she explains. 'It corresponds to a time when I was very excited about trying new directions. It was very refreshing and exciting ... I had no more limitations and I did not have to justify myself to

anyone anymore. And it got me my signature deal with Spinefarm Records after a friend of mine working with them gave them my 'Facettes' CD, and they contacted me and a deal was struck.'

As introduction to the new record an EP called 'Precious Moment' was released 'This when I started to combine heavy sounds with the knowledge I had been acquiring since 'Facettes'. It marked my reconciliation with heavy music. I was ready to start working with it again. 'Precious Moment' is an open love letter to Life with it's exciting and beautiful moments as well as it's sadder and more destructive ones.'

Check her out at www.eilera.com



I first wrote about New York's **KELLY PADRICK** around seven years ago and it has been interesting watching how this fine genuine artist has musically grown. Kelly started singing at a young age. 'I would just love to sing silly rhymes ... that's what made me happy. Dolly Parton and early country music inspired me, because that was what my dad raised me on.'

Kelly's media response stateside has been very positive. She is about to have her song 'Pizza and Fairytales' feature in the upcoming movie 'Trust The Man' starring X Files star David Duchovny, Billy Crudup and Julianne Moore.

'Pizza And Fairytales' is a sexy, sonic pop song that vocally reminds of Shirley Manson from Garbage crossed with Stevie Nicks. It's very cool with great towering vocals from Kelly, but it's also very melodic in structure too. 'It's about the man who inspired the song,' she explains. 'He is still, and will always be the love of my life, and he truly is a great friend. To this day, he still inspires me to write about him.'

I ask Kelly how she got involved with the movie soundtrack and if the song was written especially for the movie and if she had met any of the cast? 'I knew the music supervisor from 'Trust The Man'. I met him when he had seen me play a few years ago, and I collaborated with him on some music. We've always kept in touch so he called me one day and told me he would like to use my music for this movie he was working on. He had heard my CD 'Haze' and he felt that 'Pizza and Fairytales' would be perfect for a background scene and turns out it was. I saw the movie with all of the stars at the film premiere, and then went with them to the after-party. It was so crowded and crazy I unfortunately didn't officially meet anyone, although David Duchovny and I locked eyes for a nanosecond.'

Kelly is currently working on her next record. 'It should be ready in for early 2008. The album will be distributed by iTunes and will be able to be bought through Amazon and some other internet markets. Writing is my passion, it's something that will keep me motivated for a very long time,' she smiles.

As well the new CD entitled 'Carmine Street' Kelly is busy shooting a video that will be directed by Patricia Chica (of Roch Voisine, Mia, fame). I ask her how she hooked up with Patricia and what is involved in setting up in the making of a music video 'I hooked up with Patricia Chica through Myspace, which has turned out to be an amazing vehicle for meeting people. I saw her director's reel and knew she would be perfect for 'Start Clean'. She had the vision, the artistic feel and openness to fully express what the song was about, she is an amazing director and very easy to work with.'

Check Kelly out at www.kellypadrick.com

VANITY INK are a superb band, with tons of attitude and wicked songs like 'Any Day Now' and the awesome guitar-crunching 'Someone Else'. In fact, the whole debut album 'On Your Skin' just rocks.

Annabella had previously jammed with band members Juha Bandit and Sam Junni in a band called Weirdora. When they met bassist Mike Peltola everything started working out for them and Vanity Ink

VANITY INK



was born. 'As soon as we all got together, we started rocking and we don't wanna stop! Jussi was found later on after one of our gigs at Tampere and he fits so good! Oh, I love these guys!'

'On Your Skin' was recorded in eastern Finland at a place called Joensuu with a qualified, professional sound engineer Kimmo Perkiö. 'He is also our good friend, and as nuts as we are too! The studio is at countryside in a peaceful place with beautiful scenes. You can run straight from the sauna to the flowing river for a swim.'

'Many people love us and some people hate us. When they watch us performing, they all enjoy our show one way or another,' explains Annabella. 'And that's because we're having lot of fun on the stage, I mean anything can and does happen because we really let ourselves go like it was the first time every time, or the last day of our lives!'

Musically Annabella is inspired by Prince. 'For me he is a guy who makes whatever he wants without limits, without caring about cultural or moral pressures – not only in his music but also in his performing as well. There are also some Finnish bands that are really important to me like Sielun Veljet, Pelle Miljoona, Smack, Peer Günt, Hearthill and Melrose. I could fill this list with Guns'n' Roses, Stone Temple Pilots, Soundgarden etc, but it's not just music that inspires me, I love going out seeing friends and getting new friends. Or to drink some red wine at home and relax and when I've finished my red wine I go out seeing friends after all. Or go to sauna and drink some sauna-beers as they are called in Finland and when I've finished, well ... you know.'

Right now Vanity Ink are mixing new songs, putting together riffs and hope to get their next album out soon. In the meantime they are out gigging and want to hit the UK for shows, so make sure that you check out 'On Your Skin' at www.vanityink.net

ROTT



ROTT cast a charm of influences that focus on the heavy end of the hard rock/metal spectrum. They have just released their debut album 'Out Of Time' and when playing the record you hear influences from Lacuna Coil, Lullacry, Tool and even Metallica. The band's music can be thrashy, gritty, experimental but always rocking thanks to singer Molly Sirenne's diverse vocal range.

The good old conflict of good vs. evil inspired Molly's songwriting. 'You'll see that theme repeated throughout a lot of our lyrics,' she says. 'The human pursuit of answers to the questions like why are we here and where do I fit in. I believe a lot of us feel lost sometimes but every human soul is immortal and has a purpose.'

The response has been tremendous. We haven't had to sell ourselves much at all. The request for airplay, interviews, promo packages, etc. seems to come daily. I'm very flattered and I may need to hire a secretary, haha.'

I love the texture in Molly's vocals coupled with Dan Proffitt's nasty guitar work, which combined make 'OFT' a winner. It takes several spins to get into but once it pulls you in there's no escape.

As a debut album the production is petty good and

the songs performed well. The band are testing the waters with this album and I think they will hit soon hit their stride come the second album. Rott mean business and you can check them out at www.myspace.com/rotband

California's **CLANDESTINE** are led by singer June Clark, who '... was a girl who listened to European Goth metal between every class break, while everyone else enjoyed the trends like Dance or Hip Hop'.

In 2002 June moved to the United States to pursue heavy music, where she received various music lessons from great teachers in Los Angeles and then formed Clandestine when she met bassist Chad Whitaker. As Chad explains, 'We were required to take a music class in grade school. I had been interested in playing guitar so I attempted to join the 'Strings' orchestra class'. Chad soon learnt that they didn't have guitars in that orchestra. 'My buddy chose upright bass so I went ahead and did the same.'

Greg Collister always loved music and wanted to be a drummer. 'I started playing drums when I was 10 years old. I got my start with the 5th grade music program in Galva, Illinois at Galva Elementary School.'

Making up Clandestine is guitarist Dan Durakovich. Dan picked up playing guitar after his friend bought an axe and introduced him to the likes of Metallica. 'I then took things further and had lessons from an amazing teacher in Indiana and eventually moved out to Los Angeles to pursue a musical career and here I am.' Musically, Dan tortures himself to get the music out of his system. 'It can be a brutal process! I think I get more 'writer's block' than most musicians,' he adds.

'There is so much more beyond our appearance, what we do, or how we act towards others, society and the world,' adds June. 'Finding out what's under the veil fascinates and disturbs me at the same time, and I almost have to let those feelings out. It is like my personal mental therapy to write songs with hidden ideas and feelings.'

I ask the band about their songs. Greg loves 'Fearless' because 'It's complex, filled with a system of tight grooves.' Dan enjoys 'Pretend' because of the solid bass force. 'Hearing Chad vamp on the chorus really makes the song groove. Also, all the song parts are intertwined very tastefully and June's mesmerising melodies make this song really fun to play,' he adds.

For June, it's new song 'Lies'. 'It will be featured in our full-length album. The song feels great when performing, and I like how the heaviness and softness in that song balance each other. The message is about irresistibly drowning to someone or something while you know it is lethal, and it makes you fade away at the end.'

The band have been receiving quite a healthy response for the EP which they produced and recorded themselves. They plan on releasing a full new album in 2008. 'We always agonise about our music and performance because it is the most serious issue in our lives. It's a challenge for us to write music that even other musicians can appreciate.'

So watch out for action from Clandestine during 2008 and check them out at www.clandestineband.com

Helsinki's **BARBE-Q-BARBIES** band came together in 2002. 'It's been a rocky road so far, but everything is going in the right direction,' says drummer Nina.

The band have a bond, a group spirit that locks them together which generates inspiration for them as well as their own individual life experiences that keep the band tight and motivated. They are writing hard for their debut album that they hope to release in 2008. 'We've had a great crew on the producing side,' says Nina. 'Bazie (from 69 Eyes) and Hannu Leiden (Major Leiden Productions), are with us and part of the bond, but for now we're really looking a good label for Barbies and the new songs have been recorded at Seawolf studios, Helsinki.'

B-Q-B are inspired by bands like AC/DC, Motörhead, KISS, Girlschool. Nina goes on to explain how the bands fanbase is building up. 'It's been cool, I guess people expect less from us because we're girls and then get highly surprised when we hit the stage and kick their ass. We've always thought about ourselves as a band, not as a girl band. And we concentrate on music, that's the most important thing of all. We want people to take us seriously and work hard for that. Unfortunately female bands/artists sometimes have tendencies to give a wrong impression about

themselves or want the attention for wrong reasons. That's not for us.'

By the time you read this B-Q-B's will have lined up some shows in London so keep checking them out via www.myspace.com/barbeqbarbies for updates and also check out their songs, as they are fun, hooky and in your face.

MYSTIC JAYYD



Led by Sandra Naro comes **MYSTIC JAYYD**. Sandra and her sister have done nothing but sing and harmonise their whole lives. 'It just comes naturally,' says Sandra 'You feel, you react, you go wherever the music takes you.'

And it took her to Buffalo in New York where Sandra met the rest of Mystic Jayyd. 'We talked, sang, had a great time at Rock-n-Roll Heaven, and briefly talked about us all getting together. They needed a lead singer and I didn't know how serious they were about putting a band together.'

A year later, Sandra's husband Phil Naro then got an email asking if he knew of a female singer willing to sing original material in an all female rock band. 'The Girls had thought that I was too busy and too professional to be in their band,' adds Sandra. 'Let me tell you that I have been in quite a few bands in the past, but I have never felt the emotion and feel of a song coming from the heart as the songs that Ann and Col had written.' Which brings us to the next question, motivation.

'Ann and Col believed and felt every word they put down on paper. Maryann and I had no problem whatsoever in incorporating our harmonies and rhythm to make you feel the song along with Ann and Col.'

Mystic Jayyd was recorded at Select Sound in Buffalo, New York, then mixed at Wellsley Studios, Toronto, Ontario and will be release next year. In the meantime check them out at www.mysticjayyd.piczo.com

VICE SQUAD



London's **VICE SQUAD** have been out and about gigging and releasing records for a number of years. VS are led by one BEKI BONDAGE who was a Kerrang magazine Lady Killer back in the day with her band THE BOMBSHELLS.

Beki is simply inspired by a love and desire to make music and make a lot of noise 'It's a way to express my anger at the iniquities of life. Music is proof that there is a God, and the music business is proof that there is Satan.'

Musically Beki is inspired by great singers like Little Richard and Aretha Franklin through to artists who aren't afraid to say what they want to say 'like Joe Strummer' she says. 'I would love to be a lead guitarist as opposed to a lead vocalist.'

'I'm always excited by brilliant lead players, and jealous too! Nothing beats cranking your amp up to eleven and making an unholy racket. Music is the sexiest thing on Earth.'

We talk about music in general and Beki explains it's impossible to choose a favourite song. 'I like them for different reasons. 'Complete Control' by the Clash is still a big favourite, particularly if I need to get in a fighting mood, which seems to be most of the time, haha. I love playing our own song 'Spitfire' live in the

live set because it gives me a stiffy and I love Kev's ferocious drumming. If I was in a fruity mood it would be a song with a lot of Les Paul action, preferably played by men in catsuits and high heels,' she giggles.

Vice Squad are a great hard hitting live band and the fans are totally into it. 'We were floundering around a bit when we first started playing under the name again back in the late 90's because we were trying to please too many people, but when we started making 'Defiant' I decided to please myself and be totally honest. There's no point trying to cater to fakes and flakes anyway, they should stick to their day jobs and 2.1 kids etc and keep their noses out of Rock 'n' Roll. So I say what I think on that album, and the audience appreciate that. We've got a fantastic positive energy live and get everyone's up and into it and then all get pissed together after the show...brilliant!!'

As to why The Bombshells broke up ... 'We broke up because they couldn't get enough gigs to keep the van and P.A on the road. The band members got fed up with getting nowhere ... the usual story!!! The Bombshells were a very hard working band which never got any recognition. But I'm proud of what we did as we managed to be self-contained and self-sufficient and lasted about ten years, though of course the line-up changed quite a bit due to members leaving because they didn't become rock stars over night. Music is hard, which is why so many give up and become 'normal'. It costs a fortune to keep a band functioning yet you get paid peanuts, so only those who are very dedicated and/or very stupid stick at it.'

Right now Vice Squad are completing their next album 'Fairground For The Demented'. 'It sounding awesome,' exclaims Beki. 'We're recording this one at Granary studios in Kent, which is brilliant as we can make a lot more noise than we can at home. The whole sound has gone up several notches since Kev Taylor joined as he's such an excellent drummer, he's completely transformed our sound and our songs. Lumpy (lead guitar) and myself always knew we were good song writers but didn't realise quite how good till we played them with Kev. We're all really excited about this album and can't wait to get it finished and play it live.'

If you get the chance, go and see the band live, they rock!! Check them out at www.myspace.com/vicesquad



From Holland come **SKYTAH** whose debut album 'Gypsy Mentality' is a fantastic slab of music. The band was born after guitarist Ben Humpig responded to an advertisement from singer Adriënn. In the first years of Skytah's existence Ben and Adriënn wrote the songs and managed to record a demo.

'Gypsy Mentality' was recorded at Wateringen in the Netherlands with the band members being influenced by the likes of Skunk Anansie, Alice in Chains, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Black Sabbath, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin.

The reaction towards the album has been positive. 'Some fans have even stated that 'Gypsy Mentality' possesses a 'lonely first class quality'. Most critical notes we have gotten so far concern the production; more specifically, that Skytah's sound is not raw or specific enough. However, during our shows the audience is without exception immensely enthusiastic,' says Adriënn.

The band hope to write and produce a breakthrough second album. 'Our aim is to reach as many people as possible with our music.' Check them out at www.myspace.com/skytah

In our last issue we featured on our cover CD a track by Germany's **ROCK IGNITION**. I caught up with Heather Shockley to find out more about this excellent band. Formed in 2006 by singer Heather and Silent Force bassist Jürgen Steinmetz the guys quickly put



together an EP called 'I Can't Resist' which was produced by Dennis Ward (Pink Cream 69). 'We put lots of effort and enthusiasm into this EP,' says Heather, 'and we think it represents us fully and is a very good debut.' In the meantime the song writing doesn't stop and the band hope to have a full length CD by the end of next year, one for which I can't wait for as the band rock and Heather is an excellent vocalist.

'The recordings took a bit longer than expected,' explains Heather, 'getting all the permissions to release it was also not so easy, but we believed so much in it and we put so much effort in 'our baby' that we definitely didn't wanna give up! And we finally got it released and I'm very happy and surprised about the great reaction from the press and the listeners! We have reached lots of people with different musical tastes, not only from the hard rock/metal scene but also people with completely different backgrounds, this is definitely the most surprising thing for us. I have to say that the biggest satisfaction comes from reading their emails and getting to know how big their love and support is for Rock Ignition – believe me, that has no price!'

Heather has always had hard rock in her blood. 'Hard rock has always been a big part in my 'growing up' process. I find it to be so energetic and at the same time a melodic and touching genre. Hard rock makes you want to take your motorcycle and cruise all over the world, get on stage and sing your heart out or maybe just get together with some friends and enjoy some beers by the beach listening to the sweetest ballad.'

Heather was also involved with the Queen musical 'We Will Rock You' and has also been out on the road as guest singer for power-metal merchants Kamelot and she is inspired by the bands she grew up on. 'I grew up listening to bands like Bon Jovi, Europe, Queen and later Little Angels, Aerosmith, Skid Row and Mr. Big. The most inspiring artist for me is Freddie Mercury; I really admire his talent and his open and honest attitude towards life and the people that surrounded him.'

Rock Ignition are soon screaming out you're way live, in the flesh and will soon release a full length CD. So check them out at www.rockignition.com



Gisa Vatsky was raised on a diet of classical music. Her father was very artistic and played several instruments and in the house at a young age Gisa became her father's backup vocalist. 'I grew up surrounded by culture, I started playing guitar and took some piano lessons and discovered Italian and English pop and rock n' roll, which changed my life,' she explains.

Gisa now fronts a new band called **INDIGO DYING**, whose album was just released by Frontiers. An excellent band with fantastic songs like the ultra catchy and melodic 'Breathe In Water'. ID has been produced by Fabrizio Grossi (Glenn Hughes) and features one Michael Kiske, the former Helloween vocalist.

'The songs are very introspective, spiritual and practical,' explains Gisa. Even the ones that might have a Christian address are very common and applicable to everyone, not matter the credo...half the band

is Jewish!!'

Prior to Indigo Dying, Gisa fronted a female rock opera called Bاندage and did studio work for artists including Perry Farrell, Pattie LaBelle and Dennis DeYoung. On her inspirations ... 'My life, the way it turned out, is a constant teaching and inspiring lesson. Hopefully I will become a better artist and human being every day. Honesty and integrity are a driving force in me and my choices are based on that, even if it sounds crazy. Like John Lennon said: 'You may say I am a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope one day you'll join us ...and the world will be as one!' He still inspires me, LOVE and Compassion are in the end my greatest inspiration!'

Check out Indigo Dying, it's a fantastic album, very melodic with huge vocal harmonies, have a listen at www.myspace.com/gisav

Best Female Artist 2007

- 1) Nightwish
- 2) Xandria
- 3) Dolores O'Riordan
- 4) Robin Beck
- 5) Within Temptation

Best NEW Female Artist 2007

- 1) Kelly Padrick
- 2) Laura Kaye
- 3) Kathrine McPhee
- 4) Saskia
- 5) Indigo Dying

CATS N' CLAWS

Free CD with Fireworks 31

1. **Shauna Young - Given Enough**
Promotional Track (www.myspace.com/shaunayoung85)
2. **Tarja - Ciaran's Well**
From The Album 'My Winter Storm' (www.spinefarm.fi)
3. **Jaime Kyle - World Of Crazy**
Promotional Track (www.myspace.com/jaimekylemusic)
4. **Imperia - Norway**
From The Album 'Queen Of Light' (www.massacre-records.com)
5. **Glitzy Glow - Black & Sunny Day**
From upcoming album 'Welcome To This Glow' (www.glitzyglow.com)
6. **Sofia - Hangover**
From The Album 'Lifetraveller' (www.myspace.com/sofiamic)
7. **Xandria - Save My Life**
From the album 'The Seventh Veil' (www.xandria.de)
8. **Kelly Padrick - Sometimes**
From the album 'Haze' (www.kellypadrick.com)
9. **Eilera - Fusion**
From the album 'Fusion' (www.eilera.com)
10. **Vanity Ink - Someone Else**
From the album 'On Your Skin' (www.vanityink.net)
11. **Rott - Out Of Time**
From the album 'Out Of Time' (www.myspace.com/rottband)
12. **Toni Rowland - I'll Be Waiting**
From the album 'Unfolding' (www.tonirrowland.com)
13. **Clandestine - My Lord**
From the EP 'Clandestine' (www.clandestineband.com)
14. **Skytah - Gypsy Mentality**
From the album 'Gypsy Mentality' (www.skytah.com)
15. **Barbe-q-barbies - Escort**
Promo Cd Single (www.myspace.com/barbeqbarbies)
16. **Vice Squad - Voice Of The People**
From The Album 'Defiant' (www.vicesquad.co.uk)
17. **Blind Shot - Haunted Heart**
Promo Track (www.myspace.com/blindshotband)
18. **Alexx Calise - Give It To Me**
From the album 'Morning Pill' (www.alexscalise.com)
19. **Mystic Jayyd - Girls Night Out**
From The EP 'Mystic Jayyd' (www.myspace.com/mysticjayyd)
20. **Jaded - Lies**
From The Ep 'Jaded' (www.jadedrockers.com)