

The Uncivil Society Presents:

Gorilla X Plays the Hits



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To celebrate the release of my 10th multi-media project Gorilla X and the Uncivil Society presents a compilation of the cover songs that have been included in each project. This creative milestone celebrates and showcases Gorilla X's unique approach to interpreting commercial hits and rendering them unlistenable and unsuitable for mainstream listening pleasure. This project is presented in one track, like a timeline in history, which travels from the most recent recordings to relics found in the past.

Enjoy! (Or not)

- 00:00 Frank Sinatra "My Way" - *Gorilla X Plays the Hits* (2019)
- 04:39 Sleater-Kinney - "Dig Me Out" - *Tales from the Panopticon* (2018)
- 06:43 Neil Diamond/Killdozer - "I am I said" - *Ego and My Own* (2018)
- 10:27 Fear "Let's Have a War" - *Weapons of Mass Frustration* (2017)
- 13:21 Talking Heads "Once in a Lifetime" - *N.O.T.A* (2004)
- 17:44 Johnny Nash "I Can See Clearly Now" - *Minority of One* (2003)
- 20:37 Husker Du "Celebrated Summer" - *We Watch the Lemons Sing* (2003)
- 24:57 Minutemen "History Lesson, part III" - *We Watch the Lemons Sing* (2003)
- 27:50 Laverne and Shirley Theme Song "Doing It Our Way" - *Land of 1000 Odors* (2002)
- 29:13 Lungfish "Put Your Hand into My Hand" (Mono Mix) - *Forks and Spoons* (2001)

TRT: 31:39

"When he opens his mouth you are sure you don't want to hear whatever he's got in it."

-Greil Marcus

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Gorilla X: *The Crank Prophet*

A "Crank Prophet", described by Greil Marcus, is a person "standing on a street telling you what you don't want to hear. They are the person you pretend you don't notice, never saw or ever heard." In reflecting on the projects I have produced, coupled with the muted reception from the eternally patient cast of friends, family and random strangers I have shared my recordings with over the years I couldn't agree more.

According to Marcus the "crank prophet" is an Avatar of an American Voice, meaning you never know what he is going to say.

"When he opens his mouth you are sure you don't want to hear whatever he's got in it. It is easier to decide to turn away than listen. There is madness in his voice - a madness that gives off the odd feeling that it might be cultivated, that it might be a con, that it might be there to get you to buy something, even if you can't imagine what it is. There is authority in the voice - the authority of someone who really doesn't care if you listen. But knows that if you won't the person behind you might, and you might be back."

In many ways this succinctly sums up the entirety of my recordings.

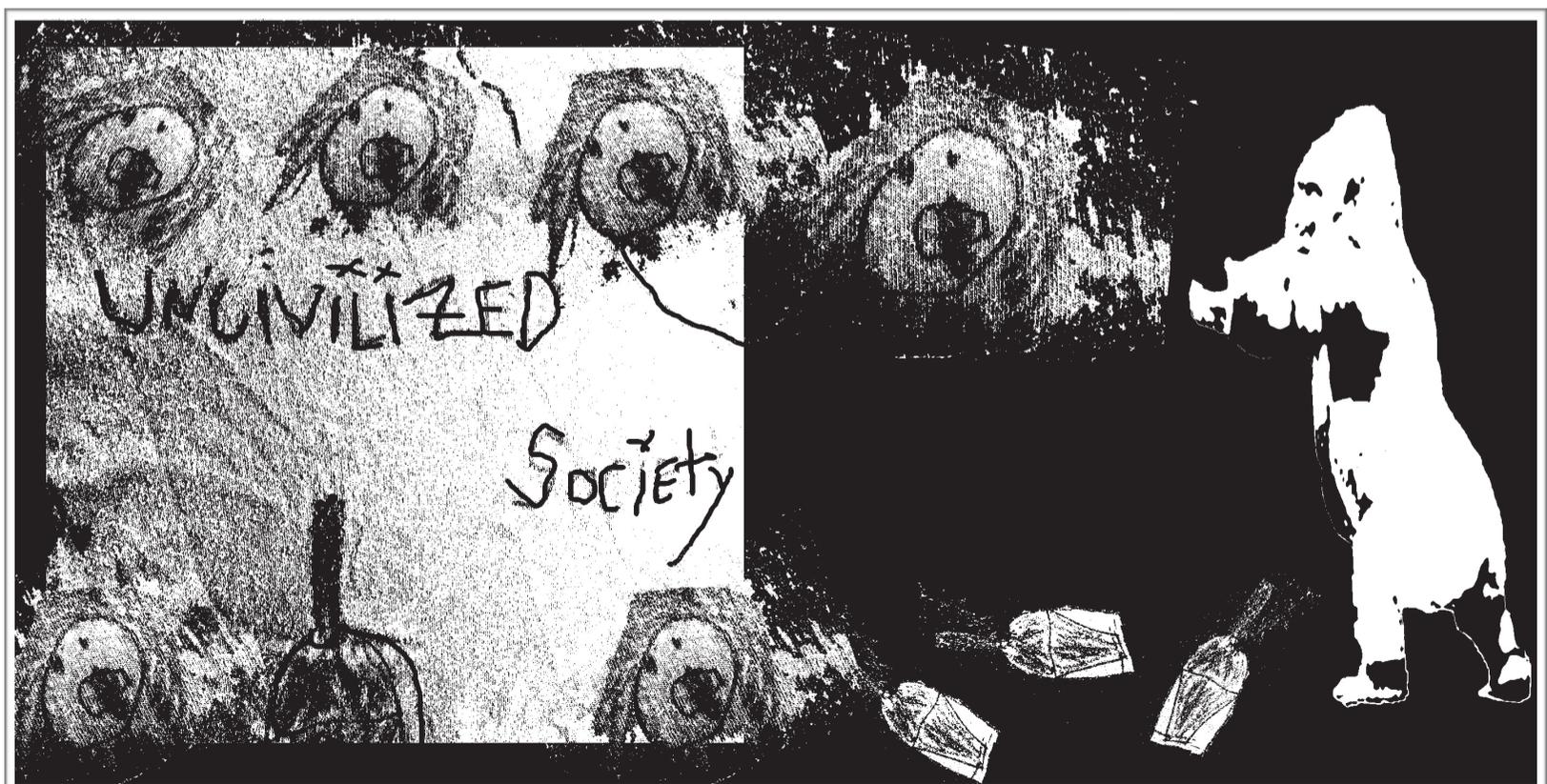


A central component to the role of the prophet in humanity is they describe the terms of how their city, their country and ultimately themselves will be judged - be it by a deity, by history, or the silence of death. These projects are the domain where I can express critical critique of the current construction of our country and society, and describe my discontent. Ironically I am able to do so because I have inherent privileges afforded to me by my race, gender and social class - the very same structures I am criticizing. To counteract this contradiction I have never sold or attempted to turn my expression into a commodity.

Mr. Marcus describes the motivation of the "crank prophet" is to *speaks the truth as they know it, and if they they don't they will be forced into a life a self-hatred and self-denial.* I both agree and understand this because as I have grown to embrace a life of normalcy replete with adult responsibilities, including work and family - I keep producing these projects not only as an outlet for creative expression, but as a way to keep me relatively sane.

Where I diverge with Mr. Greil's hypothesis is that he feels a prophet "carries a burden of having their vision come to fruition" or being ridiculed because they couldn't exactly predict the future. I portend to do neither. I do, because I love to do it. I understand and accept that I am a hack musician, a terrible vocalist and a sloppy graphic artist. I don't care about achieving perfection, because I am happiest while being engaged in the exalted messiness of my creative process. I don't worry about capturing the perfect take because the time I spend chasing that false god might keep me from discovering a larger truth. I am satisfied by the pure joy I derive from expressing myself without filter or restraint, even at the cost of shutting off others ears and minds of my friends and family. I have embraced this compulsion for creative expression and found a way to have it be part of my life, for better or worse.

Another motivation for me to invest my time and money into making and distributing these recordings is that I am deeply curious about this living social experiment called Democracy that I have the fortune of being born into, and living with. I have traveled extensively throughout the United States and have experienced it's freedoms and encountered it's contradictions. I have studied our nation's history, and have always been intrigued with the invitation offered by the first amendment in the Constitution of the United States which grants a citizen the right to express their ideas through free speech. The notion that anyone can peacefully expresses an idea appeals to me, and these projects are my way of accepting this invitation, and using them as a soapbox which I stand on and shout (not that anyone is listening).



Project: Forks and Spoons

Release: 2001

Song: Lungfish

"Put Your Hand into My Hand"

This project is the beginning of my journey as a recording and multi-media artist. I had just moved to Madison Wisconsin from California with my partner Pris-Illa and developed an acute case of culture shock. Having difficulty connecting with local musicians and not used to being forced to spend four to five months indoors I responded by purchasing a \$30.00 Casio piano replete with cheesy drum machine, a 4-track recorder from a co-worker and "borrowed" a Shure Beta 58 from work. Coming from the Bay Area and being involved in alternative political and communities I was empowered to create. As my friend Chris Rankin one said, "the beauty of punk rock lies in giving you permission to strap a guitar on your shoulder get up on a stage and say what you jolly well want to say". Inspired by this spirit, I made my first recording. This cassette only release is a truly terrible first effort to write and record my own songs, but you gotta start somewhere.

The inspiration for "Forks and Spoons" comes from my dual disdain and fascination for large carved decorative wooden fork and spoon sets. On one hand, I feel they represent the pinnacle of American tackiness. Yet the utilitarian nature of this decor has always struck me as really funny. In my 20's, feeling that my 40th birthday was a distant yet inconceivable milestone, I wanted to celebrate the occasion by hosting a food themed bacchanalia.

Consisting of portions of food served in kiddie pools, and to each attendee was to be provided either a large fork and spoon to serve as both a party favor and tool to feed each other. At one point I had collected 15 sets of the large wooden utensils. The pair pictured on the cover of the record were the sole survivors of this fleeting obsession.

"Forks and Spoons" has 15 tracks on this project. As I was remastering the project I kept saying ". . .one more . . .really?" Lyrically the songs were culled from old journals, which explains why what I talk about is being depressed and having a broken heart. As the project moved forward I adopted a bass pedal that had basic effects - like chorus and delay and started to experiment with layering and repetition to make ethereal sounds.

I did not consciously decide to cover a song for this project, like most of my life it just happened. Since discovering Lungfish in the early 90's, they have always been one of my all time favorite bands. Their song "Put Your Hand into My Hand" can be found on the record "Talking Songs for Walking". I have always loved the hopeful repetitious spirit of their lyrics and coupled with the driving repetition of their songs. In the mid 90's, while hitching across the United States I sang this song on the side of the road while waiting for rides. It made me feel better about the moment I was experiencing. While traveling, I came to understand that freedom is ultimately a lonely path constructed of the responsibilities you accept and deliver upon. Moving to the Midwest at the start of the Millenia, I found myself far away from friends, family and familiarity. To ground myself I would often manifest this song as a mantra in my mind.

Unfortunately while executing the recording this song, where I was able to key into a funky flowing version of the riff, I chose to emulate my inner Les Claypool in my delivery. Perhaps I would have been better served by tapping into my inner Daniel Higgs for this rendition - I just didn't (and still don't) have the confidence to be that deep man.



Project: Land of 1000 Odors

Release: 2002

Song: "Doing It Our Way"
(The Laverne and Shirley
Show Theme Song)

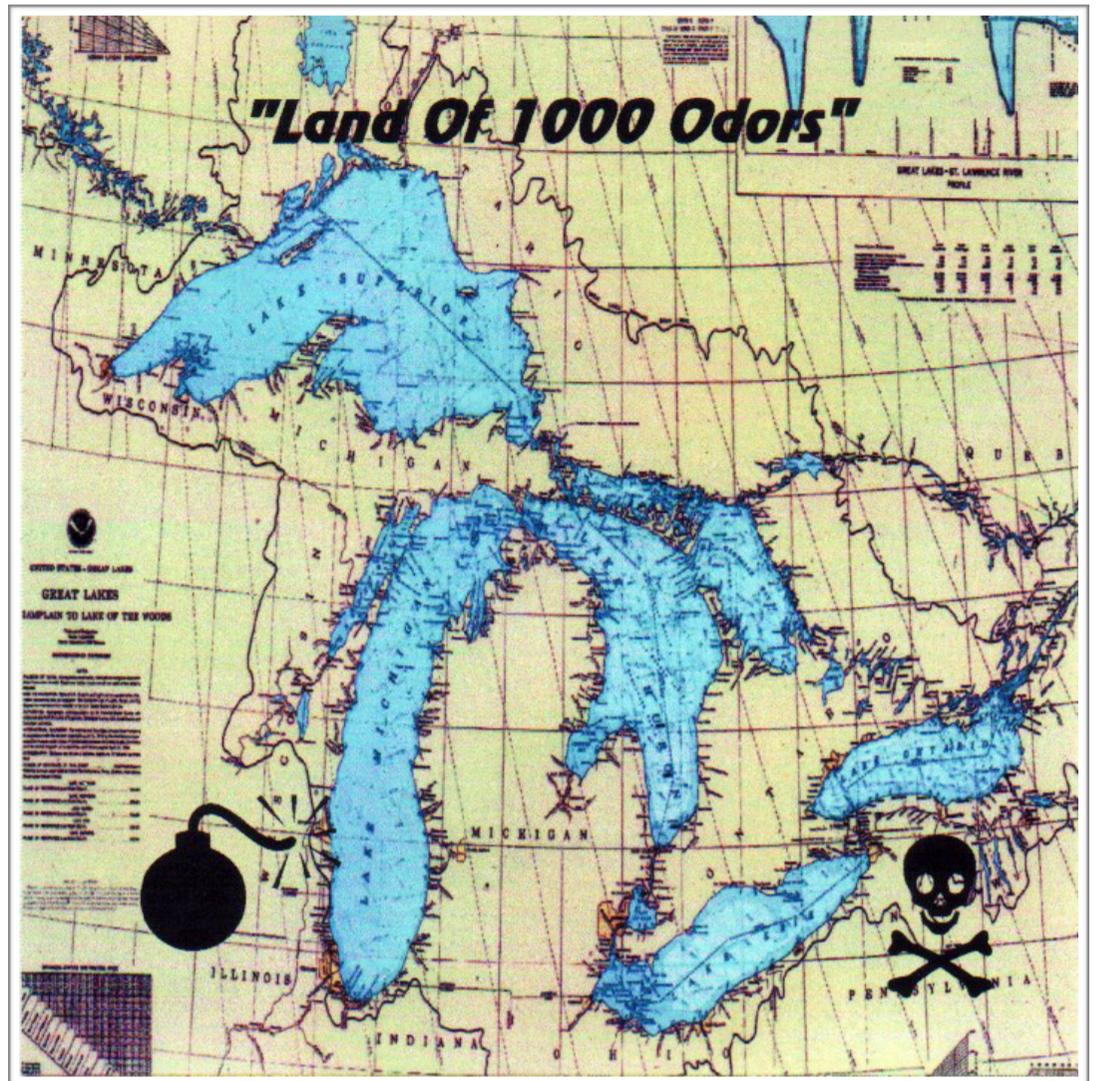
The project "Land of 1000 Odors" is a combination travelogue of my experiences exploring the Great Lakes region, and translating the stories I heard while working at medical conferences into songs. Lyrically the themes for this project shifted from internal exploration to more observational, responding to the foreign culture that surrounded me.

Madison Wisconsin, a fine 36 hour town indeed, is encompassed by glacial lakes which stagnate during the summer and smell just like the dirty tank my pet turtles Doug and Danny used to live in (no wonder they both

ran away). For me, the stench and subsequent place was unbearable, yet none of the locals seemed to either notice or mind. Another contributing factor to the local odor was a "chronic wasting disease" that spread throughout the deer population in the state. Hunters were encouraged to kill as many deer as possible to staunch the outbreak, the picture on the back of the CD is an image of heaps of deer corpses being burned. To create a true olfactory experience, the CD booklet included scratch and sniff samples of terrible scents and encouraged listeners to sniff while they listened.

The cover song for this project was the theme song from the 1970's television show "Lavern and Shirley". The show was set in Milwaukee, and upon my first visit that fine city I couldn't help but shouting out "Schlemiel, Schlimazel, Hasenpfeffer Incorporated" at every chance I could, until Pris-Illa told me to simmer down. This moment unlocked a repressed memory of singing this song every day while walked home from school in the third grade, making this cover a natural fit for this project.

The recording is an improvement from the previous project, yet the concept of mixing and mastering still eluded me. There is more of an emphasis on the keyboards to provide a melody, and cover up the deficits with the vocals. "Doing it Our Way" is a simple straightforward bass line, over a cheesy Casio piano drumbeat. There are way too many songs on this record, because at this point I would record until I ran out of space on the master four track cassette tape, that is when I would consider a project completed. The concept of writing more, and editing down would not dawn on me until much later.



Project: *We Watch the Lemons Sing*

Release: 2003

Songs: Husker Du

"Celebrated Summer"

and The Minutemen

"History Lesson, part II"

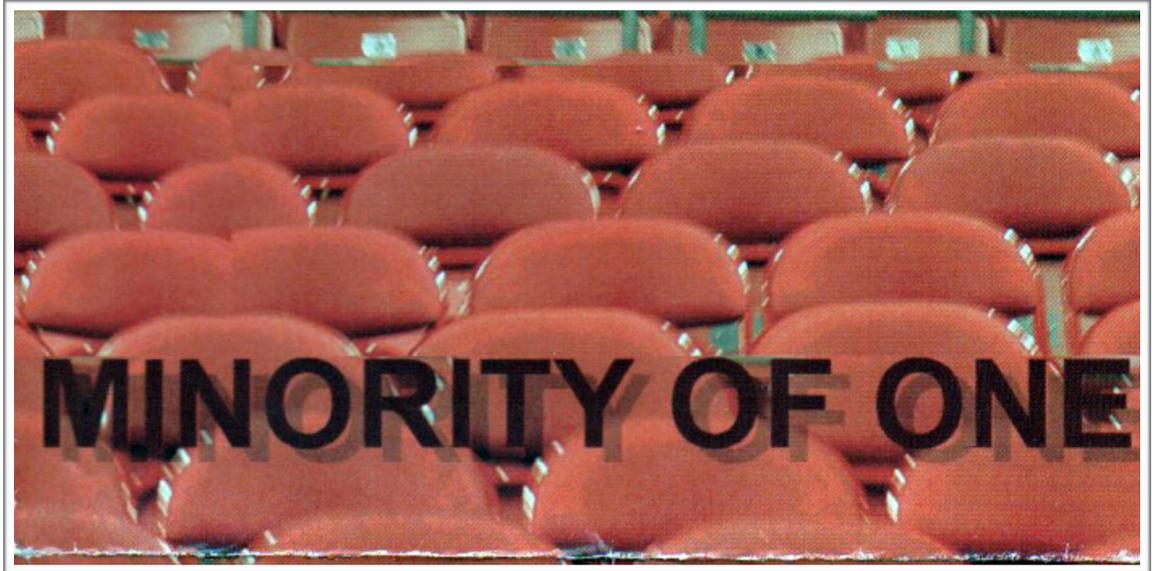
Lyrically *"We Watch the Lemons Sing"* includes observational vignettes and political statements. The title track is a song about some dudes I went to Jr. High school with, who would skip school to huff model paints in the lemon grove adjacent to our school. The song and video tells the story of how one day they skipped class and committed to inhaling a whole bottle of paint to themselves. By the end of the day the group shared a mass hallucination where the citrus started to sing the "lemon song".



The project *"We Watch the Lemons Sing"* introduces a drum machine, vocal and bass processors which add depth and dimension to the project. The recording was also digitized, mixed and mastered by Mike "Beaker" Parpovich at his "Sit Down, Shut Up, I'm Right, Your Wrong" Studio located in scenic Sun Prairie Wisconsin. Mike's insights, knowledge and decisions really helped add depth and richness that was not evident in the previous projects.

The covers songs on this project were from two bands who were both formative and deeply influential for me. Having recently visited Minneapolis, my love of Husker Du (and Prince) was reignited. Between hanging out at lakes at sunset in the summer and being in the Midwest, what Bob Mould expresses in *"Celebrated Summer"* aligned to exactly where I was at in that moment. The Minutemen were the band that literally changed my life. Songs like *"Split Red"* and *"Bob Dylan Wrote Propaganda Songs"* helped open my forming consciousness to societal inequity and provided the political terms to articulate a solution. I would listen to their records look up words in the dictionary and get books to help me understand what they were talking about. Most of the time I had no idea what he meant, but D. Boon was so powerful and compelling in his delivery it just made me feel that what he was proclaiming was true. On the other hand tunes like *"One Reporter's Opinion"* and *"Glory of Man"* showed me how you can open up your journal and express abstract personal ideas over kick ass econo-jams, with simplicity and lack of pretense. To this day, one of my great regrets in life was not sneaking out of my house to see them headline the SST-Fest at the Ackerman ballroom with Karen Tucker as a freshman in high school in the mid 1980's. Than again I would have had to endure another set by SWA . . .so I guess it all evens out in the end. As for covering *"History Lesson, part II"*, while working on this project US invasion of Iraq and involvement in Afghanistan was ramping up. I felt Mike and D's creation story/love letter in the song was the perfect backdrop to tell a larger tale of human futility and suffering caused by war. I sent a copy of the project to Mike Watt and was honored to receive a postcard thanking me for my "kind words". To this day I use that phrase to acknowledge a compliment from others. Thanks Mr. Watt (and the rest of you) for not asking for mechanicals!

Project: Minority of One
Release: 2003
Song: Johnny Nash
"I Can See Clearly Now"



The title of this project takes from George Orwell's famous quote found in 1984 *"Being in a minority, even in a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth*

even against the whole world, you were not mad." With the events of 2003 unfolding, spiraling unemployment, real estate frothing and man made disaster occurring what seemed daily it felt germane to the moment. The concept of "Minority of One" was inspired by going to a women's hockey game at the University of Wisconsin. Although the event was sparsely attended and had open seating, one fan chose to sit alone in the upper deck and cheer wildly throughout the entire game. I was moved by his investment in the moment, and how little the shit he gave about what others thought of how his actions were perceived. This experience formed the foundation of the "Crank Prophet" persona which I still embrace and personify to this day. The cover photo for the project was taken inside the Kohl Center, where the fan was standing.

Lyricaly this project was driven by telling myself "I can get weirder". The songs range from cultural observations (Do You Know the Mullet Man), political statements (I Take From You) and plain old silliness (Pizza Pie). During the time I was working throughout the state, and when stopping at gas stations I would go out of my way purchase cassettes for the ride, and "discovered" artists like Link Wray, Jerry Reed and Johnny Nash. In light of the continuing political conundrums presented by W, I chose to cover his song "I Can See Clearly Now". I hope you can discern the not so subtle sarcasm evident in the recording.

This project introduces the growth of writing and combining multiple drum machine parts into a song. I was also given a banjo by my brother and included it into some tracks. Working with Mike Parpovich, he taught me how to ping pong tracks together to make more room on the 4 track recorder, resulting in songs that have additional instruments and backing vocal tracks.

Surprisingly, this project actually had songs that were played on college radio. "The Fraud of Liberty", resonated with college students in the Bay Area. The song itself is a truncated version of the writings of Knut Hamsen. In the 1890's he lived and traveled through the United States and wrote a critical critique of America. One hundred years later the contradictions he highlighted - aggressive foreign policy, starting wars, blind patriotism still resonate today. Ironically, Hamsen manifested his hatred of the United States by becoming an outspoken booster for Germany's National Socialism. After World War II he was reviled and disposed by his own country, and forced deep into the bowels of forgotten authors in human history. In re-reading his book a couple of years ago, I would agree with his observations, but after almost every paragraph I would say, "dude . .you don't have to be such a dick about it . . ."

Project: N.O.T.A.

Release: 2004

Song: Talking Heads
"Once in a Lifetime"

"None of the Above 2004" was my direct and visceral response to the Bush cabal and their hubris to seek four more years of making the rich richer while driving our country into the ground. I was, and am still, fed up with our deductively dualistic "Coke and Pepsi" brand of democracy, and advocated that choosing neither candidate or party was like the winning choice. After all, apathy - represented by the number of eligible adults who did not (or could not) vote compared to the number of votes cast, has won every presidential election in United States history!



Written and recorded over the span of four weeks N.O.T.A was one the easiest project to me produce. I started to be able to hear both bass lines in my mind while I was writing the lyrics. At this point I felt I had command over my gear and a defined method of production had manifested. Ian MacKay has been credited with saying "When children start to speak they find their own voice by imitating the sounds around them. It would follow that bands do the same. Bands will find their own voice at some point". This is project felt like my where my voice and vision emerged.

The cover I chose for this record was the Talking Heads "Once in a Lifetime". Being too young to be able to experience early/good Talking Heads, rather than the bad/MTV talking heads is a nostalgia touchstone for me. I have found even though the reality you are experiencing is valid, those who were doing a couple of years before you always sounded so much cooler than what you had in your moment. As I get older, the music and aesthetics presented by the Talking Heads only become more profound for me. The video for "Once in a Lifetime" resides in the pantheon for indelible visual art experiences, and lyrically I felt this song was appropriate because at the time the economy was humming, the rich were getting richer, people were taking out loans on their homes to buy coach bags, none of the prosperity felt real much less sustainable. When the bubble popped a few years later, no one was surprised.

Project: The Gorilla X Show
Release: 2005

As every good artist does when they produce a body of work, they create a greatest hits record to either get out from the terrible terms of their contract or to simply make more product to sell. That was the concept behind the Gorilla X Show, lock, stock and barrel!!!

In moving away from Wisconsin back to the West Coast I realized this would be a great time to re-invent myself and create a one man multimedia spectacle. I could do this because with each project I produce and included a video with each record.

To round out this project I resorted to a technique that I still employ today. In 2003, when working on the video for the song "History Lesson Part III" on the record "We Watch the Lemons Sing", I was using found video footage I appropriated from the library. I encountered a section of the song where I described bad things humans do like "shot, stabbed, flayed, crucified, drown, boiled in oil . . .". I knew I was not going to find videos for those kind of images at the public library. I had just become aware of Google Image search feature, and gave it a shot. I typed in the keywords and took the first useable image that popped up. Bingo, .jpegs of the worst examples of humanity were only a Boolean search away! I took the images and created a PowerPoint presentation. When assembling a video, I let the process dictate the result and end up with a lot of unintentional visual puns. From this method, I was able to create an additional five videos and combine them with the live action videos I had already made. The presentation was performed live as one man multi-media experience at clubs and in art galleries. When performing, I acted as the narrator, played the music and executed a live edit of the presentation simultaneously. Every time I did it, some ass-hat would come up and want to chat with me while I was working. Dude, that is what the green room is for!



Project: Weapons of Mass Frustration

Release: 2017

Song: Fear

"Let's Have a War"

Life happens, I admit it. It got the best of me. That doesn't mean I wasn't doing. I just wasn't making and recording music. Things crashed, hope manifested. I felt good about where we were heading as a society, making progress. Back on track, working towards creating equity for all.

But then it happened . . . The Orange Asshole . . . The fucking electoral college . . . I was mad, I did not want to be part of this country.

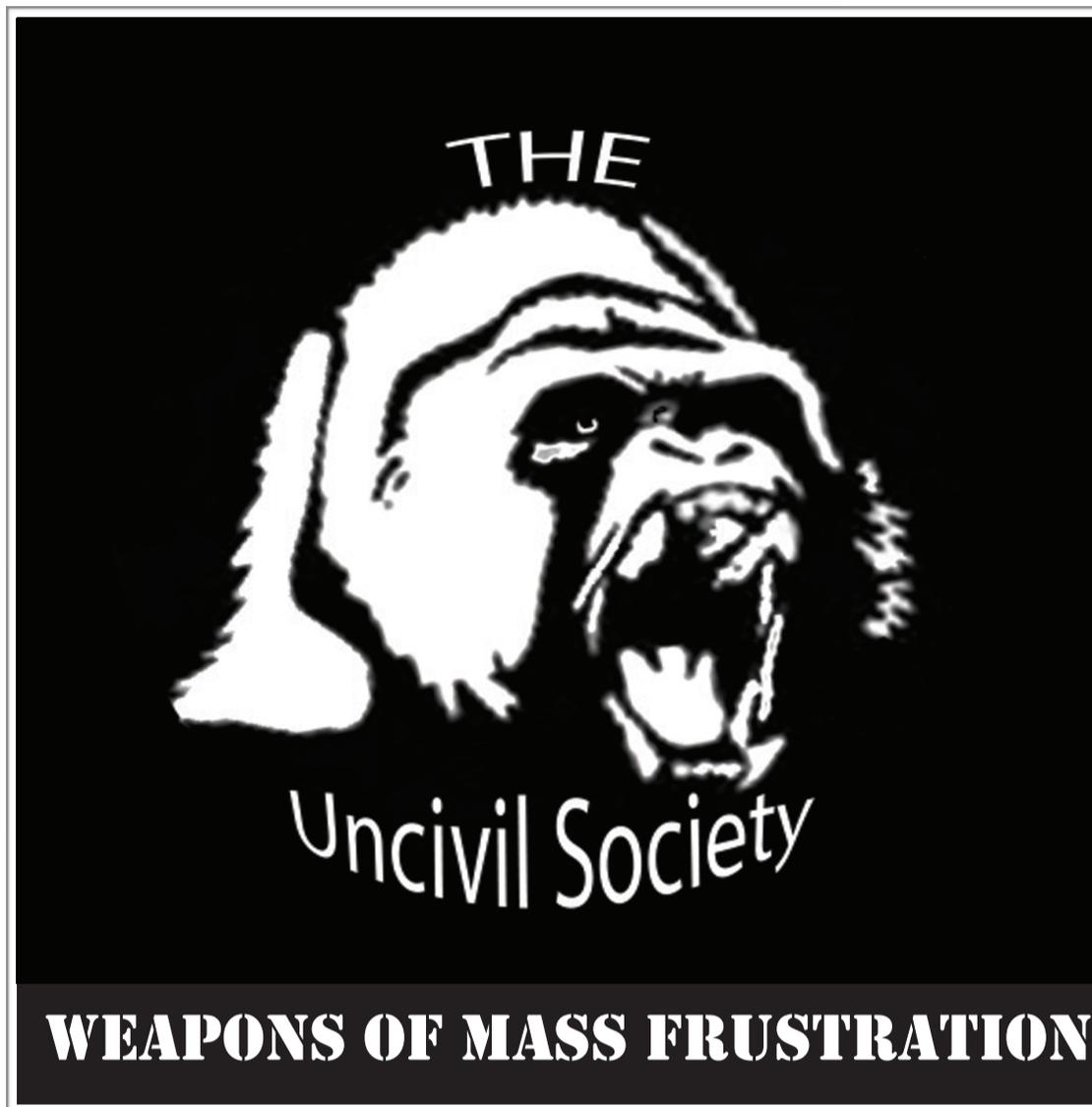
The morning after the election during my run it came out of my head. . . "Weapons of Mass Frustration"

Inspired by our current state of affairs this record loudly proclaimed enough is enough and advocates for our country to quit pretending we get along and for the west coast break away and form a safe liberal bubble to call home.

Musically, I was attempting to channel my inner Gil Scott Heron to rant like the Sleaford Mods over funky drum samples with a jazzy stand up bass app I found and used for this recording. Forged from a true DIY spirit, the recordings are tracked quickly, without regret or striving for any notion of achieving aural perfection.

Ironically, I had just moved and during the process I re-discovered copies of Howard Zinn's "People's History of the United States" and Noam Chomsky's "Manufacturing Consent". These books became the ideological foundation for the project and inspiration for the lead song "Read or Bleed . . . Learn or Burn". Howard Zinn's quote "A liberal believes in the self-correcting nature of democracy A radical believes that something is fundamentally wrong with this country" became the mantra for this project.

Like N.O.T.A, this project developed quickly. Feeling our country had just regressed back to the time of Millard Fillmore and the "Know Nothings" of the 1850's, the only choice for a song to cover was Fear's "Let's Have a War". This song was the segue between the lyrical themes of anger and hope for this project. I wonder how Lee Ving would respond to hearing his epic punk rock anthem being interpreted as be-bop jazz diddy.



Project: Ego and My Own

Release: 2018

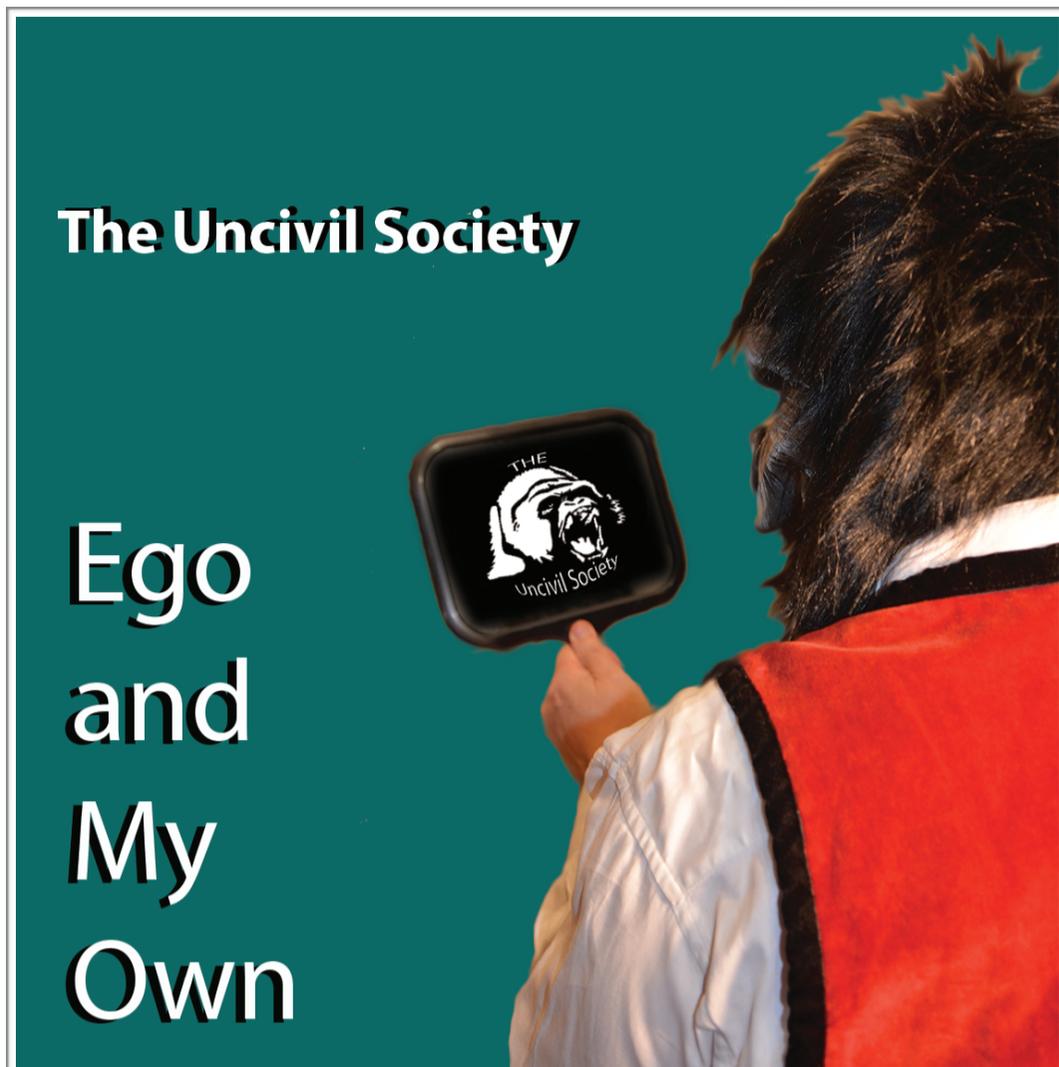
Song: Neil Diamond/
Killdozer

"I am I said"

"Ego and My Own" is the companion record to Weapons of Mass Frustration. After releasing the venomous political spew of the previous record, I felt obligated to offer insights and encouragement for how to liberate yourself. I was introduced to the writings of Max Stirner by an old friend in the early 90's. Stirner wrote about how all religions and societal institutions that claim authority over the individual, be it the state, legislation, the church, or the systems of education rest on empty

concepts. This record loudly proclaims his ideas of liberating yourself and rising above social, political and ideological conditions, so each can walk their own way. His quote "If I concern myself for myself, the unique one, then my concern rests on its transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself, and I may say: All things are nothing to me" became the philosophical backbone to this project.

Keeping with an all digital method of production, this project helped me understand layering and multi-tracking. I discovered the joy of tuned gongs as well. The cover song for this project is Neil Diamond's "I Am I Said". Although Killdozer's version resonates much deeper within me, I felt the idea thematically fit this project. I still don't understand why Mr. Diamond was comparing himself to a chair.



Project: Tales from the Panopticon

Release: 2018

Song: Sleater-Kinney

"Dig Me Out"

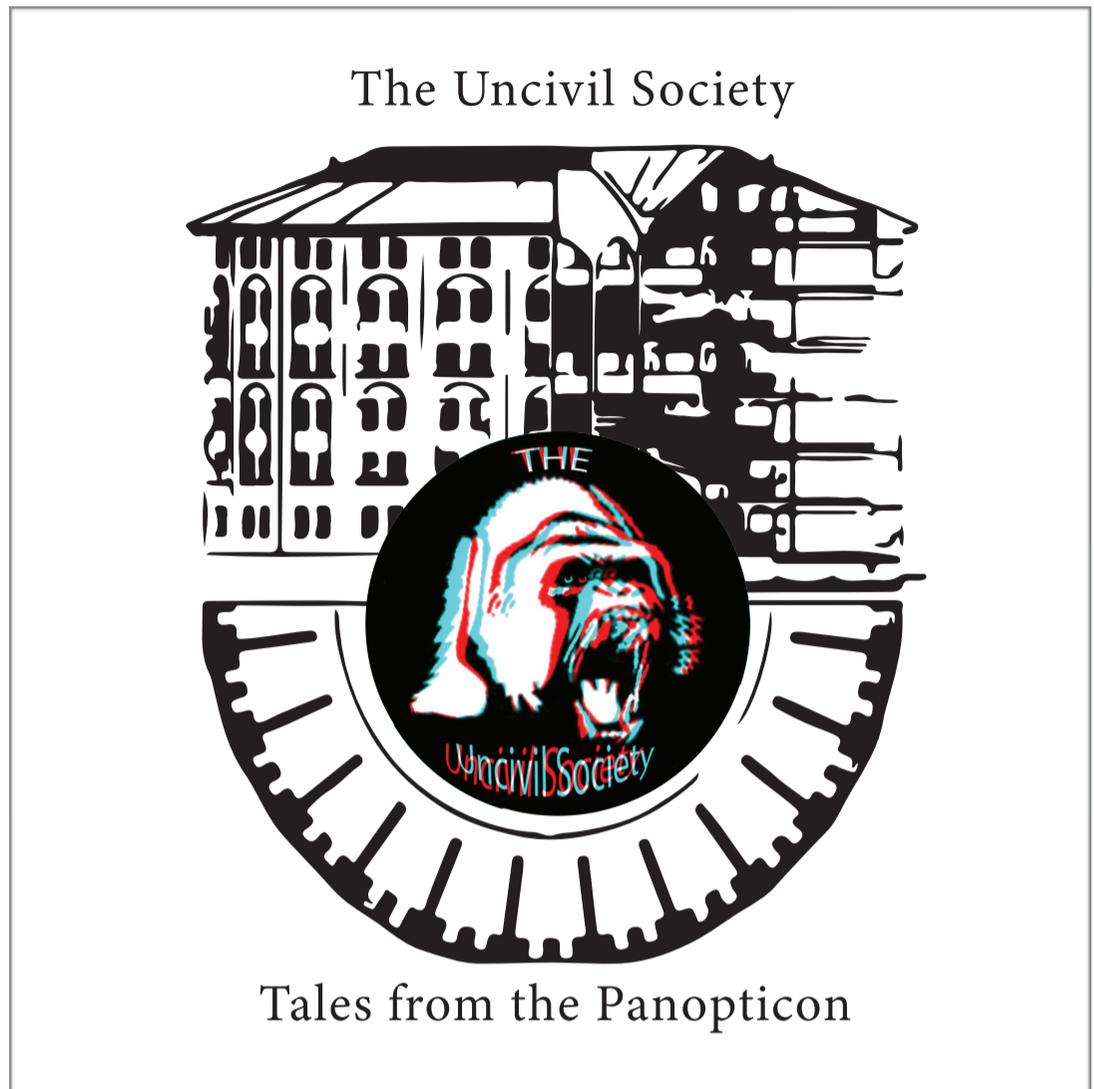
"Tales from the Panopticon" was inspired by re-reading Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" and Michel Foucault's "Discipline and Punish", authors who explore the physical and social structures that control and contain society.

Musically this project is influenced by a range of artists presented in the 33 1/3 series, books that deeply examine signature records. I stumbled into Fugazi's "In on the Kill Taker" and was hooked. I went to the library and checked out every one they had in their collection. Ironically I ended up with ten artists, ranging from ABBA to the Velvet

Underground. As I read each book I also did a deep listen to the record. I learned about where the band was at in their creative process, understood the technology they recorded with and experimented with the recording techniques they employed to create their signature sounds. The song titles contain an "Easter egg" which hints at the artist interpreted.

As I listened to the albums I was able to hear how each musician was connected - be it by using reverb or a drone in the background or by participating in the crucible of artistic commodification. Maybe that is the essence of music, a human endeavor where we create and harness vibrations audible to our senses, that cause us and others to react and respond. This is why I strongly feel that we can't own music, only experience it in our brief moment in time.

The cover I chose was Sleater-Kinney's "Dig Me Out". Where I have always appreciated their music and message, I do admit that it has taken me a long time to come around to embrace Corin Tucker's banshee wail. I understand the feminist perspective of the lyrics, but I felt the idea of body invasion was aligned with the meta concept of the Panopticon. In reading about their process and how this record was an evolutionary leap for them I feel by going back to a live drum and bass, using an array of microphones and exploring with recording techniques while allowing the lyrics to have space this record signals a new direction for me as well. I am curious to see where these discoveries take me over the course of my next ten projects!!!



Project: Gorilla X Plays the Hits

Release: 2019

Song: Frank Sinatra

"My Way"

Every project has intentionally, or unintentionally included a cover song. Why? Because music moves me, psychically, spiritually and emotionally. In some cases the cover song encapsulated that moment in time. Other covers were the result of discovering, or re-discovering a neglected part of my record collection. Some were happy accidents that inexorably transformed my perspectives. Most are simply a way to pay homage to musicians I deeply respect and admire. Thanks to the artists for having the courage to create, to perform, to express and share, and for being a part of my life. I hope you can appreciate this endeavor in the same way. After reflecting on my journey to this point in time, is there any other song to cover besides Frank Sinatra's "My Way"?

Enjoy! (or not . . .)

Gorilla X

Summer 2018



Gorilla X Plays the Hits

"My Way"

Lyrics by Paul Anka

Music Jacques Revaux

Produced

Arranged

Recorded

Gorilla X

Recorded at

Normie-ville Studios

2018

Credits:

Pris-illa Photos

Re-Sister, backing vocals

Thanks!!!!

Pris-Illa - my mate and muse

Re-Sister - for sharing her voice

Gorilla Y - for the rad mix down dances

Greil Marcus

Paul Anka

Corin, Carrie and Janet

Neil Diamond

Michael Gerard

Lee Ving

David Byrne

Johnny Nash

Mike Watt

Bob Mould

Laverne and Shirley

Daniel Higgs

Ian MacKay

Rob Brezney

Mike Parpovich

John Geek

Joe Helmsley

Carol Gronner

Pam Kray

Chris Rankin

Hillary Binder

Anne Lee

Ken Kearney

Luciano Levrone

Greg Nelson

To all who have been kind
enough to indulge me
throughout the years



This free speech project is to be distributed without charge or copyright



"When he opens his mouth you are sure you don't want to hear whatever he's got in it."

-Greil Marcus

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