

Black Tractor

Where does one begin? The task is a daunting one to be sure. To chronicle the history of Cincinnati's...fuck, the world's most important heavy metal band is a job I approach with great reverence. I challenge anyone to put pen to paper and relive the violence, drug and alcohol abuse, the cockamamie sex, and the awe inspiring music that was and is being produced within the Black Tractor camp. Few bands are surrounded by the lore and myth that accompany Black Tractor. It is up to you, inquisitive reader, to determine fact from fiction. I shall begin at the beginning.....

It was 2002, and one of Cincinnati's greatest bands was in it's death thralls. The multi-award winning Bagg were quietly closing the book on seven years of violently experimentally listenable recordings and inspiring live shows. Something about a gay French drummer (sorry...er...percussionist) and a jewish cowboy was the final straw. Music makes for strange bedfellows indeed. The band was done and two key members immediately went on to form a new project...

Johnny Potatoes and Rock High rose from the ashes of Bagg to give birth to the metal bastard Black Tractor. The idea originated as a project whose main focus would be to highlight the problems of the American farmer. Hoof disease, inclement weather, and of course the effects of cotton on ecosystems when considered on a global scale. They would wear Carhardts on stage and have portly plain wives who excelled at cooking with gravy.

The band formed with two other individuals who shall remain nameless. Poor souls who made up the rhythm section yet ultimately could not keep up with the torturous touring and recording schedule. The bass guitar player donned a Mexican wrestling mask on stage and communicated through bursts of incoherent babblings. His position in Black Tractor was kept clandestine due to his day job. No one is quite sure what he did, he was a government employee and his job involved firearms. In retrospect, we all look back and suspect him of being mentally retarded. The drummer was a bipolar individual who had frequent temper tantrums in which his drums often were the recipient of abuse. One particular evening, after a steady diet of Xanax, whiskey and sunshine, he expressed a desire to beat the teeth in of Mr. High. This was a problem. A fisticuff on stage would have been unacceptable. The whereabouts of this buffoon are unknown now. He was a bit of a racist and enjoyed camouflage. He is more than likely planning to blow up a federal building

somewhere. Both members quit suddenly and unceremoniously, much like the retarded, government employed, Timothy McVeigh wannabes they were.

It was this incarnation of the band that committed the legendary "Skidmark of the Beast" to tape. Clocking in at just under 13 minutes in length, it injected Cincinnati's limp music scene with a shot of adrenalin and was awarded best metal record of the year by several Cincinnati music journals. A multitude of incredible shows followed on the heels of Skidmark's release. Alcohol fueled bursts of energy that were often too loud and stimulating for sorority girls who trolled Cincinnati's watering holes looking for free drinks and a bad sexual encounter with some closeted frat boy.

After the exodus of the rhythm section, Potatoes and High once again were sans a musical vessel. It was at this time High went about assembling a new Black Tractor. They knew they must forge on, especially in a time when rock and roll could find no harbor.

Enter Edward Van Martinez...

Van Martinez is a guitarist who is capable of executing the most ridiculous guitar solos imaginable. His face melters are truly unparalleled. Rumors swirl about Edward. Some feel confident he is the elusive El Sid, myspace.com guitar phenom. Others feel he appreciates the entire ZZ Top catalog, even the stuff from the eighties. The rumors are plentiful, but alas, they are only rumors so I will not drag the Martinez name through any more tentative mud.

Next came the sizeable task of finding a drummer who could drive the Tractor to the frenzy the music demanded. Whisperings about an individual who was ostracized from a Hollywood family slowly began to trickle into the Tractor stronghold. An individual who channeled years of neglect at the hands of his family into his drumming. Whitey Van Peebles. Unmatched at his drumming skills and knowledge of cartoons. A vegetarian who has not watched a live action television show for twelve years. He also does not appreciate Neil Peart, a rare quality amongst drummers. All this made him the natural choice for Black Tractor. He now sits on the throne of rock for several Cincinnati bands, yet he never misses a gig. He may be a mutant, able to play two gigs at once, maybe three.

Then a problem arose. The bass player the band had employed at the time seemed a bit problematic. This individual will also remain nameless, as I do not wish to slander anyone. At practice he seemed lethargic, yet at shows his energy

was unbridled, to the point of annoyance. No doubt a result of cocaine consumption in the parking lot. After several no shows at practice, the decision was made to terminate his services. After a show at Cincinnati's defunct Poison Room, he gracefully quit, thus avoiding any awkward meetings and tearful goodbyes.

With a vacant spot on bass guitar and a gig looming at the Midpoint Music Festival, Black Tractor was in dire straits. A bass player was needed quickly, someone who could learn the parts and play the show with minimal practice. Whitey recommended a friend named F-Wad Ramses. Besides a strange affection for excessively gory movies, F-Wad is the nicest guy you could ever meet. Due to an unbridled work ethic, and the discipline to actually practice at home, F-Wad came to the show and performed without flaws. Originally hired as one time replacement to do the Midpoint show, F-Wad eventually was asked to join full time and Black Tractor was complete.

It was now that the band graced the doors of Shepherd's Pie Studios (owned by Rock High) to record the follow up to "Skidmark of the Beast." The sessions were fast and brutal, recorded over two days in May of 2004. "Someone Call A Priest" was released to critical acclaim and fan fervor. The record is now on the eve of it's third pressing and the demand is still large.

Black Tractor is currently writing the follow up to "Someone Call A Priest" with the strongest line up the band has ever known. Inspiration is plentiful and the band is playing the best shows of it's existence. They will be entering the studio within the upcoming months to record what will undoubtedly be the greatest metal album ever committed to tape. Undoubtedly.