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Hair & MUA: Lyndsay Gabrielle

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Photo by: Andrew Gates

Hair & MUA: Lyndsay Gabrielle

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20 QUESTIONS

Get To Know Your Cover Model

Maureen Chen

Photography By: Andrew Gates
Make-up & Hair by: Lyndsay Gabrielle

*M*aureen Chen was born and raised in Taiwan to Chinese parents. Prior to moving to Los Angeles two years ago, this sexy Leo built an impressive resume that includes commercials, print ads, co-hosting at a radio station and hosting a travel segment on television. She was even a contestant on a Taiwanese reality show. Since taking the plunge and moving to California, Maureen has already been featured in various national publications, even scoring multiple covers. Living in the States has influenced Maureen in many ways: she enjoys listening to pop-music, eating American food and is majoring in English. Living the American dream never looked so good...





20 QUESTIONS

1.What's your Ethnicity?

I am a Chinese, I'm a bold and pure Asian girl.

2.What's your zodiac sign?

Leo, A sign of super star! I'm proud my sign is the same as Michael Jackson and Madonna. (smile)

3.Where are you from originally?

Heaven... (smile) I'm originally from Taiwan but, moved to LA two years ago.

4.What did you like most about growing up in Taiwan?

The best part of growing up in Taiwan is... I never feel late night in Taiwan. The night was always young and active. So many things to do even after 9pm; Night Market, Cyber internet cafe, Street Vendors selling everything you can think of in Taipei city. There's Delicious food everywhere and shopping in Taiwan is inexpensive, It's very easy to save money. The Taiwanese are very liberal and hospitable toward foreigners or different cultures. I mean. If you are a foreigner going to travel to Taiwan, we will speak English to you, even a taxi driver!

5.What kind of mischief did you get into while growing up?

I was kind of superstitious when I was little girl, Maybe because my mom is Buddhist and my teacher always liked to scared students that a monster or ghost will get us if we were too naughty in the class, so I called the teacher and pretend I'm a ghost and the teacher replied to me on the phone, "Your voice sounds very funny!"

6.What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

I was renting a studio in a community that had a gated swimming pool and the landlord gave me a key and told me I coul go to the jacuzzi and swimming pool anytime, so one night after my girlfriend and I swam a few laps we decided to get into the jacuzzi but the water was too hot so in order not to damage the bikinis we decided to go naked together in the hot tub.

7.What brought you to LA?

As much as I love Taiwan, I felt it was time take a different path and pursue a modeling career and gain more opportunities. That's why I moved to "The City of Angels", AKA Los Angeles.

8.What's your favorite hobby and why?

My favorite hobby is cooking and wine tasting. When I was younger my sister and I would take care of each other by making sack-lunch for school because my mom needed to work all the time so I always helped her out in the kitchen or follow her around when we shop in the supermarket. Making delicious food in kitchen is like doing an experiment in a science lab, it takes a lot of work and ingredients. Eating good food

makes me happy and making Chinese food also cure my homesickness when I'm LA.

9.What's your guilty pleasure?

Eating Alaskan snow crab legs with prime rib steak and Andre pink champagne. Then for dessert it's Haggan-Daz White chocolate with raspberry and truffle.

10.Who do you admire?

Michael Jackson, I admired his dance, voice and humanitarianism, even after his hair got burned while filming for Pepsi he still donated 1.5 million to charity. His music and spirit will live on for many generations.

11.What's one of your personal goals?

I would like to live in a house with a yard on a mountain, with a horse, an African grey (talking parrot), American short hair (cat) and an apricot poodle (my current pet for now) with someone I love and my mom living happily forever!

12.What do guys compliment you on the most?

"Beautiful", "Down to earth", "Humble", "Want to marry you one day!"

13.What's your favorite body part on yourself?

My fingers; They are pretty thin and long and very good for a lot of delicate work, such as nail art and painting. I don't know how I would live without my hands and fingers!

14.What's your least favorite body part on yourself?

My Brain; I hope I'm as smart as my sister is in school, but I think that's the reason why I'm always happy! (laugh)

15.What do you look for in a guy?

Appearance first, he doesn't have to be handsome or pretty, but he should at least be clean, humble and modest. Personality, how he treats his parents and family shows if he will be responsible to his own family. Good sense of humor; I don't want to be bored to death and spend the rest of my life with someone that makes me bored.

16.What's the first thing you notice about a guy?

Feeling is very important! Face with clean hair, nails, and skin texture. Hygiene means a lot to me. It shows if he is healthy and takes good care of himself.

17.What turns you on?

Music, cologne, dinner, wine, candle light, a good conversation, and eye contact attraction.

18.What turns you off?

Mama's boys, snobbish, selfish and business phone call.

19.What's your biggest pet peeve?

Talking very loud in public, especially in a room or a space, such as movie-theater, bus or train and shaking their legs while they're talking.

20.Who's your celebrity pass?

Wentworth Miller.

RM

PIT PASS

Get In The Driver's Seat!

The Resurrection

By: Nicolas Bates

On a racetrack in 1952 the world saw what was to become a winged icon. And in 1954, the general public could possess it: The Mercedes-Benz 300 SL. The 300 SL was the first ever production car to come equipped with gull-wing doors and was the fastest production car of its time. Flash forward 57 years, and you have what Mercedes-Benz is calling the SLS AMG. According to Dr. Dieter Zetsche, they were not just trying to pay homage to an automotive icon, but instead, create something that "will surely become one of the most alluring sports cars of our time." Perhaps we will be able to tell in less than 57 years.

Right off the bat you may love or hate the long and somewhat stiff lines of the SLS AMG. Perhaps if a Dodge Viper, second-generation Acura TL Coupe, Mazda RX8 and a Honda S2000 mated, this would be the offspring. Your opinion of the styling may solely rest upon which angle you are viewing at that given moment. The SLS AMG almost has a shape shifting quality about it. The long and wide front end is very reminiscent of the 1954-1957 300 SL in that its grille is largely oval in shape. The new SLS AMG looses the prominent accent over its fenders, but reels you back to the mid-fifties with its grills emanating from the body between the door and front fender. The car has been widened, lowered, and flattened. The gull wing doors on the 300 SL were mandatory due to its unique design, however, the SLS AMG's are purely style invoked. But, when you get to what's under the hood, you may grow a little more lenient on the styling.

The SLS AMG boasts 563hp at 6,800 rpm and 479 lb-ft of torque at 4,750 rpm from its AMG 6.3-liter 32-valve V-8. To help get the car moving a little quicker, AMG revised this known motor to include a new magnesium intake with eight separate velocity stacks and 2 electronically controlled throttle plates to feed it. A new dry-sump oil system allows the engine to sit lower, thus, lowering the center of gravity for this longer than average vehicle. The car is considered front/mid mount, and the motor sits directly behind the front axle line. This allows for a nice weight distribution of 48% front/ 52% rear. For the first time ever, AMG and Mercedes-Benz are offering a vehicle with a chassis made purely from aluminum. This helps keep the weight down and the rigidity up. The SLS AMG weighs in at nearly 3,600 lbs. Mercedes-Benz is clocking the SLS AMG from 0-60 in 3.6 seconds and it has a limited top speed of 195 MPH. The energy created from the 6.3-liter motor is transferred to the ground via 7-speed dual-clutch transmission with a carbon drive-shaft. Four driving modes are offered, including manual, if you are feeling frisky. Mercedes-Benz claims no interruption of traction with this state-of-the-art set up.

This car would not be complete without a slew of options to choose from. The SLS AMG is ripe with leather hue options and other small choices like whether or not to spend \$5,000 on carbon



SPECS

2011 MB SLS AMG

Price:	\$180,000+
Engine:	6.3 Liter V8
Torque:	479 lb-ft.
Horsepower:	563 hp
0-60 MPH:	3.6 sec. (est.)
Top Speed:	195 mph
EST. MPG:	13 City/20 HWY
Available:	Summer 2010



fiber caps for your side mirrors. They may not help you see better, but they will...well, cost you \$5,000. Aluminum is standard trim, but an all out carbon fiber package is offered. Performance wise, an AMG carbon ceramic braking system is also offered. And for you audiophiles, a Bang & Olufsen sounds system is available. Regardless of your choices, the interior is smooth, lightly inspired by the aeronautical industry, i.e. its plane thruster inspired shift lever, and has a very futuristic feel. No switches can be found, but round objects will be turned and pushed in constantly. Its almost 2-meter long hood and almost no rear end notwithstanding, the SLS AMG has ample room in the interior department. Style and comfort, the way it should be.

Fifty-seven years ago the iconic Mercedes-Benz 300 SL with gull wing doors was put into production. Because of their technological firsts, odd door choice and low production numbers, the 1954-1957 300 SL's are highly sought after and seen as one of the most collectible Mercedes-Benz' of all time. Today, Mercedes-Benz and AMG have come together to produce an automobile that not only remembers and resembles this icon, but also surpasses it in almost every way imaginable. And with a \$180,000 price tag, you can have 3 SLS AMG's for the price of one 300 SL.

RM



**"...Dinner, Wine,
Candlelight..."**



See more of Maureen at
www.MaureenChen.com



STATS:

Birthday: August 13

Height: 5' 5"

Weight: 103

Measurements: 32DD-24-34

ALL ACCESS

The Latest Albums Rev

Deftones Rise

Written by: Lindsay Murphy

After a harrowing tragedy and difficult decisions, Deftones return with a viscerally hitting stunner that could be remembered as the band's best record ever.

In November 2008, bassist Chi Cheng was involved in a major car accident, and because of injuries sustained, remains in a "semi-conscious state." The band had planned on releasing their album *Eros* several months after the accident. Its release has since been postponed indefinitely, although they maintain the decision has nothing to do with Chi's condition. Instead, vocalist Chino Moreno has credited the album's shelving to a creative shift in band's artistic endeavors and the desire to give fans the best album possible. Recorded tracks had been described as experimental, prodding the edges, and soaked in soundscape.

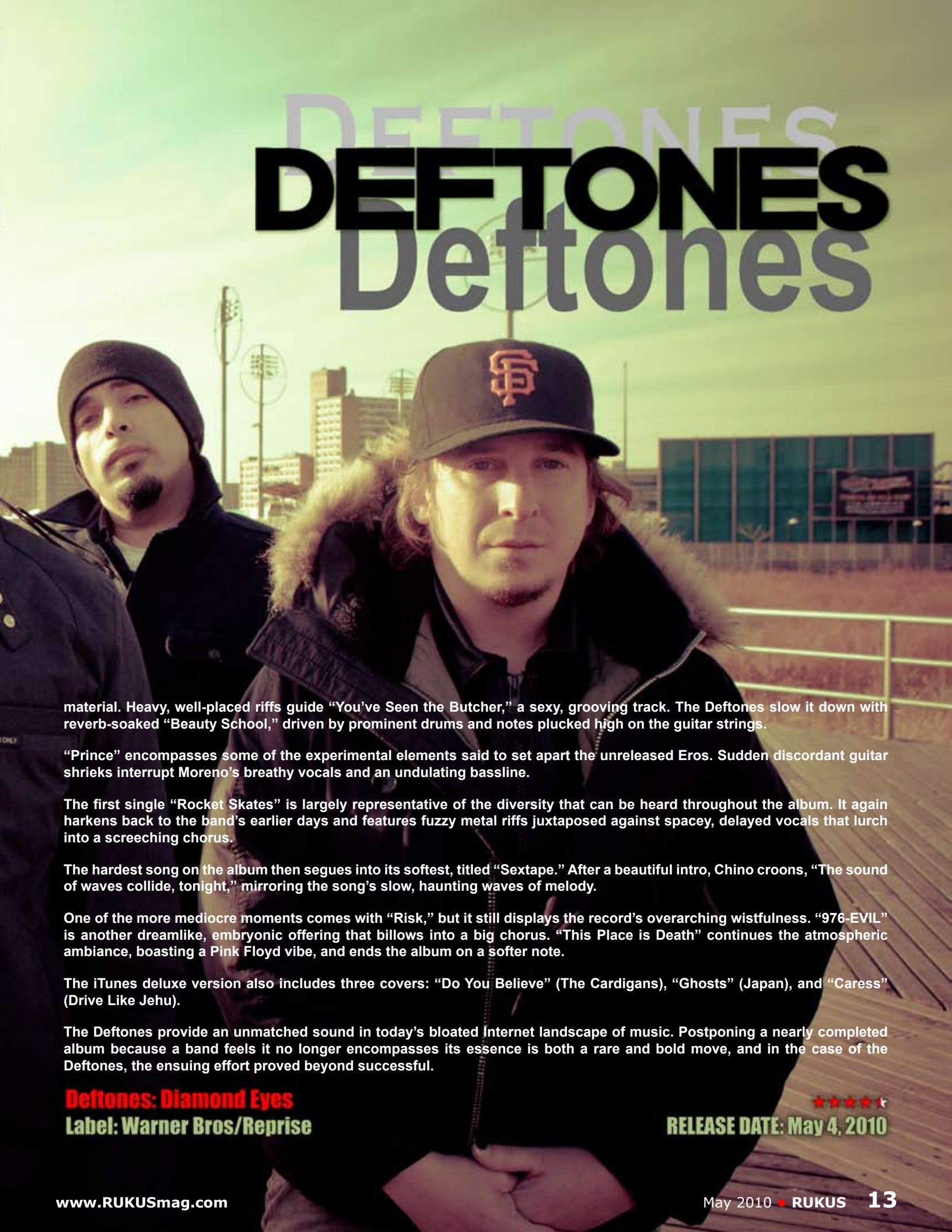
So they started from scratch. *Diamond Eyes* is notable for being the first record with replacement bassist Sergio Vega, formerly of post-hardcore outfit Quicksand. Another aberration from the band's previous efforts was their refusal to layer using popular audio editing software Pro Tools, instead practicing until perfection and opting to achieve a more raw, real feel. Despite this departure, the songs still feature the Deftones's signature full heaviness. This approach appears to have provided the band a new, invigorated vibe that bleeds off every track on *Diamond Eyes* and displays their talent as musicians.

The Deftones pumped everything into this album, and it is easily one of the heaviest, most melodic, and most aggressive records released to date. *Diamond Eyes* creates a fuzzy cocoon of fantasy, from happy to haunting. Chino's characteristic bending vocals adorn the album, perforated by bouts of screaming and buoyed by Stephen Carpenter's signature guitar riffs.

Chino's poetic offerings are more stellar than ever. Metaphorically driven with repeated thematic elements of eyes, stars and space, the ocean and waves, and the color red, the lyrics serve well to enhance its phantasmal aural ambiance.

The title track is infectious and after one listen, will easily repeat in your head. With forward-thinking hope, Moreno dreamily sings, "Time will see us realign/Diamonds reign across the sky/I will lead us to the same realm...."

One of the album's standouts, "CMND/CTRL" brandishes a more aggressive sound especially reminiscent of the band's early

A photograph of the band Deftones standing in a baseball field. The two members in the foreground are wearing dark jackets and caps. The background shows a city skyline and stadium lights under a hazy sky.

DEFTONES

Deftones

material. Heavy, well-placed riffs guide “You’ve Seen the Butcher,” a sexy, grooving track. The Deftones slow it down with reverb-soaked “Beauty School,” driven by prominent drums and notes plucked high on the guitar strings.

“Prince” encompasses some of the experimental elements said to set apart the unreleased Eros. Sudden discordant guitar shrieks interrupt Moreno’s breathy vocals and an undulating bassline.

The first single “Rocket Skates” is largely representative of the diversity that can be heard throughout the album. It again harkens back to the band’s earlier days and features fuzzy metal riffs juxtaposed against spacey, delayed vocals that lurch into a screeching chorus.

The hardest song on the album then segues into its softest, titled “Sextape.” After a beautiful intro, Chino croons, “The sound of waves collide, tonight,” mirroring the song’s slow, haunting waves of melody.

One of the more mediocre moments comes with “Risk,” but it still displays the record’s overarching wistfulness. “976-EVIL” is another dreamlike, embryonic offering that billows into a big chorus. “This Place is Death” continues the atmospheric ambiance, boasting a Pink Floyd vibe, and ends the album on a softer note.

The iTunes deluxe version also includes three covers: “Do You Believe” (The Cardigans), “Ghosts” (Japan), and “Caress” (Drive Like Jehu).

The Deftones provide an unmatched sound in today’s bloated Internet landscape of music. Postponing a nearly completed album because a band feels it no longer encompasses its essence is both a rare and bold move, and in the case of the Deftones, the ensuing effort proved beyond successful.

Deftones: Diamond Eyes
Label: Warner Bros/Reprise

★★★★★
RELEASE DATE: May 4, 2010

The Last Installment

Written by: Lindsay Murphy

Prog-rock band Coheed and Cambria finally finish their expansive concept series with prequel *Year of the Black Rainbow*. More muted than their previous efforts, the big guitars and hooks that define the band sometimes seem buried beneath singer Claudio Sanchez's vocals. However different it may be from the band's previous efforts, it's redeemed by a smattering of experimental, layered facets that render it progressive and different than anything else on the music scene today. Sanchez also shows the most vocal breadth of his career, shedding some of the potentially alienating elements that cause critics to deem the band "emo," while maintaining passion.

Year of the Black Rainbow is a prequel to the sprawling storyline on which the four other Coheed albums are based. Created by frontman Sanchez and titled *The Amory Wars*, it is a mythological science fiction narrative that spans multimedia including a series of comic books, novels, and Coheed records. Without delving into detail, *Year of the Black Rainbow* contains accounts of love and betrayal that fuel the ensuing story.

Sanchez's lyrical offerings are beautiful and complex, and the accompanying novel of the same title expands on the chronicles they draw from. Having no knowledge of the concept does not impede enjoyment, however, as each song stands strongly on its own.

Year of the Black Rainbow starts off with "One," an instrumental song reminiscent of "The Ring in Return," which kicked off their second album. Interspersing stark piano and haunting soundscape, it could easily be the background in a horror film. The song sets the shadowy atmosphere of the record and builds up to track two, "The Broken," which features a catchy chorus and huge metal riffs. Sanchez's voice serves as a siren, inviting listeners into his fantasy world.

"Guns of Summer" blazes out with a fast, percussion-heavy intro driven by ex-Dillinger Escape Plan drummer and newest Coheed member Chris Pennie. It winds through a jungle of power chords and key changes, and presents a more experimental direction for the band.

Coheed chose "Here We Are Juggernaut" as their first single, and like its title suggests, it is a huge force on the album. A standout song, its colossal chorus will instantly dig itself into listeners' heads, and it contains more pop components than the rest of the record.



One of the more melodic songs, "Far," is flooded with delay. An incongruent, jarring bridge jumps out between harmonious riffs, making the listener wonder if it was perhaps imagined. It is unusual, unsettling moments like this that make the record protrude from its peers.

Dueling guitar lines and turned-up bass comprise "This Shattered Symphony," a key track that builds to an epic ending. The song showcases Sanchez's vocal abilities, from gruff lows to scintillating screams.

"World of Lines" and "Made Out of Nothing (All That I Am)" both feature soaring, anthemic choruses. The slow, acoustic "Pearl of the Stars" shows a different side of the band and is likely to be a polarizing song for fans. It again emphasizes Sanchez's vocal range and features a lingering solo.

Dark emotions will drag listeners into "In the Flame of Error," a pulsing prog-based track that leads well into "When Skeletons Live," another track that highlights Coheed's pop metal and prog sensibilities.

"The Black Rainbow" fittingly encompasses elements that define the album, heavy with ambience and soundscape that swells into a grand, tangled climax. It ends with a disturbing laugh and instrumental section that reflects the atmospheric foreshadowing of the first song, bringing the album full circle.

The deluxe version includes the supplemental novel, DVD with studio footage, "Black Card" offering VIP exclusives, and bonus tracks "Chamberlain" and "The Lost Shepherd."

While it might not contain the addictive hooks abundant in previous records, *Year of the Black Rainbow* rewards multiple listens. Each successive play will peel back its many layers to reveal intriguing subtleties and transmuted pop. Slower and less tangential, it demonstrates the band's increasingly maturing songwriting skills and intricate musicianship. **RM**

Coheed and Cambria: Year of the Black Rainbow
Label: Columbia

★★★★★
RELEASE DATE: April 13, 2010



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LIVE & LOUD

The Live Show Reviews

Three Days Grace

Photos by: Nicolas Bates at the X 103.9 Three Days Grace show

Written by: Lindsay Murphy

X 103.9 put on a rockin' show in Ontario, California, featuring alternative hard rock band from Ontario, Canada, Three Days Grace.

With their slew of memorable singles, high energy, and a few fun tricks, Three Days Grace played a solid set. As the lights dimmed at Citizens Business Bank Arena, Johnny Cash's "God's Gonna Cut You Down" played over the speakers. Red lights flashed and sirens sounded announcing the band's entrance, and they exploded into their first song.

At the start of the second song, a sheet dropped, revealing a large white banner splashed in black, pink, and purple featuring masked men bashing electronics and releasing birds, bats, and butterflies from the wreckage—cover art from their most recent album *Life Starts Now*. When not playing guitar and consequently tied to his mic stand, singer Adam Gontier exuded incredible energy. He covered all corners of the stage, showing off his presence while playing "The Good Life."

As they burst into hit single "I Hate Everything About You," the audience went absolutely crazy. "We've been on the road for like three months," Gontier announced, "and you guys are one of the best fucking crowds we've played to!"

Guitarist Barry Stock broke out his double-neck guitar for "Pain," in which Gontier emotionally growled the chorus. They then advocated obtaining their newest album by any means—buying, ripping, stealing, whatever. Hearing a band's desire to have their music spread, without a concern for monetary gain, was refreshing.

Intertwining lights scanned a dark audience as they led into "Home," one of the best songs of the set. With a prolonged intro and crowd volley that built anticipation, Gontier held out a piece of his specialized mic stand—a *Terminator*-inspired, silver claw with intricate exposed tendons that grasped the mic. The song culminated in the volcanic spewing of fireballs, after which the band left the stage.

After a robotic sample flashing in sync with electric blue lights, multi-talented drummer Neil Sanderson (who also plays keys and sings backup vocals) performed a lengthy, energetic drum solo. While rad, it also served as a distraction tool: four spotlights suddenly spouted attention onto a tiny stage on the opposite side of the venue, highlighting Gontier. He started singing "I Don't Care," and made his way through the crowd to the main stage.

Sanderson switched to keys and the kids pulled out their lighters/cell phones for "Last to Know." "Goin' Down" urged the crowd up, as did "Just Like You." They then pounded out recent radio hit "Never Too Late."

For their last song they asked for a request, and the crowd clamored with demands. The band lamented that they would not be able to play "Riot." This announcement was met with resounding boos...but they were just kidding and launched into the song. The audience's arms looked like a giant sea anemone, and the addition of fire further encouraged their desire to riot. Gontier continually threw guitar picks to fans during the song, like doggie treats rewarding good little rioters.

After exiting the stage, concertgoers chanted "Three Days Grace!" begging for an encore. Placating their commands, Gontier came back onstage and promised something special. Bathed in smoky blue spotlights, he played a moving cover of Phil Collins's "In the Air Tonight," with the band joining in toward the end. They then closed out the show with two of their own songs, "World So Cold" and crowd favorite "Animal I Have Become." The latter featured Gontier extending his microphone claw for the audience to bolster his singing, more pyrotechnics, and a hail of thanks, love, get-home-safes, shirts, and drum sticks.

Overall, Three Days Grace put on an outstanding show. Their incredibly catchy songs translate well live, with the band gushing energy, engaging the crowd, and nailing every note.

Band: Three Days Grace
Venue: Citizens Business Bank Arena

Date: April 25, 2010
City: Ontario, CA

Adam Gontier - Lead Vocals, Guitar

Barry Stock - Guitar

Neil Sanderson - Drums, Piano, Vocals

Brad Walst - Bass, Backup Vocals



Smile Empty Soul

Photos by: Nicolas Bates
Written by: Daniel Richter

Smile Empty Soul were the headliners at The Key Club on March 25th. Smile Empty Soul started out as a high school band in Santa Clarita, CA as a three piece post-grunge band. Their self titled debut record, with the help of three successful singles, went on to become certified gold. Smile Empty Soul's sophomore album, "Anxiety" was never released because of issues the band had with Lava Records. After five years from its original release date, Smile Empty Soul has re-released "Anxiety" as a CD/DVD combo. The DVD has backstage footage as well as on stage performances.

Smile Empty Soul has cited strong musical influences by Nirvana and other grunge bands of the past. During their show it was easy to see where they got their inspiration from. With aggressive lyrics over sharp solos and heavy guitar riffs, Smile Empty Soul is a fun band to see live. The boom from Ryan Martin's bass fills your chest and Jake Kilmer's drum set keeps your head nodding and toes tapping.

The band might not be a house hold name yet, but their single, "Bottom Of A Bottle" has gained them a lot of radio play and earned them more fans. I highly suggest seeing Smile Empty Soul while they are on the verge of stardom. In a couple years tickets will be more expensive and harder to come by.

Band: Smile Empty Soul
Venue: The Key Club

Date: March 25, 2010
City: Los Angeles, CA



Jake Kilmer - Drums

Sean Danielsen - Lead Vocals, Guitar

Ryan Martin - Bass



Black Sunshine

Photos by: Nicolas Bates
Written by: Daniel Richter

Black Sunshine performed at The Key Club on March 25th as an opener for Smile Empty Soul. Black Sunshine was originally the creation of Matt Reardon. You may know Reardon from his fame as an extreme freeskier and Volkl team rider. Now he is the frontman for the alternative rock foursome known as Black Sunshine.

The other three members came together from separate bands. Dedicated, they all came together to form a band in which they could produce the best music they could. During the show, Matt "Toast" Young was the standout performer. His tenacity and high energy drumming absolutely set the tempo for the rest of the band. Toast gave each song everything he had and more, which is a true testament to his work ethic and passion for drumming.

Guitarist Charles Lee was accompanied by Matt Reardon on guitars throughout most of the set. Along with Chris Serafini on bass, the string section came together with a very clean sound. With soaring melodies and crisp guitar riffs, their live performance sounded like a studio recording.

Black Sunshine releases their self titled debut album in stores on April 13th. Their first single, "Once In My Life" has already gained them a large fan base and has set their toe hold firmly in the alternative rock world.

Band: Black Sunshine
Venue: The Key Club

Date: March 25, 2010
City: Los Angeles, CA



Matt Reardon - Lead Vocals, Guitar

Christopher Serafini - Bass

Matt "Toast" Young - Drums

Charles Lee - Guitar

COMING UP...

Models To Keep An Eye On

Mindi

"MinDelicious"

Stoots

Photography by: Andrew Gates

Make-up: Lyndsay Gabrielle

Hair: Liz Zvingler



Mindi is "MinDelicious" and that country accent makes her all the sweeter. Born and raised in a small Tennessee town, this southern stunner graduated from the University of Memphis with a degree in Fashion Merchandising. Mindi's interest in fashion and modeling started at a young age while playing dress up and fooling around with make-up. Blessed with curves in all the right places and dark skin that would make any sunbather jealous, Mindi has always been comfortable flaunting her ASSets. Strutting her stuff in front of the camera for some of the top photographers in the industry has been a dream come true, but her dreams don't stop there. Keep an eye on this sultry southerner...she just might charm the pants off you!







THE STATS

Birthday:
July 9, 1984.

Zodiac Sign:
Cancer.

Measurements:
32B-23-33.

Height:
5'3"

Weight:
105

Ethnicity:
I am Caucasian, but I do have some Indian in my blood.

Hometown:
Jackson, TN.

Turn Ons:
Massages, nibbling on my ear, biting my neck or sides, talkin dirty, watching a certain kind of movie (the ones without boys), wearing lingerie, and I like my hair pulled. I am trying to keep this as pg as possible.

Turn Offs:
When a guy calls 10 times in a row, when a guy orders super fattening food, when a guy puts his hands or feet on my face.

Pet Peeves:
Facebook instant messenger!

Celebrity Pass:
Aubrey O'day! I like Tila Tequila too!

See more of Mindi at
www.mindelicious.com or
www.twitter.com/mindelicious

COMING UP...

Models to Keep An Eye On CONT'D

Erika Fernandez

Photography By: Andrew Gates
Make-up and Hair: Lyndsay Gabrielle

Erika Fernandez grew up in "America's Finest City", a.k.a. San Diego. While soaking up the California sunshine, Erika's unique and exotic looks caught the eye of a local photographer and her modeling career was born. Best known as a swimsuit model, Erika has set her sights on making a name for herself in acting and other creative ventures. This self-driven hottie is carving a path for future endeavors that include a fashion line as well as exhibitions of her paintings and drawings. With good looks and an insatiable will to succeed, is there anything this girl can't do? I think not!







THE STATS

Birthday:
July 7.

Zodiac Sign:
Cancer.

Measurements:
36-24-36

Height:
5'3"

Weight:
114 lbs.

Ethnicity:
**I am Panamanian,
Italian, and Filipino.**

Hometown:
San Diego, CA.

Turn Ons:
**Drive and ambition.
Go-getters.**

Turn Offs:
**Naive, arrogance,
negativity.**

Pet Peeves:
**People who cannot
spell the word moist.**

Celebrity Pass:
The Avellan twins.

See more of Erika at
www.erikafernandez.com or
facebook.com/erikafernandez

GAME ON

The Latest Games Reviewed!

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a dark tactical suit with a textured, olive-green shoulder pad, is crouching in a dark, industrial environment. He is looking down and to the left with a serious expression. A bright light source from above creates a strong highlight on the wall behind him and on his shoulder. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting a complex interior structure.

Tom Clancy's *SPLINTERCELL*
CONVICTION

Mark & Execute

Who says change is bad? I don't, as long as it's executed correctly. The *Splinter Cell* series has been known for stealth espionage tactics with compelling stories. Set at the most later date in the saga, we're once again reunited with Sam Fisher in a more arcade-style title adhering to the LEAD Engine.

For a game that got some mixed reviews, I was probably one of the very few to have played Sierra's *The Bourne Conspiracy*. It was a fast-paced action title that recreates a cinematic experience, similar to the movie series, and it was actually pretty damn good. *Splinter Cell: Conviction* lost a portion of its hardcore stealth touch and now has an added action vibe, similar to the Bourne game.

Some of the first, and coolest things I noticed when playing this are the in-game objective reminders. Typically in just about any game, you'd have to go into the options or press the BACK button to see what you have to do to reach the goal. In *Conviction*, your objectives are marked up on a water tower, or in huge print on the asphalt in huge bold lettering. Great production value here. Throughout the game, Sam experiences flashbacks. Instead of cutting to a past experience and coming back to reality, the flashback will get projected on a wall or a smooth surface in the area you're standing in. Very original, and definitely unique.

To get the job done, you'll have to hide in the shadows and carefully plan your attack. The game retains its ability to let you complete portions of missions in multiple ways. For instance, while attempting to break into a guard office in an underground parking garage, you can set off a car alarm to lure a guard out and take his key. Or, you can climb on top of the office and hop in through the ceiling and blow away the guards. Whichever way, it's your choice. There is also a new 'mark & execute' feature that allows you to mark a limited amount of enemies, click a button, and nail them all down automatically with your stock handgun. Very similar to Red Steel, but it works. Upgrade your weapons by completing challenges to earn more execute marks and larger clip sizes.

Unfortunately, I've endured a painstaking amount of re-dos to finish particular objectives. I quickly learned that some levels require only stealth, and some only straight-on brutal action. What bothers me is that there's no solid mix of both, as the *Metal Gear* series succeeds in capturing. It's trying so hard to be Gears, but wants you to hide in the shadows and shoot out lights. It's like being with your second cousin at a theme park, and he just can't make up his mind.

Overall, the developers changed direction in this episode of the series to appeal to a wider variety of audiences. We're handed a flashy arcade-style game with some fancy visuals and excellent lighting, but lacking in solid and structured gameplay. Missions can force a bitter taste in your mouth, as you can find yourself repeating and loading checkpoints over and over again. If you're looking for a simulation in the stealth genre where strictly using your environment as a weapon is mandatory, look elsewhere. For newcomers searching for something with the *Splinter Cell* logo, this is a game for you.

Splinter Cell: Conviction

PRODUCER: Ubisoft

PLATFORM: Xbox 360, Microsoft Windows

RELEASE DATE: April 13th, 2010

★★★★★

RATINGS: Mature
GENRE: Stealth Action

GAME ON
The Game Reviews CONT'D

RED STEEL 2

You're Steel The One...

By: William Nadel

In a time long ago, I sat in eager anticipation for the future of immersive gaming. The Nintendo Wii, still full of tantalizing promise, filled me with visions of perfected gaming controls. One of the first games slated to wow us was Red Steel. The game promised precision based sword and gun combat using the Wii controls, but it fell far short in its execution. Here we are some time later with the sequel, Red Steel 2. I must admit that after the disappointment of the first game, I was looking forward to ripping this game a new orifice. After playing through the entire package, I can say with certainty that Ubisoft Paris has done very well with making me forget their previous debacle.

Red Steel 2 is a western/Yakuza style ninja fantasy revolving around the "story" of a nameless hero, wearing a cowboy hat and leather bondage paraphernalia on his face. I use the term "story" very loosely because there really isn't one of any substance. The "story" progresses through simple audio files and short, somewhat corny cutscenes. They never gave me a sense of purpose behind the endless combat.

That being said, I didn't buy this game for its story. I wanted to finally utilize the Wii Motion Plus accessory to live out my gunslinging and swordfighting dreams. All in all, they have developed a deep and engaging combat system. The Wii Motion Plus adds close to true 1:1 motion feedback on the controller. That means the sword and gun move exactly how you move the controller in real life. When you slash, the sword in-game slashes at the same angle you did when you almost hit your girlfriend in the face with the Wii-mote. At any time, you can press the "B" trigger to shoot the gun while pointing the Wii-mote at the screen. All of this works as designed, but the game starts off too slowly with a small selection of limited sword moves. It isn't until all of the sword and gun combos are unlocked that the flow of combat and the real promise of the gameplay comes to fruition. They require you to repeatedly return to your mentor for training, but the training comes in baby steps. Once all attacks and parrying moves are obtained, the game becomes a hell of a lot more immersive. You are required to perform specific controller movements to execute preprogrammed maneuvers, but these generally seem to register accurately. Learning how to reposition the controller after a sword slash takes some practice, but it becomes second nature.

Because everyone has specific tastes for controller reactivity, the developers have given extensive options for altering the behavior of the controller and game camera. All of this freedom is great, but you can accidentally ruin your controls if you blindly change the bounding box and look sensitivity. Luckily, they created presets that cover a wide range of possibilities. This customization is vastly improved over the first title.

The graphics are very crisp with the 480p connection and are some of the best graphics to date on the Wii. The sound design is basic, but those compressed to sh*t files do their job nicely.

All being considered, this game is worth its weight in pollution and well worth the admission price. If you actually take the time to master the controls, you will be pleasantly surprised by the depth of this 10 hour campaign. Hopefully they will think further out of the bounding box next time and include some true 1:1 swordfighting action online.

Red Steel 2

PRODUCER: Ubisoft Paris

PLATFORM: Nintendo Wii

RELEASE DATE: March 23, 2010



RATINGS: Teen

GENRE: First-Person Shooter

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