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20

QUESTIONS WITH

Alicia Whitten

Automotive Mecca

SEMA 2014

GAMES REVIEWED

HALO

THE MASTER CHIEF COLLECTION

CALL OF DUTY
ADVANCED WARFARE

BAYONETTA 2



Foo Fighters

Sonic Highways



T.I.

Paperwork



November 2014

IT'S HERE



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6

Alicia Whitten

October Cover Model

20 questions with Alicia

Photography by Andrew Gates

Makeup & hair by Alicia Whitten

14

Pit Pass

Get In The Driver's Seat

Featured Event:

SEMA Show, Las Vegas

By Andrew Gates

32

All Access

The Latest Albums Reviewed

Albums Reviewed:

T.I.

Paperwork

By Jeremy Weeden

Foo Fighters

Sonic Highways

By Silas Valentino



36

All Access Spotlight

Artists/Bands Featured:

DJ Quik, Black Veil Brides & Bob Seger

By Samuel Wendel

38

Coming Up

Models To Keep An Eye On

Featured Models:

Nikki Trinidad

Rancho Cucamonga, CA

42

Game On

The Latest Games Reviewed

Games Reviewed:

Halo: The Master Chief Collection

By Jesse Seilhan

Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

By Jesse Seilhan

Bayonetta 2

By Josh Schilling

On The Cover

Photo by Andrew Gates

Make-up & hair by Alicia Whitten

This Page

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20 QUESTIONS

Get To Know Your Cover Model

Alicia Whitten

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up & hair by Alicia Whitten



Alicia Whitten is a southern California grown beauty. Her ethnicity is one the average person might have trouble wrapping their head around since she's mixed with; Vietnamese, French, Irish, Dutch, German, Spanish, American Indian and Italian. Alicia is a tom-boy through and through, she's got a lust for adventure and loves living on the edge. She was first discovered at *High Ends* car shop and asked to model at the popular HIN, Hot Import Nights, car show. From this appearance people took notice and Alicia became a hot commodity. She has worked with some of the best photographers in the business and been featured in a myriad of men's magazines.

Alicia has proven that her talents go far beyond the realm of being a model, by taking up dancing and acting. Her big goal for the future is to become a professional motor-sport drift car driver, since she's a huge fan of cars and her feature film debut was in *Fast and the Furious 4*. She also had the pleasure of being featured in a *GT Channel* video shoot filmed at Willow Springs International Raceway starring Daijiro Yoshihara.

Alicia has made a few appearances on TV and the big screen as well, working with some formidable directors. She hopes to continue making moves to keep her on top of her game. Alicia is definitely striving to do more and has the attitude to make things happen; Beauty, Brains and Brawn, what more could you ask for in a woman?.



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

1. What's your Ethnicity?

I am Vietnamese, German, French, Irish, Dutch, Spanish, American Indian, Italian and some other stuff I can't remember. My Mom is Vietnamese and French and my Dad was the rest. I'm the muttiest of mutts. [laughs]

2. What's your zodiac sign?

I am a Scorpio. That's right, I'm not flaky, fluffy or helpless.

3. Where are you from originally?

I was born in Omaha Nebraska and lived on the base there. I definitely do not remember my corn husking years since we moved out of there when I was turning two.

4. What did you like most about growing up in Simi Valley, CA?

I like the fact my neighborhood was safe and full of families. It is known to be one of the safest cities in California...although it is hella boring here!

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

Oh my goodness, what did I not get into. [laughs] I lit my first match when I was two years old and started a fire then put it out. I even covered the big burn mark with a rug. Also decided to burn all our toys in the room and ran around it like Indians until my dad barged into the room. I would come home bleeding a lot from climbing trees, trying to skateboard, rollerblade, playing street hockey and pretty much everything you could name. My mom use to yell at me all the time telling me guys are not going to like me if I have scars all over and that I shouldn't be doing things like that because I'm a girl. My response to her was that there obviously was a mistake and that I was a gay boy whos dick fell off. She would get mad at me for saying that of course, but I just told her, it is what it is. [laughs] I was definitely a tom-boy and still am. I grew up with brothers, I have four brothers and two younger sisters.

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

I think I would have to say skydiving. But honestly, I want to pull some Travis Pastrana crap and jump out of a plane without a parachute one day.

7. What's your favorite hobby and why?

You know, it actually changes a lot on my mood. I love racing cars, but I also love drawing and painting.

8. What's your guilty pleasure?

Oh gosh, playing *Call of Duty* with my headset and talking crap. Ugh, *COD* why must you suck some of my life and sleep away. [laughs]

9. Who do you admire and why?

I would have to say Travis Pastrana. I think he is such an amazing individual. Everything he wants to do he just does it and he is amazing at it. He definitely has some big balls. I mean I do too, but they are stuck on my chest, they definitely have not dropped yet. [laughs]

10. If you could change one thing in the world what would it be and why?

Hunger and War, I hate to know there are many people in this world going hungry. And I wish there were world peace because honestly, life is way too short to be angry and starting wars.

11. What's one of your personal goals?

Other than becoming an amazing race car driver/drifter it would be to give my son the most amazing life that I never had.

12. What do guys compliment you on the most?

I would say my eyes, they always say they are the shape of almonds.

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

Maybe my stomach.

14. What do you look for in a guy?

A guy with an amazing down-to-earth humble personality. I like someone who is romantic, fun, funny, spontaneous, adventurous, respectful, caring ... yeah just all of the above. Also, sweet but crazy and they definitely need to be able to keep up with me. [wink]

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

Either their eyes or their smile. I feel you can tell so much from those two things.

16. What's your ideal first date?

My ideal first date, oh man ... let's see how big your balls are Mr ... let's go jump out of a plane.

17. What turns you on?

A man who respects himself and others, it's hard to find these days, so it definitely snags me when I find one, most of them are good actors though.

18. What turns you off?

A guy with bad teeth, who has addiction problems, high egos and who yells a lot or likes to fight. I hate fighting, I like talking things out if anything. If you want to fight, let's throw on some boxing gloves [laughs] Just kidding ... I wouldn't want to knock 'em out or anything. [wink]

19. What's your biggest pet peeve?

Liars, people who are late or people who ask you to pick them up and then they are not ready.

20. Who's your celebrity crush?

Paul Walker for sure. I had the pleasure of meeting this man on set of the *Fast and the Furious 4*, He was definitely a humble and caring man. It was so sad when he died, RIP **RM**

20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS
Your Cover Model Cont'd



20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



“...let's go
jump out of
a plane.”

20 QUESTIONS

Your Cover Model Cont'd



STATS:

Birthday: November 15

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 107lb

Measurements: 34C-28-34

See more of Alicia at
[instagram.com/savedgedoll](https://www.instagram.com/savedgedoll)

PIT PASS

Get In The Driver's Seat

SEMA 2014

Photos by Andrew Gates
Written by Andrew Gates

The mecca of the automotive industry is in Las Vegas every November and it's the place to be for every car enthusiast. I'm a huge fan of the industry and I love coming to this show to meet other enthusiasts and see how much it's going to cost me to upgrade the RUKUS drift car for the coming season.

The show didn't seem as busy as 2013, but the cars and companies came out in droves. We had the pleasure of making the rounds and seeing some spectacular builds to which you would be amazed. This is also a chance for us to say hello to our current sponsors (*Painless Performance Products* and *Rayno Window Film*) both of which had a booth at the event. It also gives us a chance to meet new potential sponsors.

The one place you should strive to attend is SEMA. Put it on your bucket list if you have to, make it happen at some point in your life and make sure to wear comfortable shoes, you'll be a hurting unit otherwise.

SEMA was in full effect and if you missed it, well that's your own fault, but since we care about our readers, we brought you some images back from the show to help wet your whistle ... enjoy.











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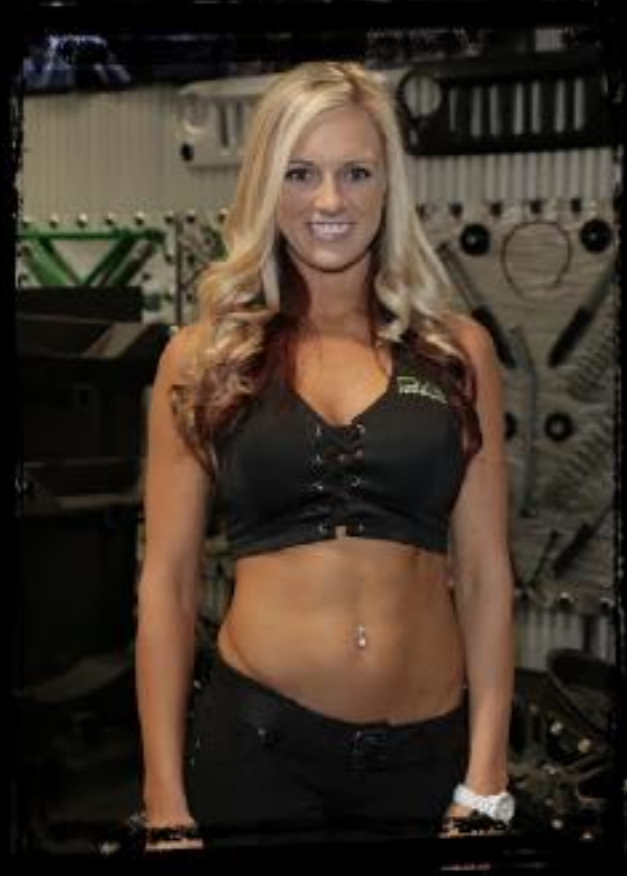




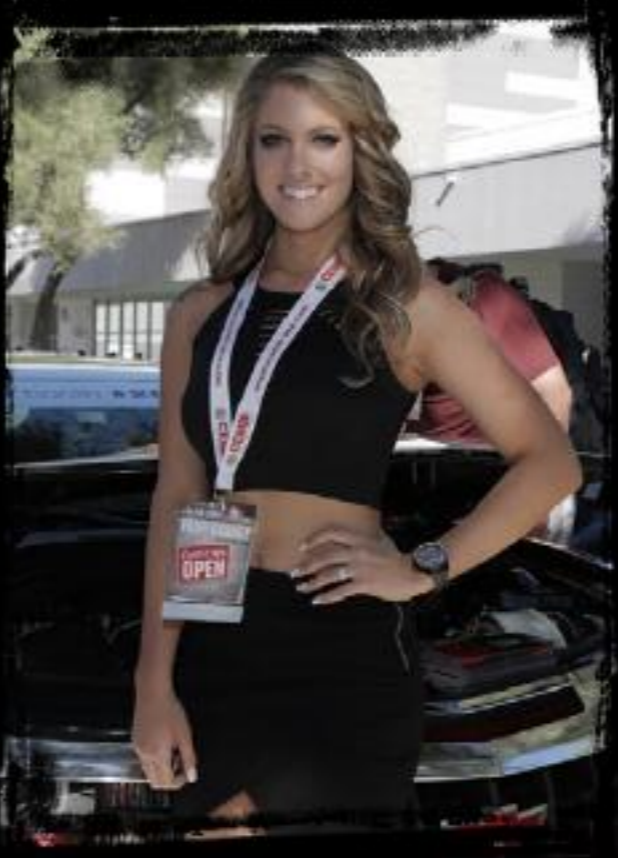
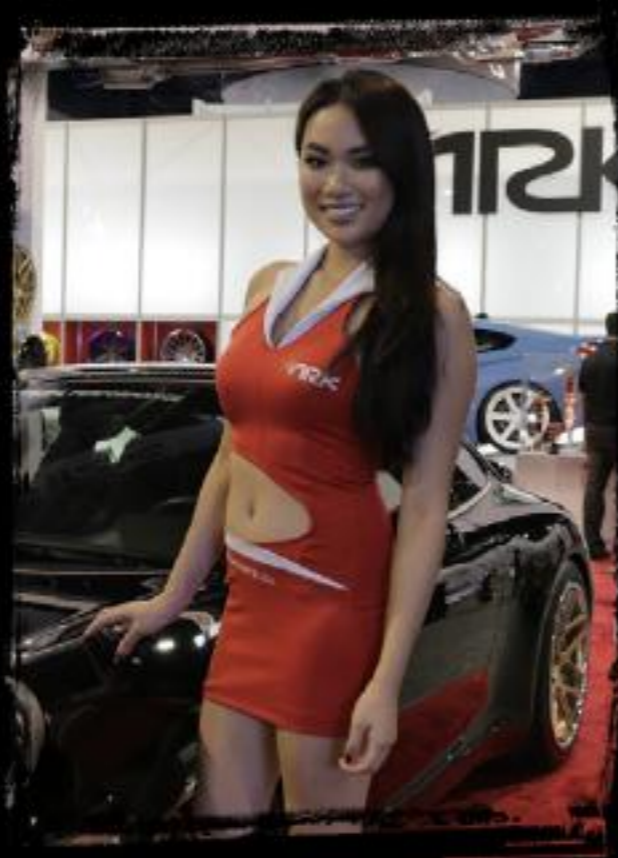












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20

QUESTIONS WITH
HIROMI



ALL ACCESS

The Latest Albums Reviewed

He Gone Got It

Photo by Jason Campbell
Written by Jeremy Weeden

T.I. is back with his 8th studio album, *Paperwork*, and it is his best work since 2007's *T.I. vs T.I.P.*

The album begins with T.I.'s spoken word over a soulful beat and a man in the background singing, "I'm the King." The song quickly turns cinematic with blaring horns over hard drums and T.I.'s double-time style flows effortlessly over the track. This sets the album up perfectly and has the listener anticipating what's to come.

The next track "G Shit" featuring Young Jeezy is a bouncy affair produced by Pharrell. Young Jeezy shows his usual flair for entertaining with the lyrics, "When Jay was beefin with Nas I was sellin cocaine/When Game was beefin with 50 I was doin the same thang." Next up is the album's first single "About the Money" featuring Atlanta newcomers Young Thug and London on da Track. This club favorite is a perfect song to go riding to as the contrast between T.I. and Young Thug's styles blends perfectly over London's slow, bass-heavy beat.

Paperwork veers down a more serious path with "New National Anthem" featuring songstress Skylar Grey. T.I. raps about racism, injustices and hypocrisies in America. He touches on Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown and speaks on what it is to be a black man in America, asking his audience of other races if they have ever had to explain what they were doing in their own neighborhood. T.I. ends the song speaking about different problems in our society saying, "Let me ask you something. If the kids are the future, tell me why you can get more for being C.O. (correctional officer) than you can for being a teacher. Tell me why it means more to the government to pay the people who got to watch over the prisoners, more than the people who got to keep the children from becoming prisoners. That make sense? Tell me why 9 ounces of crack will get you more time than a rape right now."

Things heat back up with "Oh Yea" another song produced by Pharrell. T.I. sets this robust energetic track off with the crescendo of, "I'm a man of respect, man of the people/I stand next to God, to man I'm no equal/Man of respect, man of the people/I stand next to God, to man I'm no equal."

Like many artist lately T.I. hops on the DJ Mustard train, and the result is the sonically pleasing "No Mediocre" featuring Iggy Azalea. This popular single is already certified gold by the RIAA.

The title track finds T.I. rapping to a mellower beat than he is usually known for. This Pharrell-produced track is reminiscent of early Kanye and is another excellent song on the album.

"Stay" is a personal song where T.I. opens up about him and Tiny's relationship. An open book for most of his career when it comes to his life, T.I. truly bares all here. He tells Tiny how much he loves her and lets her know that if need be he will beg her to stay. "Light Em Up" is a tribute to his artist DOE B who was murdered in December. T.I. delivers a fitting tribute on this song featuring Grand Hustle artist Trae the Truth.

Paperwork places T.I. squarely back on top of his game. The album is a good blend of the different styles T.I. can bring to the table and will appeal to listeners of his early work as well as his more recent material. Already one of the top rappers to ever come out of the south, T.I. proves he is not done adding to his legacy yet with *Paperwork*.

Artist: T.I.
Album: Paperwork
Website: trapmuzik.com

★★★★★
Label: Grand Hustle
Release Date: October 21, 2014



ALL ACCESS

The Album Reviews Cont'd



20 Years and Counting

Written by Silas Valentino

If anyone else found themselves in the situation Dave Grohl was in following Kurt Cobain's death 20 years ago, they'd probably just play drums in some other band—like for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. But Grohl did something on his own and went into the studio to record an album all by himself (except one song's guitar part) with the outcome being the Foo Fighter's self-titled debut album. The Dave Grohl spirit of mixing up the rhythm and treading into new waters, while maintaining true to form, has remained consistent in the Foo Fighter's past 20 year run and it's still the case for their eighth studio album, *Sonic Highways*.

Grohl and Co. toy with convention on this one. Instead of recording all the tracks in a single studio, the Foos recorded the album's eight tracks in eight separate studios across the country including in Nirvana's *In Utero* producer Steve Albini's Chicago studio and the old soundstage from Austin City Limits in Texas. But instead of coming off like a cover band trying to incorporate all these different styles into the songs, *Sonic Highways* is an authentic and unmistakable Foo Fighters album.

The lead single, album opener and theme song for the HBO mini series documenting the Foo's cross-country journey—“Nothing from Something”—is an instantaneously enjoyable rocker. It builds and adds to itself until a climatic explosion signaled by guitarist Chris Shiflett when he rattles off a furious solo at the 4-minute mark. (Refer to the scene in the Chicago episode of the HBO series where Shiflett and Grohl craft together this solo's live wire sound—it makes you hone into this part of the song.)

“What Did I Do?/God as My Witness,” their Austin track, breathes with a Credence Clearwater Revival-style verse and features just enough honky tonk to justify its Texan inspiration. Each track on this album features a guest musician representing their city and Gary Clark, Jr. lends his bluesy touch on the song's second half. Clark, Jr. is an unattested guitar hero but on this guest appearance he sounds limited and not fully flexed.

This notion of good idea but not great execution plagues *Sonic Highways*. Everything is in order for a unique musical expression: the Foo Fighters traveled to musically-distinct cities to record, powerful guests frequently appear to lend their chops; but even with all this great buzz in the air *Sonic Highways* falls short of extraordinary and shelves itself in the “okay, not bad” section of music's library.

Cutting west to the golden coast, the Foos enlist Eagle's guitarist Joe Walsh for a desert-wide solo on “Outside.” Walsh's signature high tone screeching is in check but the standout on this track is the Foo's bassist Nate Mendel. The opening bass lick is a warming throwback to his early work like “Up in Arms” off the Foo's *The Colour and the Shape*.

Taking us home is the final track “I am a River,” inspired by New York City. Since NYC is already a cesspool of culture and inspiration it's hard to pin down exactly the music motivation behind this track but the featured musicians (Tony Visconti and Kristeen Young) are frequent David Bowie collaborators, which gives insight to the song's grandeur feel.

At the center of *Sonic Highway's* album artwork amidst the famous landmarks of the eight cities that inspired the album is the number 8. But if looked at differently, the 8 falls on its side, ∞, it makes an infinite sign.

If *Sonic Highways* proves anything it's that the Foo Fighters won't be throwing in the towel any time soon.

Artist: Foo Fighters

Album: Sonic Highways

Website: sonichighways.foofighters.com

★★★★☆

Label: RCA, Roswell

Release Date: November 10, 2014

ALL ACCESS SPOTLIGHT

Written by Samuel Wendel

Facebook.com/DJQuik



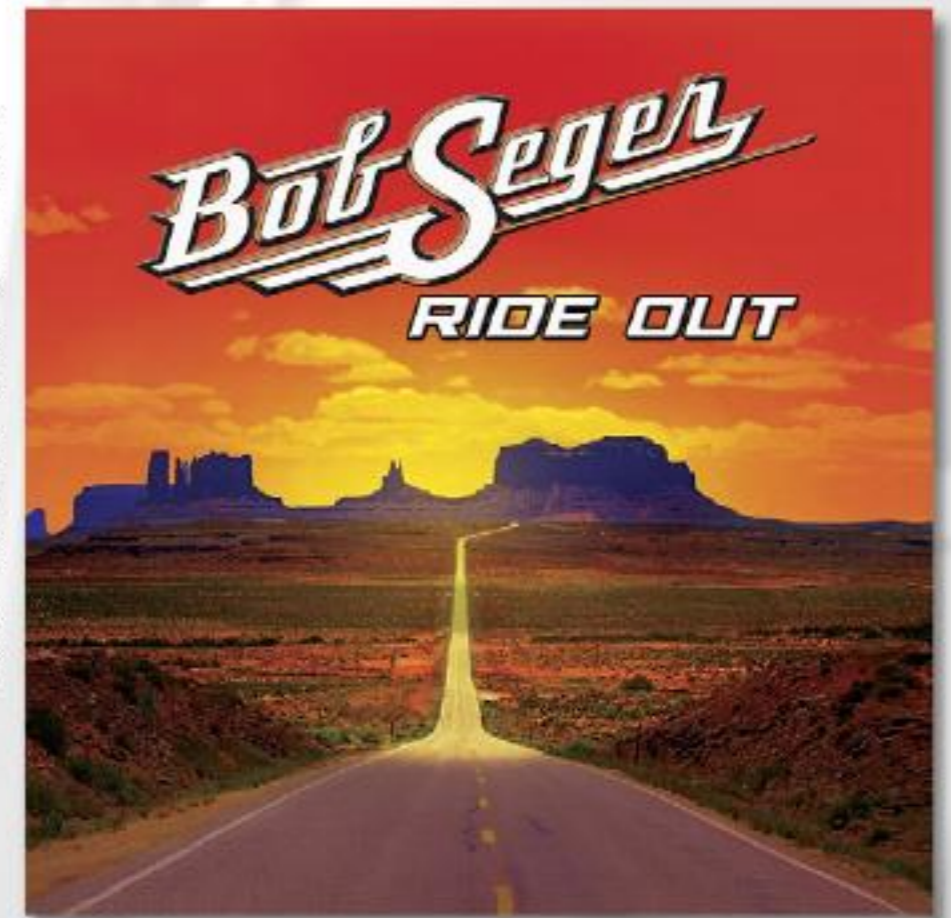
DJ Quik, *The Midnight Life*

25 years and nine studio albums in, you could forgive DJ Quik for slowing down—fortunately, and unsurprisingly given his name, he's doing just the opposite. *The Midnight Life* finds the 44-year-old rapper picking up speed, outclassing all the young guns bursting on to the scene. Unlike most high profile hip-hop these days, DJ Quik is a rapper who can throw down breezy hooks that burrow into your brain while at the same time paint images and provoke complex emotional responses with his lyrics. Throughout *The Midnight Life* DJ Quik create a rich sonic palette that sounds light and friendly—something that'd easily boom at college party—but hiding in plain sight are darker themes and hints of chaos. It sounds happy, but it's a wolf in lamb's clothing. As a result, the latest from Quik is uneven at times but ultimately a compelling and entertaining release. He mixes lush R&B with subtle trap beats and then overlays that with sharp and biting lyrics that, like mosquito bite, surprise you and slowly inflame. Guests appear in form of Dom Kennedy, Bishop Lamont, and Joi, but for the most part this is Quik's show—and he makes the most of it.

Bob Seger, *Ride Out*

At 69 years old, Bob Seger is still running strong, and he shows it on *Ride Out*, the 17th studio album from the bonafide rock legend. Unfortunately, no track on *Ride Out* is a surefire beer-commercial radio hit like "Nightmoves" or "Against the Wind," but this is no throwaway album from a washed up 80s rock star. Everything good about Bob Seger shows up here: his signature raspy croon still rises and sears like a shot of bottom shelf whiskey on a warm Friday night in June mixed with the same foot tapping mix of guitar and piano that's emanated from blue collar radio stations for thirty years. Standout tracks are opener and lead single "Detroit Made," and later "It's Your World," as well as several covers. *Ride Out* may not reach the heights that Seger ascended to at the peaks in his long and lofty career, but it also doesn't fall flat into the gutter either—instead he's got the windows down, cruising into the wind along the road into a well-deserved limelight.

Facebook.com/ BobSeger



Facebook.com/BlackVeilBrides



Black Veil Brides, *Black Veil Brides IV*

Despite calling sun-drenched Hollywood home, Black Veil Brides seem fixated upon a warmer and still more demented location—Hell, the underworld, the pit of Hades, etc. The majority of tunes on the fourth studio album from these glam/metal/rockers center around the subject of hellfire and suffering—and frontman Andy Beirsa delivers the apocalyptic tidings with enough enthusiasm and grandiosity to put a wild-eyed traveling evangelical minister to shame. But lyrical content aside, the real propulsion behind the Black Veil Brides' newest release springs from the blustery guitar playing—this album is truly a showcase of feverish solos and heavy riffs. The combo of lead guitarist Jake Pitts and rhythm guitarist Jinnx power the album across 11 tracks. The duo attempts to "shred" at every opportunity with the ferocity and visceral impact of a manic garbage disposal or an industrial paper shredder. The pomp and swagger and production results in quite a showing from these rockers, but although their tormented lyrics aim for the profound depths of hell, the latest from the Black Veil Brides never gets more than skin deep: it's a slickly produced, bombastic affair, but ultimately plays it relatively safe. Standout tracks are ponderous ballad "Walk Away" and ferocious opener "Heart on Fire."

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COMING UP

Models To Keep An Eye On

Nikki Trinidad

Photography by Andrew Gates
Make-up & hair by Bioanca Robinson



Nikki Trinidad is a true California girl, born and raised in Rancho Cucamonga. This Filipina-Latina mixed beauty got started modeling at a very young age, doing runway modeling for Nordstroms as a child, she fell in love with the idea of modeling. After high school, Nikki attended FIDM, The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, where she earned a degree in Graphic Design. While attending school she also took up go-go dancing at some of LA's most trendy nightclubs.

Nikki's modeling career really got a boost when she attended Dub Show in Los Angeles, posing for pictures for countless attendees, she got noticed by numerous people asking her to model for their events. This is when Nikki realized she wanted to make a career out of modeling. Since then, she has really made a name for herself modeling for a variety of car shows, men's magazines, music videos and as a ring girl.

Nikki keeps herself busy, traveling to various cities for her fans and work. She recently moved back to Los Angeles from Las Vegas and is looking forward to a great 2015. Keep an eye out for this bombshell as she makes her way to as many shows as she can throughout the southland and plans to launch her new website soon.



COMING UP

Models To Keep An Eye On Cont'd





THE STATS

Birthday:
September 16

Zodiac Sign:
I am a Virgo

Measurements:
32D-23-35

Height:
5'2"

Weight:
104lb

Ethnicity:
I am half Filipino and half Mexican. My father is full Filipino and my mother is full Mexican.

Hometown:
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Turn Ons:
I'm turned on by a man who knows what he is doing and knows how to take control. [wink] I've always been into athletes, anything from baseball, football, boxing, skateboarding and snowboarding, oh and a guy on a street bike (moans ugh...so hot!)

Turn Offs:
A serious turn off is a man who is full of shit and brags about nonsense and has no manners.

Ideal first date:
Ideal date would be good food, good wine and live music.

Guilty Pleasure:
Guilty pleasures are ice cream and dark chocolate covered strawberries ... yummy. Oh and lately, I think I have a serious Starbucks problem.

Pet Peeves:
One pet peeve is not having common courtesy for others in all types of situations.

Celebrity Pass:
My Past and one of my first crushes is Leonardo Dicaprio.

See more of Nikki at
[instagram.com/nikkitt_bby](https://www.instagram.com/nikkitt_bby)

GAME ON

The Latest Games Reviewed

Wheel in the Sky

Written by Jesse Seilhan

Halo is the first and potentially greatest franchise in Microsoft's console library. When it debuted alongside the original Xbox in 2001, it helped put the budding console on the map with the best first-person shooter experience since Goldeneye. In the past decade, there have been multiple sequels, spin-offs, and remakes, but the four main (and numbered) Halo games have been compiled to create the Master Chief Collection. Packed in with each campaign is every single multiplayer map ever made for these four games, including the remastered ones in Halo: Combat Evolved Anniversary Edition, totalling over 100 maps in all. Combine this with an upcoming multiplayer beta for Halo 5: Guardians as well as the made-for-Xbox episodic series Halo: Nightfall, and you have the near-perfect collection of all things Halo. But is it all just rose-colored nostalgia or does it still hold up in a post-Modern Warfare world?

The one thing the original Bungie games did best was combat. In this collection, the weapons still feel great as ever and the combat puzzle and its unique encounters still create anxious moments with near-perfect balance. While the original Halo got the remaster treatment a few years ago, Halo 2 is the belle of this game's ball. Halo 2 has been given more than just an audio and visual upgrade, as all of the cutscenes have been remade by Blur studios, a premiere digital media company. Playing this once underwhelming game again is much sweeter with the improved graphics and helps boost potentially the weakest of the four entries. Halo 3 and 4 have been given smaller improvements, mostly in the framerate arena, giving all four games an extremely fluid feeling of motion. Together, the epic saga of Master Chief is one grand story that makes way more sense after giving each campaign a go.

Multiplayer is as authentic as can be, giving fans the original maps and the remastered maps made for Halo and Halo 2. But, honestly, all this freedom can be somewhat confusing. Remembering which games have dual-wielding, overshields, and crazy physics can become difficult when playing different titles in quick succession. It doesn't help that the pre-made playlists can range from one to four different games, drawing from over a hundred maps and dozens of weapons and systems. Luckily, the map-making Forge is back, allowing players to craft their own worlds and rules, going beyond prior iterations with way more options and space to create. Halo multiplayer is tough to compare to other shooters, as it has a pace and balance all its own, but those who lived and died playing in the days of the gigantic original Xbox controller will find themselves going to sleep with visions of flying Warthogs in their mind.

Honestly, there hasn't been a collection like this since Valve's The Orange Box many years ago, giving gamers more for their money than any other product this year. Playing through each campaign should take over 15 hours, if you take your time and look around to find each hidden nook and cranny. Score and time attack modes are built in to keep things competitive with your friends and earn achievements, giving you even more reason to play through missions over and over. But if you really enjoyed Halo in the past decade, the multiplayer is the real draw. Being able to customize your favorite game types of old, hop in and out of different games, and play massive battles like you once could is a unforgettable experience that has been faithfully recreated. While the initial launch was hampered by server woes, when the game works, it an unflappable experience that few games have surpassed in the past 13 years. If you ever played one of these games or wondered what all the fuss was about, buying The Master Chief Collection is a no brainer. It is now the gold standard for all remakes and collections.

Game Title: Halo: The Master Chief Collection

Producer: Microsoft Studios

Platform: Xbox One

Website: halowaypoint.com

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: First-Person Shooter

Release Date: November 11, 2014



HALO
THE MASTER CHIEF COLLECTION

GAME ON

The Game Reviews Cont'd



CALL OF DUTY
ADVANCED WARFARE

Back to the Future

Written by Jesse Seilhan

If there is one series that has desperately needed a shot in the arm, it is Call of Duty. The perennial shooter has showcased all notable wars in the past 100 years, used every weapon imaginable, and told just about every military story known to man. But Sledgehammer Games, makers of the Dead Space series, had this year's entry on their desks and decided to do something different while still sticking with what works. Gone is the modern setting and in its place is 2054's military problems. North Koreans open the game as enemies, but quickly the Private Military Contractors known as Atlas take over as the big bad entity. Their leader Jonathan Irons, played expertly by Kevin Spacey, gives you every reason to want to hunt him down and kill him, but not before you get a sweet exo suit. This suit is the real difference maker in Advanced Warfare, with mobility and abilities unlike any other Call of Duty game ever.

The suit gives you all sorts of benefits, the most obvious being increased speed and a double jump. Each single player missions gives you a variant of the suit, some allowing for a multi-directional dash, while some opt for the double jump. Mapped to the d-pad are a multitude of special abilities, such as amped-up defense, a sonic blast that stuns everyone in range, and a slo-mo effect that gives you time to dispatch any and all threats. Your battery meter dictates how many uses you get out of these powers, which can be upgraded in the all-new exo upgrade menu. Between missions, players can buy perks like faster reloads, higher damage threshold, and the ability to hold more grenades, by spending points earned by getting kills, headshots, and grenade kills. The weaponry gets an upgrade too, as the boring red dot and iron sights have been replaced by threat-detecting reticles and smart grenades. These grenades are awesome, as a single grenade can be "cycled" through a variety of options, from homing, frag, and sticky on the explosive side and EMP and threat detection on the utility side. These changes make the moment-to-moment gameplay more engaging and at the very least, different than prior iterations.

Plot tends not to matter to most COD fans, as plenty of people never even touch the campaign, but this year's effort deserves some praise. While the story goes down a hole you can see coming a mile away, the way it gets there is at least a ton of fun. Each mission plays differently, giving you different toys (drones, airbikes, and a badass tank) to play with and big-budget blockbuster moments featuring Michael Bay explosions all over the place. That being said, the draw here will always be the multi-player modes. Advanced Warfare sort of streamlines prior outputs by leaving some beloved modes at the door while iterating on the custom class system from the Black Ops games. You get a dozen slots to fill, from grenades to weapons and perks, allowing you to create many specific loadouts, fit for the dozen or so game modes packed into the game. Domination and Team Deathmatch are still around, as are Kill Confirmed and the litany of Hardcore playlists, so most people will be happy.

All in all, this is the best Call of Duty game in years. It's a fun romp through a near-future America with stellar graphics, tight gameplay, and a somewhat compelling campaign. Multiplayer is still as addicting as ever, but zombies are gone and that will always turn some people away. The package as a whole is the best Activision has put forward since Modern Warfare 2, but still pales in comparison to the big shooters of 2014: Titanfall and Destiny. Both of those offer a sense of scope, mobility, speed, control, and fun that games like Battlefield and Call of Duty are not built to match. This game tries with the exo suit and the fun tech toys, but if they continue in this direction, the franchise could lose its way and alienate dedicated fans that have been fans for a decade. It's up to either Infinity Ward or Treyarch to carry the torch in 2015 and build on this excellent product.

Game Title: Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

Producer: Activision

Platform: Xbox One, PS4, PC, Xbox 360, PS3

Website: callofduty.com/advancedwarfare

★★★★★

Ratings: Mature

Genre: First-Person Shooter

Release Date: November 4, 2014

GAME ON

The Game Reviews Cont'd



BAYONETTA 2

Pure Diva

Written by Josh Schilling

Fans of the first Bayonetta released back in 2010 were always hoping for a sequel, but they weren't necessarily expecting the follow-up title to be released exclusively on the WiiU. Since the original was only on the Xbox 360 and PS3, the current gen systems would make more sense, but the makers of those two consoles turned down the sequel, and Nintendo was left to pick up this exclusive. Luckily, the time for Bayonetta 2 has arrived just in time for the holidays, and the over-the-top, mind-bending action remains as the titular character blows through the denizens of heaven and hell on her way to save the soul of her like-powered witch friend Jeanne. And if none of that makes sense, the game also comes bundled with the first Bayonetta, giving WiiU owners the entire saga in one package and a way to play the illustrious diva's entire story.

On imagination alone, this game rises above just about any other title. The settings set the proper stage for the completely unique enemies that Bayonetta shoots, kicks, and dispatches with her demon-summoning hair. Her foes are awe-inspiring in their creative design, and the combo-laden gameplay that is reminiscent of Devil May Cry adds to the beautiful chaos that permeates this game. The story drips with somewhat typical familiar Anime twists and turns, but it is overall grand and satisfying without being sappy, and very far from pointless or boring. The voice-acting and writing is as solid as any Platinum Games product, and the pacing keeps the player engaged throughout the dozen or so hours it will take to complete the campaign.

This game is pure spectacle, and shows off the power of the Wii U in ways that have not been seen before. When you are pulling off combos against spectacular enemies on a crumbling building while gigantic demons are battling in the background, you will get a taste of the grandeur that this game has to offer. Beyond the single-player story, this game offers other challenges, and a co-op mode as well if you have a buddy ready to tackle the forces of Heaven and Hell with you. Each chapter can also be replayed at higher difficulties while trying to attain better medals, and from there you can unlock different abilities and weapons. Instead of brandishing guns on her shoes, Bayonetta can now trade those in for a pair of chainsaws! Take that, you stupid angels!

What seals the deal with this game is Bayonetta herself. A lot has been said about her overt sexuality, and the cut scenes add to the controversy with their gratuitous slow-motion crotch shots, but Bayonetta wears it all with the flair of a true diva, and could certainly care less what you, I, or any of the characters in the game think. Her goal is not to make males drool, and she shows contempt for them in just about every interaction she has: she just is who she is and you can tell that she is supremely proud of that fact. With all that in mind, she is definitively the greatest female video game character of all time. More powerful and interesting than Lara Croft or Samus, and not naïve like Elizabeth from Bioshock Infinite or Ellie from Last of Us, Bayonetta is more akin to Alyx Vance from Half Life 2 in how they command attention not only from their abilities, but with their charm and complete independence of male support. Bayonetta rises above with her style, her skills, her wit, and she could probably kick the crap out of any rival, which seals the deal in my book. The best part is that Bayonetta knows all of this already, but would be politely appreciative at the same time...maybe.

Game Title: Bayonetta 2
Producer: Nintendo
Platform: Wii U
Website: bayonetta2.nintendo.com

★★★★★
Ratings: Mature
Genre: Action/Adventure
Release Date: October 14, 2014



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