

## Cynic Interview

Flashback 18 years from now. Focus has just released to the public. What was going through your head when Cynic had decided to disband? Why did you decide to reunite in 2007 after such a long period? Did you ever think you were going to end up reuniting after a certain time?

Our disbandment wasn't something that happened overnight. It happened quietly and organically. There wasn't ever an official break up. There was no press release. It just kind of dissolved. The feelings kind of arose later where I realized it wasn't what I was doing anymore, I was doing something else. I don't know...there was a sore spot there for a while. I think we pushed ourselves out of the music industry because we were so overwhelmed by it. It was just one of those things where there was a lot of pressure and we didn't feel very loved and thought we were just outsiders. So we said let's go back to doing music without this "thing", we'll just do something else. So there was a little bit of a sore spot there and I think when we got back together, there's been a lot of healing because of that. It was kind of this opportunity to look at this thing of our childhood and do it again in a way that felt it makes sense. It was weird, ya know? Back then it was against all odds \*laughs\*. Although we were signed to a big record company and all that, it was still a very challenging time for us. We got back together as a result of a series of synchronicities that happened. Sometime in early '07 I think, had a bunch of things happen. Started with an email from a kid from Russia who said that he had a dream he saw us play at a festival and that we were reunited and I remember thinking, "Oh that's trippy." Then over the course of two weeks six more things happened that dealt with Cynic appearing again. For example, an old friend asked me, "Whatever happened with that record?" If one was paying attention, which I was, I just thought I was heeding the echo of the universe. I almost feel like I just took instruction, and did what I needed to do. And it makes complete sense now creatively. It's been such a liberating thing to do. And the healing of that unresolved ending that we had there. It's a good, fun journey. \*laughs\*

You've had a lot of "side-bands", from Aeon Spoke to Portal. Do you think you would continue working with either of the projects?

Well Portal really just did a series of two demos that become this record, like the "Portal Demos" or whatever. Those are actually going to be released next year officially. I think that was just a snapshot of the post-Cynic Focus period. It was still kind of Cynic, but under a different head. It was one of those things where I don't think we'd ever do something serious with it. Aeon Spoke is possible. We released a record on our own and then one in '07 with a record called SPV. It was definitely a different kind of side. I feel like Cynic can do all that now. Cynic doesn't have a style per se. So if I did bring Aeon Spoke back it'd be really different. Something like a barebones acoustic thing. Just a totally different sound. So...who knows? Maybe! \*laughs\*.

I know the song Carbon-Based Anatomy is a "reinterpretation" of the song Homosapien by Aeon Spoke. What made you decide to pull inspiration from that?

It's really just a different name for the same kind of source. So I always feel like it's one of those things where, with our music, pretty much any given Cynic record is like an assemblage of existing material from a library, and Homosapien was a song that we made a demo for and it kind of fell away, and I always felt like that was a really cool song. It just had this juice to it. And it curiously seemed to find its home in real place in the context of a Cynic production, because it was never officially released with Aeon Spoke. It's one of those things where songs have a life of their own, and when their ready they get heard. It was ripe. It was time for it to come off the tree. That's the unpredictable trippy part of the creative process. You have no idea how things are happening, they're just happening. \*laughs\* It's

cool.

I feel like Cynic is on a very precarious edge right now, where if you're slightly nudged in the wrong direction everything could collapse. Is there some truth to that?

I think we feel pretty solid. I don't think we're on the verge of breaking up. The core of Cynic is Sean (Reinert) and I and we have a 25 year working relationship. He's like my family. He won't go away. \*laughs\* But it's a good thing. It's a very deep relationship that's beyond language. It's a very curious chemistry that we have as musicians. So right now there's a good sense of momentum. There's an abundance of material that's pouring forth and appearing in the project. It feels like everything's groovy. Why not keep it rockin'? We're just kind of going with the river, we're going wherever it takes us.

Reinert and Masvidal have always been the staple of the band, but there's never really been a permanent band member outside of those two. Is there a reason for this? Will there ever be a permanent line up?

I think what we realized is that the permanent line up is him and I. We are the core in terms of the creative process. So, it seems to work. It's a simple relationship. You can't force bands. They just happen. They happen as a result of wanting to be around each other and having a lot of chemistry as musicians. I think that for us, this works right now. It's possible that we could have a 3 piece band or a 4 piece band. It's possible that these guys could be with us for the next 5 to 10 years. It's hard to tell. At the core, there's this dynamic between Sean and I that's integral to Cynic because of how long we've worked together and been friends. So who knows?

Speaking of which, I know Sean Malone has recorded on every album with you guys besides Re-Traced. Is there a possibility that he could become a full-time member?

Well yeah, he has been. He was on Focus and Traced in Air and the new record. So yeah, it's possible. We love his bass playing. He's definitely in sync with what we're doing musically, and I've always felt that with him. So, there's a good chance. It definitely depends on what we're doing and when we're making the record. But yeah, Malone jams. He's a badass.

Once you're done touring, where does Cynic go from there? Can we expect another album from you guys?

Another album, yeah. We were kind of in the middle of that when we made this EP. It was kind of like interruption. We said "We'll get something out this year", and in six weeks we made this thing. So it was really a groovy thing because it produced this interesting result because of the urgency. It was really fresh and spontaneous and raw process. So yeah I think we'll get back into living in L.A., which is where we live, and I might even come to the bay area and hang out with some friends there and do some writing because I've got a lot of good friends up here. Just kind of do work as a session musician because we do a lot of that stuff like teaching, T.V., film, all that good stuff. So we're just wearing all the hats that you wear as a musician when you're not the touring guy. And working on the new music and diving into that, which is gonna be consuming also. So there's always something to do. I've always like the quote, "Don't just do something, sit there." The opposite in terms of encouraging meditation.

What are some of your favorite bands out there right now? Who are you most impressed by?

I'm kind of all over the place. There's an artist I've been really listening to that I really enjoy. I don't know if I have favorites but I go through these cycles of artists being more in the forefront, because I think I'm a fan of that. Great artists versus genres. Regardless of style. I've been digging this artist out of LA, Chelsea Wolfe. Really cool stuff, listening to her record. Brian Eno has always been a staple in my library. It's trippy. A lot of electronic elements. Ambient futuristic, kind of groovy stuff. I always have on routine a guy named Ben Monder, a guitar player from New York. It's kind of a futuristic, Pat Metheny-esque thing. He has a record, Oceana, that I've been really listening to on this tour. What else...My buddy was playing the new Animals as Leaders. I was really digging that. It's like video game-prog. It's fucking cool. It's awesome. There's probably a bunch more but that's all that's coming up right now.