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RANI SHARONE OF STOLEN BABIES – AN INTERVIEW

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With the release of their sophomore album, "Naught", the Los Angeles based band, *Stolen Babies* are taking their quirky musical stylings to the next level. For those not in the know, Stolen Babies is an eclectic group made up of lead singer and accordion player Dominique Lenore Persi, Bassist Rani Sharone, Ben Rico on keyboards, and Gil Sharone behind the drums. So it seemed like a good time for OurVinyl to take some time out and have a chat with bass player, Rani Sharone about the new album, the band's history and what's on the horizon for Stolen Babies.

OV: So let's go back to the beginning, you guys started off as a performance troupe called the Fratellis, how did that eventually evolve into Stolen Babies?

Rani: It kind of happened by default. When the Fratellis split and everyone went their separate ways we were the only ones left who wanted to keep a band going. In other words Stolen Babies are the Fratellis' leftovers!



OV: Many have described Stolen Babies sound as "avant-garde metal" or "dark

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cabaret", in your own words, what would you describe it as?

Rani: "Experimental Rock" I'd say. That pretty much sums it up.

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Stolen Babies' *Dried Moat*

OV: Stolen Babies has been compared to bands like early Oingo Boingo and Mr. Bungle, what would you say are the main musical and artistic influences of the band?

Rani: Well, Boingo and Mr. Bungle were a huge influence on us since the Fratellis just as much as Fleischer cartoons, experimental animation, film music, Disneyland and silent era German expressionist films were. Our influences are so diverse and numerous it's too hard to pin point the main ones. If anything I can say life experience is the biggest influence. Having a shitty day or great day plays a significant role in what we write or why we write.



OV: It's been almost six years since your debut album, "There Be Squabbles Ahead", how is the new album, "Naught" different? How long did you spend working on it?

Rani: For one, the process of recording the album was completely different this time around. With Squabbles we basically relocated to Oakland, CA to

record at Polymorph with Dan Rathbun over a period of a few months with some tours in between. With "Naught", Dominique moved up to Nor Cal so there was no jamming out 4 times a week at rehearsals kind of thing. It was pretty much us sending mp3's back and forth to each other then she'd come out to Los Angeles for a week every so often and we'd work on stuff in person. This went on for a couple years. We all worked around everyone's schedules to make it happen. There was no pressure or imposed deadline. Musically "Naught" is a continuation of Squabbles. It picks up where Squabbles left off. With as much time that lapsed between albums there was a lot of personal and artistic growth for both Dominique and myself, so I can openly say that Naught has more depth and maturity to the writing. Working with Ulrich Wild, our producer, brought a new dynamic to things as well and it was awesome.

OV: What is your creative process, what comes first; the idea or the music, the lyrics or the melody, how do you put together a sound as unique as yours?

Rani: For me it always starts with an idea and the process of putting ideas together is pretty similar, but the impetus behind the idea is always different. A composition can start with a guitar riff born out of improvisation, (i.e. intro of "Dried Moat") or more out of a mood (i.e. opening of "Swimming Hole.") Dominique has a completely different mode of operations then me so I can only speak for myself but it's all about just finding the right ideas at the right time and in the case of a song putting the right words to it. Never happens the same way twice.

OV: You've toured with some great bands like Lacuna Coil and Combichrist, any bands that are personal favorites that you'd like to hit the road with?

Rani: I wish I was more in tune with bands out there. I'm kind of out of the loop with current bands, but off the top of my head I think it would be cool to tour with Mindless Self Indulgence.

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OV: Any strange and interesting tales from the road? It seems like all bands have that one really bizarre experience while on tour, what about you guys?

Rani: There have been many but one sticks out. We had a nightmarish accident back in 2004 that almost killed us all and made us never want to tour again. An

oncoming car lost control flipped over and was coming at us head on. We got out of the way last second but the car hit our trailer and made it detach from the hitch which made it roll over a bunch of times crushing most of our gear in the process. Craziest part was the driver of the car that caused this was a carrier for a genetic lab company and there were pouches of blood and plasma and other shit all over the freeway. That experience almost overshadows the fact that I once walked in on two people fucking in a hotel room when I was given the wrong key at check in. Ooops!

OV: You're going to be doing a lot of touring for the new album, what's your favorite part of being on the road and performing live?

Rani: Being on the road is always a growing and learning experience so that in itself is a gift. I definitely feel a shift in my awareness when I'm on tour, which isn't always the case when I'm home. Tour feels like a mission and it keeps things interesting. Playing live is the best. There's nothing like it. It makes long drives and all the rigors of touring worth it.

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Stolen Babies' *Swimming Hole*

OV: Other than the new album and tour, what else do you have up your sleeves? Any surprises? New projects?

Rani: Ah here's where I get to shamelessly promote! I'm trying to keep my schedule open because promoting "Naught" will be a priority, but I do have some film scoring projects up ahead including an animated project called "DOME". I'm really excited about that one it's going to be pretty bad ass. Dome's director Brandon Fayette, who works with Bad Robot/J.J. Abrams, is an amazing 3D artist and has been sending me production stills that blow me away! I'm really stoked to get going on that. I'm also hoping to work with production designer Rick Heinrichs again. I just scored his directorial debut, which was a pilot for an interactive web series called The Gamblers. It was an honor and pleasure working with him because his work, especially for Tim Burton's films has been a huge influence on the band. There are some other tentative things so keep an eye out. Thanks!

Stolen Babies are currently on the road through the end of October and the new album "Naught" is available digitally, with the physical release of the album coming out on October 16th. For details check out the bands website at <http://www.stolenbabiestheband.com/> or the bands Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/stolenbabiesofficial>

Written by Christina Lawler

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