

Prog rock group ponders spirituality



Photos provided by interscope.com, artistdirect.com, myspace.com/dredg

BY COREY BOMMEL
Reviewer

What do a man's spiritual journey, a painting by Salvador Dali and opposites all have in common? They were all inspirations for several albums by dreg. The band's fourth full-length album, "The Pariah, the Parrot, the Delusion," released earlier this summer, continues to illustrate the members' fondness for concept albums.

Dredg is a four-man band originally from the town of

Los Gatos, Calif. They were formed in 1993 by vocalist Gavin Hayes, bassist Drew Roulette, guitarist Mark Engles and Dino Campanella on the drums and keyboard. They began to hone their sound with their early EPs and by the time they released their first full-length album, "Leitmotif," they had begun to establish their experimental style. Each album released can only be described as epic in scale and would be right at home

as a major motion picture soundtrack. There is no defining genre to place them, as their sound is highly unique and can only be described as art. In fact, Hayes and Roulette paint as well, incorporating their works into the band's album art and live shows.

Each of the band's four full-length studio albums has followed a theme. "Leitmotif," released in 1998, follows a man afflicted with a spiritual disease on his journey to seek

guidance from different cultures. The booklet that accompanies the album tells the story as opposed to the traditional song lyrics. Interscope Records signed the band after the release of the album and re-released it under the new label.

In 2002 dregd followed up with "El Cielo," one of my favorite albums. This time the band drew inspiration from a painting by Dali and the theme of the songs followed sleep paralysis and lucid dreams. Considered by many fans to be dregd's masterpiece, it's one of those albums you have to sit down and listen all at once to fully appreciate. The band's sound grew extremely complex in lyrics and musical arrangement. This CD garnered critical praise and new fans began to emerge.

2005's release "Catch Without Arms" showed a change in direction. Still following concepts, this time opposites divided into two perspectives, the song structures changed. The music was heavily influenced by Interscope and became what many called "radio friendly." The band even alluded to this in the titular track. During this time, dregd also wrote the soundtrack to the independent film "Waterborne."

After several years of touring, contemplating, writing and mixing, the band was finally ready to release its new album "The Pariah, the Parrot, the Delusion." "Pariah" was influenced by an essay by Salman Rushdie entitled "A Letter to the Six Billionth Citizen," which focused on religion in today's society. The album is split into four sections, each labeled by a

song the band refers to as a "stamp of origin," and slightly shifts the songs' perspective. With this release, the band members separated themselves from Interscope, opting to take creative and publishing control into their own hands. This led to a return to the much more experimental dregd of earlier releases.

The album begins with a bang, sending you into the immediately memorable "Pariah" and challenging your views on religion. The song's driving guitar sets the mood for the songs to come. "Light Switch," possibly my favorite track, begins with a memorable blues guitar and soft sounds, but breaks into a much harder rock song. "Information" starts out with a haunting piano riff borrowed from one of the instrumentals on the "Waterborne" soundtrack and continues to impress. "Savior" could be counted as the one pop-rock-inspired song on the album and feels more at home with the "Catch Without Arms" phase of the band, but it doesn't disappoint. The album is also peppered with instrumental and experimental tracks—not full songs, but haunting interludes to tie the album together. "R U OK" is one of these tracks, with a speak-and-spell creating the only lyrics.

Dredg continues to impress after more than 15 years of performing together. Though "Pariah" is somewhat scattered, the concept remains clear, especially when listened to in one sitting. If you are a fan of bands with diverse sounds, such as Muse, Porcupine Tree, or The Mars Volta, I suggest you look into dregd. Any band that can branch out in so many directions, and contribute to so many different forms of art, is worthy of notice.

Dorm room inspires music nostalgia

BY NICK FRUMSON
Reviewer

I was in my friend's dorm room the other day and there were so many band posters on the walls, I felt like I was in Hot Topic. I decided to choose four artists from my friend's wall and focus my review on key songs that represent them. I chose "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" by The Beatles, "Raspberry Beret" by Prince, "You Shook Me All Night Long" by AC/DC, and "She's a Rainbow" by The Rolling Stones.

The first choice is "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds." I have to warn you, my inner Beatles fan is going to come out a bit. This song is so beautiful, unusual and different. The main melody sounds like a sitar and synthesizer combo, but it's really just an altered guitar. Not for the honorary fifth Beatle, producer George Martin, this song and many others would not be nearly as great. Because they are the Beatles, they can get away with not always making sense. A segment from the music video of "Yellow Submarine" is a prime example of this. You are essentially watching an acid trip of women dancing with partners, horses, and other women. Almost every frame is a colorful and purposely messy animation of various women frolicking about in a Crayola world. Awesome song, awesome group.

Next is "Raspberry Beret" by Prince. This song is a lot of fun and great for dancing and driving. It features Prince in all his pop glory,

yet offers something unexpected. There is a prominent background string accompaniment along with the '80s synthesizer and clapping. "Raspberry Beret," although repetitive, has an exceedingly catchy chorus. In the song, Prince talks about a lady he sees wearing a raspberry-colored beret and how much he loves her, even though the beret is the kind you buy at a secondhand store. I never really thought of Prince's music as accessible, but this song is fun and easy to enjoy.

Another unexpectedly accessible artist is AC/DC, with their song "You Shook Me All Night Long." This song is a great rock 'n' roll jam. When I listen to it, I just want to bang my head along with it. It's a real '80s big hair screamer and I enjoy the lead singer's raspy high-pitched voice. Along with this great song must come a great video as well. The music video alternates shots of the band playing with black-and-white scenes of a man being seduced by a sexy woman. It's decorated all over with scantily clad women and '80s smoke and light effects. Classic.

Further along on the dorm room wall was The Rolling Stones. Immediately, I thought of "She's a Rainbow." I love this song for many reasons, one being that the main melody is voiced by a grand piano. How cool is that? The song also sports a string quartet, acoustic guitar and a mellotron,



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as well as the rest of the band. Besides a total shift in sound from what the Stones normally put out, another interesting fact about "She's a Rainbow" is that the lyrics don't coincide with the song's title. The chorus goes "She's like a rainbow," while there is no "like" in the song title.

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