Jude the Obscure Official Biography



Jude the Obscure, circa 2003

Jude the Obscure had a very comfortable place in the Ontario math-core/noisecore scene throughout its existence. I believe they were the first to be called “chaoticore”. Prior to the forming of this band, Grant Freifeld (“Fuzz” on bass), Jason Rice (“Jaundice” on drums) and Chuck Leach (“the Bank”/”Bankenstein” on guitar) played together in a slew of Grimsby, Ontario high school bands, often changing name every few months. When in 1998 they decided to go “heavier”, they asked a guy in their high school who was wearing a Snapcase shirt if he wanted to to be their signer; that was James Long (“Jimbo”). With Jimbo in, Jude the Obscure was born. The final addition was one of Jason’s coworker, Jordan Passfield who was brought in as an experimental guitar player.



“A New Life of Painful Sin” demo, 1999



“A New Life of Painful Sin” demo, 1999

Their first show was a house show with Rise Over Run. In 1999 they recorded 3 songs at Scott Bialik’s small basement studio, soundDOME Studio, in Hamilton, live right off the floor. Jude self-released it as their first demo “A New Life of Painful Sin”. Everyone who ever talks about this demo doesn’t speak of it nicely. Nevertheless it is a good representation of what early 2000 metalcore was like.



Poster advertising “A Perfect Place” on Punx Without Mohawx Records

Their high school friends, Rise Over Run, had gotten signed to the Quebec label Punx Without Mohawx Records, so Jude sent them their demo as well. The owner, Jean Clown, came all the way from Ste-Foy, Quebec to see them play and signed them to a sketchy record deal, which brought them to record 5 songs at Le Labs Studio in Quebec. This got released in 2001 as a split CD with Burial Faith under the name “A Perfect Place Volume One” and finally got them the attention they deserved. Through PWM they played a bunch of shows around Quebec. They ended up playing with such bands as The End (who sounded similar), 100 Demos, 7 Angels 7 Plagues, Alexisonfire, Ashera, Between the Buried and Me, Every Time I Die, Hatebreed, Hopesfall, Kid Gorgeous, Poison the Well and Season of Fire.



Jude the Obscure, circa 2003

In late 2002 they began recording songs for their first album in Julius Beatty's studio. They were finally going for the sound they wanted to have by producing it themselves. The album would be recorded in two sessions. The first half was recorded and paid for by the band, in late 2002 and early 2003, and was sent to record labels to finance the second half. One of the label interested was Ferret Records but it just didn't fit their financial schedule so they offered it to OneDaySavior Records. OneDaySavior signed them right away in March 2003 and scheduled the album release for April 2003. The second recording session was guested by Dallas Green and George Pettit from Alexisonfire and the band regularly sent unmastered songs to ODS Records to show the progress. Almost right after the recording was done, Jason left the band due to inner tensions. But he was quickly replaced by Andy MacKay from Niagara-on-the-Lake. Andy was praised as being in multiple bands simultaneously (one other being From Gallows Tree) and very flexible in his playing. His first show with the band was July 4th 2003's Hellfest in Syracuse, NY.

OneDaySavior set up an album release show on July 18th 2003 at The Hideaway in St. Catharines featuring Boysetsfire and A Day and a Deathwish, where Jason came on stage to play a few songs, but the CD was however delayed until August 13th 2003.



Jude The Obscure – “The Coldest Winter”, August 2003, One Day Savior Recordings



“The Coldest Winter”, October 2003, Defiance Records

The fall of 2003 seemed so promising for Jude, with a

potential tour in the US in the fall/winter (as soon as Andy was finished his school semester) as well as international label interest. There was even some talk of filming a music video. Defiance Records from Germany had gotten hold of “The Coldest Winter” and wanted their share of this band. In late September a deal was inked to re-release “The Coldest Winter” for the European market, on both CD and LP, slated for December 2003, and help the band out on a UK/European tour in the spring of 2004. The European version had an upgraded artwork as well. Defiance Records came through on the release a lot faster but the extensive touring didn’t go as hoped. Some shows were played around Ontario but nothing happened until 2004. Two legendary shows would occurred on January 15th and 16th, 2004. The first at the Red Square Night Club in St. Catharines with The End, The Abandoned Hearts Club and A Day and a Deathwish. The second with The End, The Abandoned Hearts Club and The Failsafe Agenda. These would be the bands last shows with Chuck.



Jude the Obscure playing at Moe’s Tavern on December 13th 2003. With Rise Over Run, Two Knives, Step Ahead and Prom Night Suicide Pact.



SCENE Music Festival 2004 flyer

In early February 2004, the band publicly announced they were going under hiatus, stating no inner tensions were causing this decision. Two weeks later, they announced the departure of Chuck but maintained the story that he left amicably. Some inner sources did however indicate that Chuck quit the band on bad terms and was responsible for their downfall. The fact was that Chuck was the go-to guy in the band for all label and press contact. When he left, he took with him the contacts and quickly joined At the Mercy of Inspiration.

Jude the Obscure spent the next four months auditioning for a new guitarist. Finally they choose Abe Bergsma, a friend of the band. Abe’s first show with Jude the Obscure was at the Level 3 Night Club with The Gorgeous, followed shortly after by the SCENE Fest in St. Catharines. The fest took place on July 11th, 2004, at the Big Bucks stage, where they played with some of the biggest bands in Ontario hardcore at the time.

Their performance at SCENE Fest was filmed and a song was featured in (705)VideoMagazine (Volume 3).

After the fest, Jude was booked to play on July 15th, 2004 at the Lions Club in Welland with In These Walls, Ceremonial Snips, Murder Thy Maker, Keep It Up, F.O.B., Andy Moog and the Sausage Party, Sons Of Azrael, At the Mercy of Inspiration and A Day and a Deathwish. The show was a benefit for a friend who had died in a car crash. After this show, Grant started a band discussion to bring everyone to acknowledging that Jude the Obscure wasn’t really a band anymore. However, promoters in Europe wanted the band to do a two-weeks UK/Continent tour in August of 2004 and asked Defiance Records to ask OneDaySavior Records to ask Jude the Obscure if it could happen. Somewhere in this chain, things didn’t happen and Jude the Obscure never got to tour Europe, nor play another show.

Download the full Jude the Obscure discography