Montgomery 21 Official Biography

-The Formation

Montgomery 21 was a Canadian brit-pop influenced emo band from Mississauga, Ontario, known for featuring (and mostly made up of) members of New Day Rising. Vocalist and guitarist Chris Gray formed the band in the fall of 1995, composing the core music and lyrics; with Jeff Almond on bass and Adam Brylowski (former drummer of Unheard and guitarist in New Day Rising) on drums. The band name was influenced by a book that Chris was reading about the civil rights movement, which included a location and a chapter. After playing their first three shows in late 1995, Jeff left to dedicate his time fully to his grind-metalcore band Acrid; he was replaced by Jo-Anne Sanders, another member of New Day Rising. The band was still looking for its own sound, but when Mike DeEyre (who was playing in Louis Mistreated with Adam's brother James Brylowksi) joined on keyboards during the Christmas vacation of 1995, they quickly evolved into this incredibly melodic band they became known for. It was in thanks to him that the band managed to distance themselves from being a "New Day Rising side-project".



Montgomery 21

show, January 19th, 1996 at the Pig & Whistle Inn. With Enter the Dragon, Seer, Grade, New Day Rising and Blake.



Montgomery 21 show at “Knights of Columbia Hall”, February 23rd 1996. With Acrid, Ignorance Never Settles, Enter the Dragon, Seer, Hourglass and Ember.





On June 29th 1996, Montgomery 21 played the Up The Dumper-Palooza show along with a ton of bands from the Ontario area





Montgomery 21 show at the Oakville YMCA on July 21st 1996. With 7 Years War, Waterdown and Bree



Montgomery 21 show at "The Church" on October 5th 1996. With Ignorance Never Settles, Acrid, Grade and Attack of the Hungarian Icelander.

-The First Demo

In the March Break of 1996, Montgomery 21 went to Signal 2 Noise to record their first five song demo. Over time, nearly

500 copies were made and have been mostly sold at shows. This demo came packaged in a yellow manila envelope with a booklet of some lyrics and song explanations, expressed by Chris Gray. By then Jo-Anne had quit New Day Rising to focus solely on Montgomery 21. During one of their many shows with Seer, in 1996, both bands discussed the possibility of doing a split together, using songs from each of the bands' demo tapes. However, that show ended up being Seer's final concert as they shortly afterwards broke up. The split was then to be shared with New Day Rising and Gorilla Warfare Records offered to release it, but the label bailed out.

One of the song from this first demo was also scheduled to appear on the benefit compilation for the Animal Defense League which Dave Buschemeyer was putting together throughout 1996 and 1997 but this also never got released. In the fall of 1996 New Day Rising broke up (for the first time), which allowed Chris and Adam to focus full time on Montgomery 21.



New Day Rising Ad 1996

-The Second Demo

The band was getting to be so good that a lot of Chris' close friends wanted to join the band on second guitar, including Dave Buschemeyer and Mike Charette. But Chris was gathering a bit of an ego and wouldn't let a second guitar player come into the band and take anything away from his fame. In the summer of 1997 they would go back to Signal 2 Noise and record five more songs for their second demo. At the studio, they were joined by Kristina Woyzbun and Natalie Woyzbun, twin sisters who recorded the violin parts on "A December's Tale". This demo also featured two samples from movies, one from "Apocalypse Now" (1979) on "A December's Tale" and another from "Midnight Express" (1978) on track 2. By this time the band was incorporating influences from Neurosis and their shows were a hypnotic and progressive experience, often playing in near darkness. "A December's Tale" from this recording session was used on the Goodfellow Records compilation "The Difference Between Us" (1997) and remains the only officially released song by the band. Apparently this second demo was never officially released because it was only half of a full-length album's worth of material that they were working on at the time.



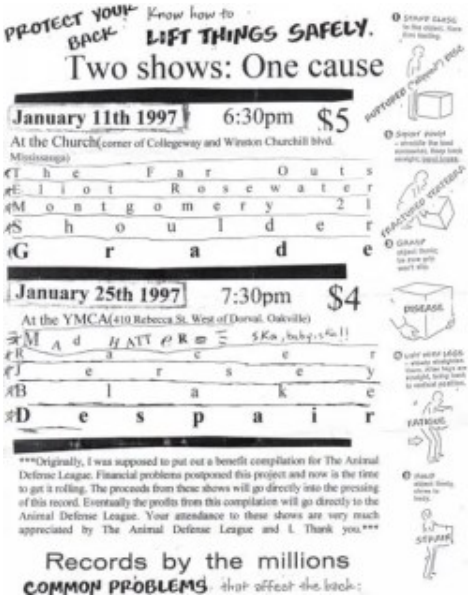
“The Difference Between Us” compilation. Goodfellow Records, 1997.

MONTGOMERY 21

A DECEMBER'S TALE

The snow is so cold, my body touched by a vale of black lace resting softly on my skin...four walls and a projection screen is so faithful, the undying trust of hard plaster and my still beating heart...i harden to love, i harden to need you...oh cold december how you kill me, cold winter how you mesmerize me with your pain...gentle death take me twice i trust the love, the bond is ice hard and cold but it is you, gentle death kill me twice...i love you, your body against mine is so cold, so gentle and pure, it's so cold, your the savage of all that is vengeful, and this i love you for...what a time to try to be someone, what a time to try to be something when they all want to kill you...your pain can not kill only weaken's with melted tears...

Crop of “The Difference Between Us” booklet featuring the lyrics of “A December’s Tale”. The only lyrics provided for the second demo.



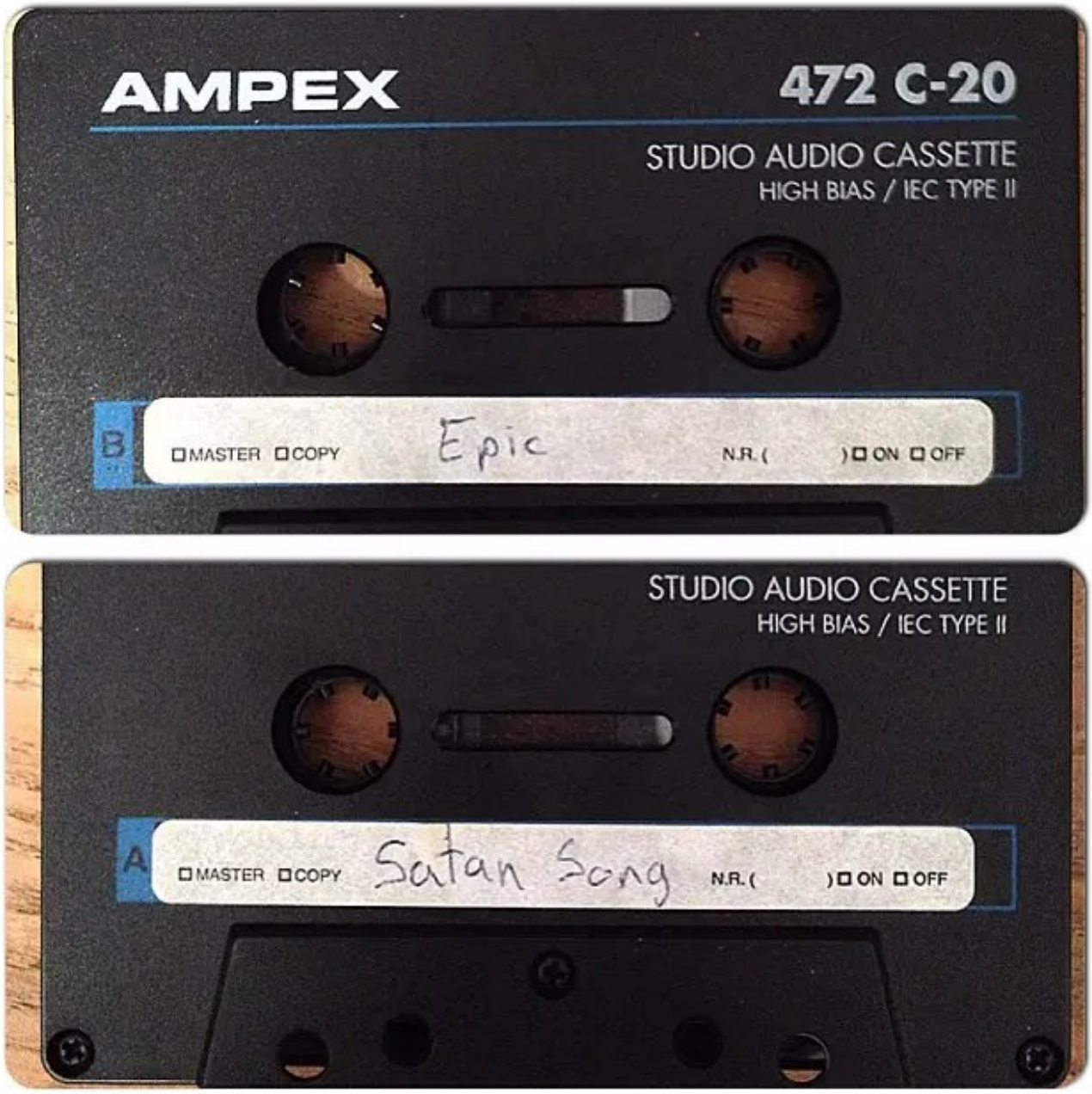
Montgomery 21 playing at the benefit for the Animal Defense League Compilation, January 11th 1997. With Karenza, The Far Outs, Eliot Rosewater, Shoulder and Grade



Montgomery 21 show at The Church on May 3rd 1997. With New Day Rising, Walls of Jericho, Grade, Jersey, Racer and A.K.A.



-The Third Demo



Montgomery 21’s third demo

Shortly after this second demo recording session, a fan of the band offered to record some of their even newer material for a school project. One afternoon Montgomery 21 went to the Harris Institute to record “Epic” and “Satan Song”, which ended up being the last two songs ever recorded by the band. By this time they were starting to integrate the style of The Cure in their music. But a combination of many events would ultimately lead the band to dissolve shortly after this recording, making it extremely rare and seldom heard. Chris Gray’s persona in “his” band led Jo-Anne to quit and, as New Day Rising had

reformed earlier in the year, Adam and Chris devoted their time to it. Mike continued playing guitar in Louis Mistreated until their breakup in 2002. Chris Gray fizzed out the remainder of Montgomery 21 into what would become his next brit-pop influenced band, The China White, in the early months of 1998.

-The Discography



Montgomery 21 banner from Re-Define Records' website circa 2002. Possibly a crop from the CD artwork.

In 2001 Scott Willemsen and James Hamilton at Re-Define Records decided to attempt a Montgomery 21 discography. It was first advertised to be a 10 song anthology CD but was quickly updated to an 11 and then 12 song discography, which apparently was supposed to feature newly recorded material. Chris Gray was planning on reforming the band, with new members, to record these songs, but thankfully that did not happen. Either way, the compilation would have been missing the two songs from the last recordings sessions because Chris had since lost his tape. Apparently the label started working on the artwork but Chris Gray never sent all the songs as promised. This compilation would have never the less been great to hear, and would have probably been our only hope in hearing the original DAT quality of those recordings. The label subsequently signed Chris Gray's band at the time, Loveless .1., and a few months later Chris Gray was signed as a solo act. Chris and Mike would reunite in November 2002 for the foundation of The Black Maria.



Re-Define Records ad from Full Contact Magazine



Maximum Rocknroll article

mentioning Montgomery 21 as part
of Re-Define Records’ roster.
Download the complete Montgomery 21 discography

-List Of Shows (work-in-progress)

1. 1996-01-19 Pig & Whistle Inn (Burlington, ON) Enter The Dragon, Seer, Grade, New Day Rising, Blake, Threshold
2. ~~1996-02-23 Pig & Whistle Inn (Oakville, ON) Enter The Dragon, Seer, Acrid, Ignorance Never Settles, Threshold~~
3. 1996-02-23 Knights of Columbus Hall (Oakville, ON) Enter The Dragon, Seer, Acrid, Ignorance Never Settles, Hourglass, Ember
4. 1996-05-10 The Shrine Club (Woodstock, ON) New Day Rising, Hourglass, Gates Of Dawn, Linton, Drive By
5. 1996-06-21 Oakville YMCA (Oakville, ON) 7 Years War, Watership Down, Bree
6. 1996-06-29 Oakville YMCA (Oakville, ON) Grade, Shoulder, Blake, Gates Of Dawn, Thrown, Seer, Sprucehill, New Day Rising, Hourglass, Acrid, Chauvez, Springseed, My Ass, Dear Departed
7. 1996-10-05 Erin Mills United Church (Mississauga, ON) Grade, Ignorance Never Settles, Attack Of The Hungarian Icelanders, Acrid, Taylor Bryow
8. 1996-12-06 The Korova Cafe (Kitchener, ON) New Day Rising, Shoulder, Swing-Shift
9. 1997-01-11 Erin Mills United Church (Mississauga, ON) The Far Outs, Eliot Rosewater, Shoulder, Grade
10. 1997-05-03 Erin Mills United Church (Mississauga, ON) Racer, Jersey, Walls Of Jericho, Grade, New Day Rising, A.K.A.
11. 1997-07-22 Erin Mills United Church (Mississauga, ON) Blake, Sleepytime Trio, Joan Of Arc, Four Hundred Years