

An Enigma Wrapped in a Riddle Shrouded in Mystery...Buckethead!

By FuMaku!

6-13-08 (Friday the 13th) Revised 2/4/10

Meet Buckethead...an enigma wrapped...yada, yada, yada. Most of you reading this have probably never heard of Buckethead, unless you're into guitar-shredder extraordinaires and even then maybe not. Some of you may only be aware of Buckethead due to his brief brush with pop culture as a short lived guitar player for Axel Rose's reconstituted Guns N Roses, though it was years before Chinese Democracy came out. I came to know of Buckethead after seeing him play second guitar with Primus at Ozzfest way back when in the 90's. After seeing this strange, freakishly tall, bean pole with long hair wearing a porcelain white mask (devoid of expression) sporting a stylish KFC bucket as a hat... shred like an 80's guitar god. I had to investigate further.

After learning that Buckethead had CD's available, I scoured all the local record stores (When there were Record Stores!) and was rewarded when I found two recently released discs at one of the stores. I would describe these albums as mostly instrumental, techno metal funk forays into prog rock, which I love, so I have been an avid fan ever since. Also since then I have come to realize that, to say Buckethead is prolific would be an understatement. Aside from releasing what seems to be several albums per year every year for nearly 20 years, Buckethead also plays on many other artists' albums in addition to playing in side bands, such as Praxis, Colonel Claypool's Bucket of Bernie Brains and, coming soon to a chicken coop near you, Science Faxtion. Collecting Buckethead albums is a hobby unto itself, not unlike collecting rare coins or baseball cards. Buckethead's albums are, from what I've seen, almost always on obscure Indy labels and rarely have a release year on them, which makes the collecting all the more challenging and fun! I have around a dozen albums which are either Buckethead releases or are bands which feature Buckethead prominently and that doesn't even scratch the surface of what's available.

Something else I like about Buckethead is the conceptual continuity that runs throughout his music, appearance, website and lyrics. This conceptual continuity is a mélange of references heavily soaked in humor geared to serial killers, particularly as portrayed in "The Texas Chain Saw Massacre" movie; Japanese "Big Robot" movies; Bucketheadland (a theme park based on serial killers, Big Robots, etc.), action figures; clues to his upbringing on a farm where he found solace playing the guitar and of his origin, which suggest Buckethead is part man, part chicken and part machine. This last part is probably why Buckethead must cover his face. Buckethead embodies the rare quality of being able to rock you and make you laugh at the same time. Something Frank Zappa excelled at, and speaking of Frank: had he lived I'm sure Buckethead would've taken the vaunted position of "Stunt Guitarist," made famous when Steve Vai played with Zappa. Buckethead is Vai but on Resident Evil-style genetically mutated steroids.

I have had the pleasure of seeing Buckethead live as a headliner on three occasions and I am excited at the prospect of seeing him again. If you haven't had the privilege of seeing/hearing Buckethead live, you should go because you won't be disappointed. Buckethead must be part machine because he plays for a very long time. When I saw Buckethead, at the Southgate House in Newport, Kentucky, he was still playing after three hours when me and my comrades collapsed from exhaustion.

www.bucketheadland.com .