

Behind the Three Ton Gate

Vocalist J.C. Riley talks about the band's debut album, Marilyn Manson, the virtue of one-eyed nuns, and groupies



L to R: Scott Putesky (guitar), Smoothy (drums), J.C. Riley (vocals), and ex-bassist Martin Davis of Three Ton Gate. The band recently changed their name from Stuck On Evil. Putesky was part of Marilyn Manson before becoming involved in Three Ton Gate.

by Rob Walsh
staff writer

"She came on like a flu / Double wide smile / As perfect as a scraped knee / She came across like a chill / Trailer park eyes / Made you dream of scars."

This excerpt from the Three Ton Gate track "Double Wide" is just your typical trailer-park whore love ballad, complete with the standard bloody gash / influenza style romantic cliches we've all come to expect from popular music. But, I assure you, the level of comfort and familiarity you're currently experiencing is in no way typical of the band Three Ton Gate, or its genre-refracting assault on the stagnant flux of today's music industry.

Three Ton Gate, brainchild of former Marilyn Manson guitarist/songwriter Scott Putesky, incorporates hazardous elements of redneck thrash and macabre blues with country metal to mix up a Molotov-rock-cocktail that is as intriguing as it is volatile. The Florida quartet originally assumed the name Stuck on Evil in parody of the inane nature of Putesky's former enterprise. That title recently became Three Ton Gate, as current events no longer allow any aspect of evil to be taken lightly.

The band ostensibly uses its powers for good, as evidenced by their debut album "Suntanic," which features content ranging from a Beatles' cover to the heartbreaking tale of a mentally challenged youngster and his pursuit to mow people's lawns for free. Vocalist and frontman J.C. Riley is the head on this rock & roll Voltron, but he would be nothing without Smoothy Bobo on drums and

Putesky on guitar. Bassist Martin Davis has been kicked out of the band due to an ongoing battle with musical impotence, but his performance anxiety didn't stop singer Riley from sitting down with me for a few words.

Beacon: J.C., is there a defining moment involved in officially becoming a musician? In the whole sordid dedication process? Is there a declaration of freedom and poverty and nihilism? Did you sign some type of rock star treaty which - along certain parameters set within your band - completely restricts all members from any affiliation whatsoever with terms even vaguely derived from 'sobriety,' including all applicable root-words? Did your transformation involve the breaking of ceramic dishware and gnashing of teeth? Utter pandemonium? What, exactly, did J.C. Riley say into the mirror on that fated day he handed his life over to music?

Riley: I wanna rock! I have been a rock star since I was 7 (I forgot to tell anyone). My entire life has been spiraling towards this defining moment. Every experience, every lesson learned and every sticky sock has prepared me for this interview. I'm not sure if I suit the lifestyle or the lifestyle suits me, but we're meant for each other.

Beacon: How much of a role does Scott Putesky's former position as Marilyn Manson's guitarist play into your band's publicity? Does this bother you, considering how badly Manson sucks?

Riley: Using Scott's affiliation with Marilyn Manson was a necessary evil we had to deal with in order to promote Stuck On Evil. But, if anyone has the right to cash in on that name, it's Scott - he and Brian created the concept. Now that we are Three Ton Gate we will be moving away from the Manson connection and focus on the future. It just wasn't the time to be Stuck On Evil.

Beacon: Before I give you my thoughts on Three Ton Gate's inaugural release, "Suntanic," how do you see your album fitting into the music landscape?

Riley: "Suntanic" is back-to-basics rock and roll. You can't lose with good songs. We all play our asses off and I think it shows. Scott produced the album himself so it has that certain intimacy, that (I'm watching Mass on the Catholic Channel now so forgive how crazy I'm getting. Wahoo! It's the Eucharist!) was needed to capture for our live sound. We love to perform - I can't wait to get back out on the road - and the songs are a showcase for Scott's unique guitar style and my vocal prowess. I can't believe I said prowess.

Beacon: "Suntanic" is a really fresh album. I think I may be in love with it. At the risk of sounding all gooey and contrived, your precious voice - truly - brings me to violent weeping sessions in which I have been forced to telephone my mother and engage in conversations which eventually involve cooing. How does it feel to toy with the emotions of grown men?

Riley: It feels damn good to toy with your emotions - it gives me the upper hand and I will crush you to my will. The songs were created from the emotions of grown men so it's only natural for you to feel what we're saying - it means we got it right. Mine is the only point of view I can reference. You know what I mean?

Beacon: Yeah, except most people misinterpret the music I perform as odd displays of domestic violence. On the topic of viewpoints, what artists have most influenced the maturation of your work and the direction you've decided to take it in?

Riley: At first I thought that said masturbation of my work. I have crazy influences and I don't want anyone to feel left out so I'll decline to list them here. What influences do you hear?

Beacon: Hmmm . . . I don't know. Maybe a kind of Mike Patton meets Ween, who

gang up with Hank Williams III and get in a brawl with Tom Waits at a country & western pub type sound?

Riley: Some of my influences are very apparent and others are more subtle. The trick is to not borrow too heavily from any one influence and to combine them so as to create your own unique style (not as tricky as reading that last sentence - do I sound like an idiot yet? Keep reading). I think I sound like Cher sometimes and that makes me sad. Oh my God, there's a one-eyed nun on my TV.

Beacon: On the sexual orientation scale, with 1 being perfectly straight and 10 being perfectly gay, where would you rank yourself?

Riley: I am very gay for a straight man. My older brother and my older sister are both gay (the water?). I've been around them and their friends throughout my entire life and I have lived with my brother and his lover. I am very comfortable around my gay friends and co-

lets like yours keep it real and give exposure to artists outside of the mainstream. Where else would you hear about Three Ton Gate?

Beacon: Do you feel prepared to handle the relentless fame and fortune which will inevitably come via the PSU Beacon's massive audience? [laughs]

Riley: I feel completely confident that I will use this fame and fortune (can I trade that for notoriety and respect?) for good and not evil. No wait - I mean evil (someone actually argued with me that Michael Jackson is not a child molester).

Beacon: You just returned from an abbreviated tour. How does your girlfriend cope with the fierce groupies implicit of all such music tours? Does she buy your stories?

Riley: I was a good boy on tour. I was drunk a lot but I sang my ass off and only made sweet love with Smoothy. I would rather make friends then get laid - that's too temporary. A friend you can trust is worth a thousand f@%#\$. (Are you buying my stories?)

Beacon: What is the one thing you would most like to accomplish during your recording career?

Riley: I would be happy singing for a living and being respected for what I do. I'd love to own a nightclub with a recording studio in the back so I could record or perform anytime I want. I want to live a static-free existence.

-J.C. Riley, guitarist

workers and this sometimes throws them off if they don't know me well. At the same time straight people freak out over how gay I am. I require much more understanding than other people. So, what's the highest a straight person can go. 5? I pick 5.

Beacon: Considering the music of Three Ton Gate is a noticeable departure from the blatant commercialism of bands like, say, Marilyn Manson, how big of a role will small alternative media outlets play in your band's success?

Riley: Manson is (or was) its own thing and can't be duplicated. It was a one in a million thing that became a monster. I hope we never become what happened to them. They aren't the guys I used to party with and I hope I never lose what they lost. As for small alternative media outlets - they are the best for where I'd like to be: successful but completely in touch with who I am. I appreciate anyone that will let me ramble on about nothing. In this age of manufactured and prepackaged music, out-

In spite of fear, country music triumphs

by Heather Fleming
staff writer

This year's 35th annual Country Music Awards aired on Nov. 6 at 8 p.m. Vince Gill was the host for the evening. This 18-time CMA Award winner celebrated his 10th anniversary of hosting the show.

The first award of the evening went to Brooks and Dunn for vocal duo of the year. The single of the year award was presented to The Soggy Bottom Boys for their hit, "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow". The third award was given to Lee Ann Womack for female vocalist of the year.

The crowd was excited to hear of Faith Hill's current pregnancy, while Tim McGraw accepted his entertainer of the year award. The music video of the year award was presented to Sara Evans for her song "Born to Fly." Willie Nelson performed alongside Sheryl Crow, which was extremely entertaining. The Dixie Chicks did not win any

awards that night but looked as though they had a great time performing on stage.

Other award winners included Dann Huff for musician of the year, Keith Urban for the Horizon Award, Lonestar for vocal group of the year, and Toby Keith for male vocalist of the year.

The two most important awards for country music artists are album of the year and song of the year. Album of the year was "O Brother Where Art Thou," which featured various artists. "Murder On Music Row" took song of the year and was written by Larry Cordle and Larry Shell. It was recorded by George Strait and Alan Jackson.

To close the show, Gill led the audience with a heartfelt performance of "America the Beautiful," while all of the evening's performers gathered on stage to show their patriotism.

To view pictures of the musicians and to read quotes from your favorite country artists, you can visit the country music website at www.country.com.

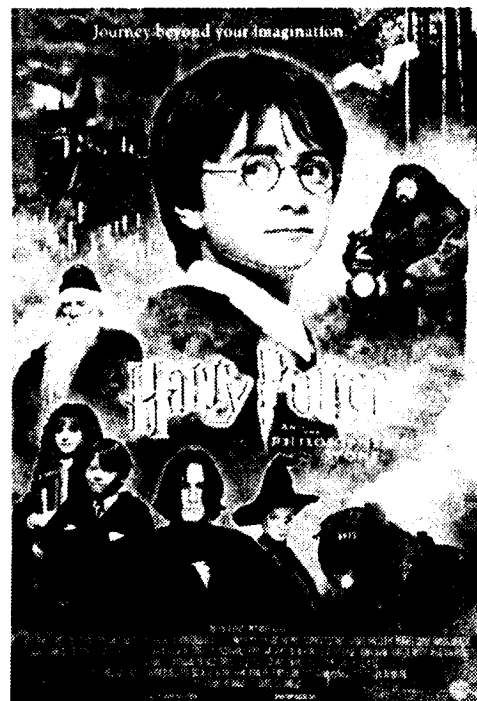
Catch the Hogwarts Express with 'Harry Potter'

by Ann Marie Havey
advertising manager

Pack your trunk, polish your broomstick, and visit Diagon Alley to get everything you need to enter Harry Potter's world for the movie premiere of J.K. Rowling's book, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" today.

Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) has spent the first 10 years of his life living under the stairs in his aunt and uncle's house, and with his cousin who likes to use him as a punching bag. Potter does not enjoy living with his aunt and uncle, but then one day a kind giant named Hagrid (Robbie Coltrane) comes to him with an invitation to study at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Potter had no idea that there were two worlds: one is the dreary world of the Muggles where he's grown up, and the other is one of magic and fantasy.

This leads to numerous adventures for Potter, including Quidditch, a kind of aerial hockey played while flying on broomsticks, difficult classes, and encounters with Lord Voldemort. Voldemort is the villain in "Harry Potter," who is more commonly referred to as "he who must



not be named." Potter and his Gryffindor House co-conspira-

tors, Ron and Hermione are always getting into adventures. Redheaded Rupert Giant plays the clownish and nerdy Ron Weasley, while Emma Watson is the brainy, supercilious Hermione.

Casting for the movie was imperative to help keep the movie accurate to the book. Alan Rickman plays Snape, the sinister Professor of Potions, and Maggie Smith is the tart but concerned Professor McGonagall. Richard Harris has a sage delicacy as Hogwarts' revered headmaster Albus Dumbledore, and John Hurt is Mr. Ollivander, seller of magic wands.

Production started on "Harry Potter" in October 2000, with most filming done in and around London (mostly in Leavesden Studios.) The movie is directed by Chris Columbus and written by Steve Kloves (who are already in production on the second "Harry Potter" movie). They collaborated closely with Rowling to keep the movie faithful to the book.

Readers' curiosity to be a part of Potter's world will finally be satisfied. They will get to tour Diagon Alley, watch a Quidditch match, and see the enchanting castle that houses Hogwarts' School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" opens on three screens today at Tinseltown and one screen at the Plaza Cinema.

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