

Evolution: Dan Rather sampling riles CBS

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our minds for years. Of course, people who are familiar with ECC's music know that it is a very sample heavy, a sort of bedroom-geek style. We've been trying very hard to, as it were, take it out of the bedroom. One thing we've been focusing on is how to make a good live show, and we've come across making our own instruments. For example, last night I performed on the Thimbletron. The Thimbletron is a sort of white glove with sewing thimbles on the ends of each finger. They are all wired into custom electronics, which Evolution Control Committee engineers have built, connected to a computer that Evolution Control Committee software engineers have programmed, and it's all wired together so that when you touch different symbols together it makes different sounds.

Emerald: How about on the recording front, anything new?

MG: Yeah, there are a few things we've been working on for a while now. There is one thing that we started years ago when Napster was really big. It seemed some of the people who were using it that had made home recordings on their computers and were accidentally sharing them with the world through Napster. We found out how people were making this mistake and we found out how to get those recordings and we built up a massive archive of them. Our favorites add up to about an hour long and we have a CD of it we're about release.

Emerald: So you have no idea who these people are?

MG: No, it's pretty anonymous.

You couldn't really be sure who you were getting it from or if who you were getting it from was the person who recorded it. A lot of these go without credits, which is really sad because a lot of them are choice and I'd like to see someone get some credit for them.

Emerald: So someone out there might pick this up and all of a sudden realize they are a pop star?

MG: I'm willing to take that risk because I'd like to find out who some of these people are.

Emerald: Since these recordings aren't copyrighted in any way, I don't suppose that's a problem?

MG: That brings up an interesting point. These are original recordings, but if you are sharing them, it's like the saying, "If you're screaming at the top of your lungs, what kind of right to privacy can you expect in this world?" Well, it should be an interesting legal battle.

Emerald: You've had your share of those?

MG: We've had our scuffles. Luckily we've kept ourselves out of court, which has saved us from a lot of budgetary woes. But our biggest scuffle yet has been with CBS. They decided they didn't like us putting Dan Rather on lead vocals of a remixed AC/DC song. We sampled Rather every day for about three weeks and we built up an archive of violent words. Every time he said "murder" or "mayhem" or "a tide of violence and human misery" or whatever, we clipped it out and put it in a file. In the end we stitched them into lyrics. The scariest part was that the title, "Rocked By Rape" — he

actually said that. We didn't have to do anything to say that. AC/DC at least has an obvious attitude, but Dan Rather has this very sterile, polished image and yet he delivers this stream of non-stop violence into everyone's homes day after day.

Emerald: So CBS got a little riled up?

MG: Yes, they read a review of the single, which had been released at a 7" and was duly ignored for over a year until Spin magazine gave it a review. CBS threatened the label as well as the band with all sorts of bad news. The label was not in a position to do anything about it and deleted the single immediately, pretty much censored it out of existence. We were lucky enough to get some support of the press and some people writing in favor of us. CBS sort of backed off or at least kept quiet. So we don't know if we're legal to keep doing it, but no one has said otherwise.

Emerald: So what would your ideal form of copyright laws be?

MG: Well actually the copyright laws as they are aren't that bad, if they were enforced as written. Fair Use is a perfect example. If people could actually exercise the Fair Use laws as written, probably things would be a whole lot better. But things like the Digital Millennium Copyright Act keep undermining that or going against already written law. It would be nice to see less undermining. It seems there is no in-between; it either has to be protected under lock and key or it is free to roam around and anyone can use it anyway they want.

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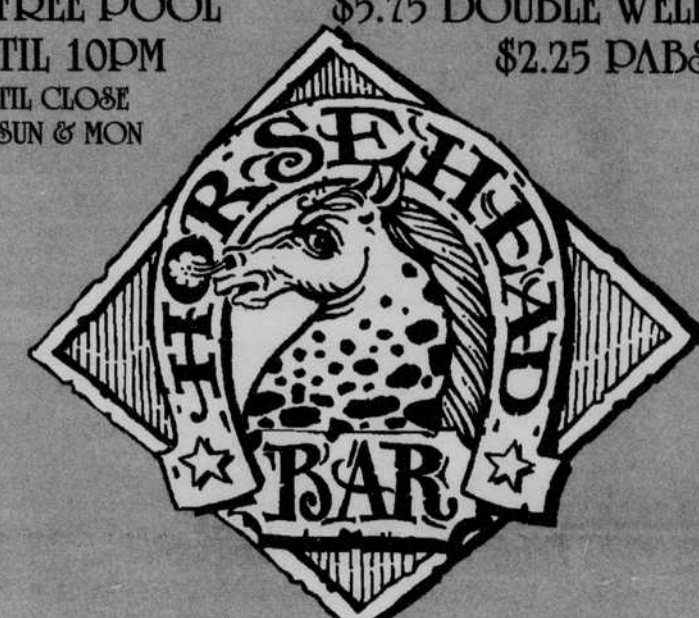
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