



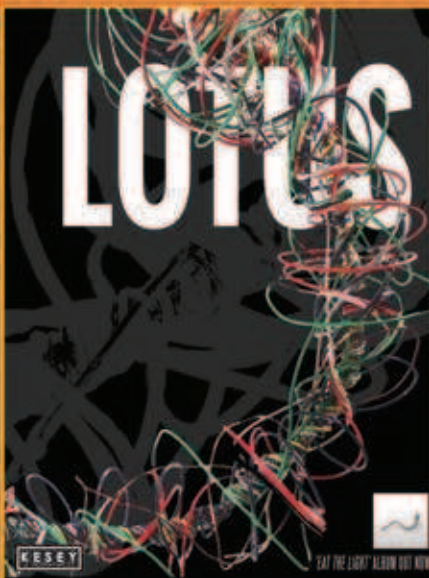
SAT DEC 31 8:00PM DRS 9:00PM SHW



SAT JAN 21 7:00PM DRS 8:00PM SHW



TUE JAN 31 6:00PM DRS 7:00PM SHW



SAT FEB 11 7:00PM DRS 8:30PM SHW



MON FEB 13 7:00PM DRS 8:00PM SHW



SAT FEB 18 7:00PM DRS 8:00PM SHW RESERVED SEATING



THU MAR 09 7:00PM DRS 8:00PM SHW

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For 20 years, **Xasthur's** Scott Conner didn't tour. He didn't do interviews. He recorded solo. He posed with nooses, called himself "Malefic," recorded songs with names like "Slaughtered Useless Beings In A Nihilistic Dream," recorded vocals in a coffin and became one of the most famous figures in American black metal — a mostly Scandinavian phenomenon when Conner started Xasthur in 1995.

But, as it turns out, he's not such a grouch, or at least so he claims.

"Being misanthropic isn't something I try to hold on to or aspire to be," Conner says. "But then again, people have always gone out of their way to make me hate them."

Still, you'd be forgiven for thinking something's softened in the 43-year-old Californian. He's given up on black metal and now slings an acoustic guitar, playing a dark, spiritual sort of folk music inspired by finger-pickers like John Fahey and Jack Rose. Conner is friendly, even funny, on Facebook, interacting with fans and plugging merch.

Most shockingly, Xasthur is now touring — comprising Connor, singer-guitarist Chris Hernandez and mononymous bassist Rachel — and played its first live shows in April 2015. The band plays Old Nick's Pub on Wednesday, Dec. 14, with **Sugar Skulls & Marigolds** and **A Court Of Owls**.

Live, Hernandez sings at the fore of the stage, acting as something of a frontman. Conner silently slouches in the back with Rachel, seated, his face shrouded in a bandana that fills in for the corpse paint (think KISS makeup, but scarier) of yore.

"The way people look is a distraction and gets in the way of listening," Conner says of the bandanna. "It doesn't matter what they look like. [Xasthur] is about giving more to hear and less to look at ... for a change."

Conner's no pop star, but, ironically, he's had to keep up appearances in the last couple years. In 2010, he briefly quit the Xasthur project, abandoned the Malefic moniker and continued as Nocturnal Poisoning — a name borrowed from the first Xasthur album, released in 2002. It was under this name that he took the stage for the first time, accompanied by Hernandez.

Since metalheads knew what Xasthur was about, but not Nocturnal Poisoning, Conner quickly found distribution and booking opportunities dried up.

"Sure is funny how that changed with the name returning to Xasthur," he muses bitterly.

Though his direction hasn't changed much since Nocturnal Poisoning — the name of one album, *Doomgrass*, isn't a bad descriptor for his new style — Conner insists the new project is very much Xasthur. Still, don't expect to hear such classics as "Legacy of Human Irrelevance" or "May Your Void Become as Deep as My Hate!" when they take the stage at Old Nick's.

Xasthur, **Sugar Skulls & Marigolds** and **A Court of Owls** perform 9 pm Wednesday, Dec. 14, at Old Nick's Pub; \$8-\$10. 21-plus. — *Daniel Bromfield*