

# Misfit Island

MISMITHS, AN L.A.-BASED SMITHS-MISFITS TRIBUTE ACT, AT SAM BOND'S JUNE 14

By Will Kennedy

According to Mismiths co-lead singer, Gorrissey, his band is a joke gone too far. One night a few years ago, he says, he and a friend were toying around with funny band mashups, like Nickel Biscuit and Creed Day. The drummer then suggested Mismiths, for The Smiths, the legendary British indie rock group, and Misfits, Glenn Danzig's pioneering horror-punk band from the late 1970s.

Based in Los Angeles, Mismiths, a Misfits and The Smiths tribute act, which performs covers and originals written in both bands' style, plays June 14 at Sam Bond's on their first West Coast tour.

With that unlikely pairing in mind, Gorrissey — who goes by that stage name, referencing Smiths' lead singer Morrissey — brainstormed how Mismiths might work. "It'll be two singers, and we'll wear skull makeup," like Misfits artwork on t-shirts, album covers and posters. The new band, he thought, "will be fun and funny," he says.

Gorrissey says the first Mismiths show was in L.A. on Halloween. "It was super packed," Gorrissey says, and the audience demanded to know when they'd play next. "I wasn't planning on it. Then, the first few years or so, we would just play a couple of shows here and there, but then, it started picking up steam. The next thing you know, it's like, 'Whoa, this is like a full-time band,'" he says.

Early on, Mismiths just played Smiths and Misfits covers, but during the pandemic, they released *Every Night is Like Halloween*, an album of originals, and as of their current West Coast tour, they're writing the follow-up.



MISMITHS Photo by John Travis

While they're technically a tribute act, Mismiths are irreverent about both bands they cover in the originals that they write. "The Show has been Cancelled" swipes at Morrissey's track record of last-minute concert cancellations. The album title and song of the same name, "Every Night is Like Halloween," references Morrissey's solo classic, "Everyday is Like Sunday." But elsewhere, "The Walking Dead" and "Deathrider" are pure Misfits-style, rockabilly-informed punk rock, and the "F.C.B" outro borrows the Ramones' endlessly singable "gabbagabba-hey" refrain.

Gorrissey covers Morrissey's emotive croon as the frontman in Smiths covers and Smiths-style originals. He also dresses like Morrissey with flow-ers, necklaces and the singer's trademark pompadour.

Jack O'Lantern, another Mismiths member who only

identifies by that stage name, wears black leather and handles Danzig-inspired vocal work.

Like Jack O'Lantern, the rest of the band — with stage names like Aidean the Fiend, Todd Zombie von Angelfuck and Johnny Martian, a nod toward Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr — typically dress in all leather and wear black and white skull makeup on stage.

The band blend works, Gorrissey says, because both The Smiths and Misfits are rooted in punk rock, and Danzig and Morrissey are Elvis fans. "Morrissey and Danzig are both such pains in the asses," Gorrissey adds, referring to the singers'

famously difficult personalities. But, he concedes, "They're both amazing songwriters, and they're both hilarious."

Mismiths play with Eugene hardcore punk band Cuntagious 9 pm Friday, June 14, at Sam Bond's; \$5, 21-plus.

**'Morrissey and Danzig are both such pains in the asses.'**

— GORRISSEY

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