

Hermiston man blazes cold heart with burning passion

By **BRETT KANE**
STAFF WRITER

Austin Henderson remembers playing “Now That’s What I Call Music 22” on his stereo on repeat when he was just a kid.

Little did he know that evenings after school spent listening to the music of Rihanna, Beyonce, and Chamillionaire would lead to a career in heavy metal and a number of tours across the United States and Canada. The rock ‘n’roll lifestyle is one that many aspire to but never attain, but for Henderson, his never-ending passion and creativity, sparked by his mother’s pop music compilation CDs all those years ago, has allowed him to lead one.

“I also listened to a lot of Radio Disney and Enya,” Henderson said. “My mom got me into hip-hop and modern music. In sixth grade, my friend, Moises, showed me the first heavy song with screaming I had ever heard, which was ‘Demonology and Heartache’ by Atreyu. I had never really had a real exposure to that kind of metal until then.”

Henderson, 24, a Hermiston resident, is a shift supervisor at First Coast Security by day (unless he works graveyard), and the lead composer behind Pendleton heavy metal and hardcore outfit Cold Hearts by night. The band has released two extended plays and toured the Pacific Northwest.

Although Henderson is a driving creative force behind the Cold Hearts music, he was introduced to the band before he was even a member. His previous band, a post-hardcore act from Richland, Washington, called No Room For Cowards, was playing the Nightmare Before Christmas show in Walla Walla, Washington, in December 2016. Cold Hearts was the opening act.



Austin Henderson performs on the Glory Be To Misery Tour with VCTMS at Satellite Bar in Houston, Texas, on Sept. 6, 2019.



Austin Henderson riffing on an eight-stringed guitar Feb. 25 in Hermiston.

“When you think of Pendleton, you think of the Round-Up and western culture,” Henderson said, recalling the first time he met Cold Hearts. “You don’t think of deathcore music. I met all the guys at that show. I just like to mingle.”

Trevor Dean, 25, the vocalist for Cold Hearts, approached Henderson to join the band as a full-time guitarist in May 2017. Since then, the group, which also

consists of Taylor Cooper, 25, a drummer from Pendleton, and Jesse Rodriguez, 26, a bassist from Yakima, released their first EP “Violence is the Answer” in January 2018, and their second EP, “Incantations” in March 2019.

While Henderson handles the meat of the composing duties, bringing his love of sludgy guitar tones and crushing breakdowns into the mix, it’s Dean who

handles their music’s lyrical content.

“‘Violence is the Answer’ is angry. There’s a lot of personal turmoil in there,” Henderson said. “Trevor was feeling very ... cold hearted. He had a lot of anguish to get out. It was his outlet.”

Cold Hearts amped up the anger, aggression, and ambition for “Incantations,” which Henderson describes as a more conceptual piece in comparison. The eight-track EP, featuring songs, such as “Ruthless Aggressive,” “Victimizer,” and “Sheep Eater” details an anonymous character who happens upon a mysterious book full of stories of violence, cruelty, and ancient rituals. Both releases are available for streaming on Spotify and Apple Music.

“By the end of the record, that person ends up committing those evil acts in the book,” Henderson said. “Everyone has that anger inside of them somewhere.”

To coincide with the release of “Incantations,” Cold Hearts embarked on

the Spring Invasion Tour in March 2019, which they co-headlined with Artificial Aliens — a hardcore band from Rupert, Idaho. The 12-day run of the Pacific Northwest kicked off in Pilot Rock and wrapped up in Boise, Idaho. It was Henderson’s first-ever tour, and it crossed a major item off his bucket list.

“It was better than I had ever hoped,” he said. “It sucked traveling in a 2008 Kia Sedona with five guys and all of our gear and merch, but it was a lot of fun. My ultimate goal was to go on a PNW tour, which I accomplished.”

Between shows, Henderson and his bandmates would bunk at a friend’s house, or in their van in a Walmart parking lot. Hotels, he said, were a luxury, if they could be afforded that night.

“It is nice to get a shower,” he added.

Henderson’s next stint on the road would soon follow, as he was approached by Chicago metal band

VCTMS to fill in on bass for the last 10 dates of their Iced Out Tour with metal band Falsifier of Ontario, Canada. With VCTMS, Henderson performed at bars, VFW halls, and old theaters across the Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and Canada.

“It was a huge upgrade from the last tour,” Henderson said. “I am forever grateful for VCTMS.”

It wouldn’t be long before Henderson reunited with VCTMS when he covered bass duties again for the Glory Be to Misery Tour in August 2019. The three-week tour began in Ohio and spanned all the way to California before concluding in Nashville.

Most recently, Henderson took up bass-playing duties once again, this time for Artificial Aliens on their album release tour of the southwestern United States. The 12-day trek ran from Feb. 1-12.

“That was the funnest tour to date,” Henderson said. “It’s funny — when you wake up on tour, you don’t necessarily know you’re somewhere else at first. A lot of small towns look like Hermiston. It’s kind of disorienting. But no matter where you go, you can always find a McDonald’s.”

Henderson is now back in Hermiston hard at work composing Cold Hearts’ upcoming full-length record, which he also plans on contributing lyrics for. But that isn’t the only musical venture he has on the horizon — with VCTMS, he’ll be playing on the same bill as famed hard rock and heavy metal band All That Remains at the Edgefest in Jackpot, Nevada, on Aug. 1.

“Now that I’ve already met my dreams, I want to keep pushing them as far as I can,” Henderson said. “I want to drop solo music and collaborate with artists I love. I want to play guitar for Miley Cyrus. I just want to keep playing shows.”

Umatilla student prepares to take on job in Portland

By **JESSICA POLLARD**
STAFF WRITER

Umatilla High School senior Emmanuel Salas has been dreaming of life in the city for years. This summer, that dream will become reality as he heads to Portland to take part in a statewide work program.

Through the Summer Work Internship for Transition program, Salas will live in a dorm on the campus of Portland State University for about two months, working for pay and learning how to budget and live solo. But his ambitions don’t stop in the Pacific Northwest.

“New York has been a big inspiration for me since fifth grade,” he said. “I don’t want to stay here. I want to move to a city and I want to do something creative.”

Salas hasn’t received his work assignment for the program yet, but hopes to be employed at a floral shop or a makeup store. After the program, he plans on attending cosmetology school in the Tri-Cities while living with his family in Umatilla or to perhaps begin working for a makeup or eyelash brand.

He was inspired to go in this direction by his mother, a hairstylist. As a child, he would regularly wake up “way too early” to watch her cut hair.

Salas is a little nervous about living independently in the Rose City.

“Having to live on my own, that’s going to be difficult,” he said. “I’ll experience how to budget and use public transportation.”

Although, he may be more prepared than he realizes. Salas said his favorite class during his time at Umatilla High has been personal finances.



Umatilla High School senior Emmanuel Salas, who goes by Manny, was recently selected to take part in a summer work program in the heart of Portland.

“It’s boring,” he acknowledged. “But it’s going to help me in the future.”

Salas is the only student from Umatilla County, so far, selected to be one of the 20 Summer Work participants. The program is open to students who are a part of the statewide Vocational Rehabilitation Program. He applied in early January.

“At first I didn’t think I would get it,” he said. “And I didn’t think it was that serious of an opportunity.”

But he said that changed as he began filling out the application, which his teacher encouraged him to do.

“This is a really exciting opportunity for (Salas) to further his skills in the

ongoing process to succeed in the working world and continue to become independent,” stated Julie Hunt, Special Education Director of Umatilla School District, in a recent news release.

During the summer of 2018, Salas participated in the school district’s Summer Work-based Experience Learning Lesson program for students with documented disabilities.

His participation led him to a job at Walmart, where he has worked for more than a year.

He has one piece of advice for students looking to gain more independence and follow their own ambitions: “I feel like you need to think outside of the box,” he said.

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