



## **D.A. SEBASSTIAN TALKS ABOUT HIS FILM HOT ROD GIRLS SAVE THE WORLD**

**You come to film making from a Musicians background. How did that influence your film?**

“Creatively” I think in musical terms and approach my film making as such. In my opinion, the most powerful scenes in film are the ones with great music behind them. In our opening credits for Hot Rod Girls Save The World I made a “Musician Made Movie” logo. Most of the cast and crew were area musicians. I think musicians are very under rated as creative forces and overly commodified by the “Music Business.” I made a conscious effort to include live performances by area bands that I liked and had worked with in the studio. The Bad Things, Wages Of Sin and DragStrip Riot all make excellent performance cameos. I was also lucky enough to get some tracks in the film by the incredible Greek surf band, The Invisible Surfers. We had worked together on several compilations and I am putting out their second CD, Till That Day, on Go-kustom Rekords middle 2009. I did the movie soundtrack myself under the KsK (Kill Switch...Klick) name- which was really the easiest part of the entire film making experience for me.

**Who are your influences?**

In film content and narration style, I would have to say Jim Jarmusch, David Lynch. Russ Meyers, Michael Almercyda and Robert Rodriguez. Also old TV shows like The Munsters, Peter Gunn and The Twilight Zone. I love that high contrast Black & White look of those shows. I also dig the dark comedic work of Stanley Kubrick and Wes Anderson and the old Hot Rod and Surf films of the sixties like Hot Rods To Hell and Beach Blanket Bingo. So stupid they’re cool- ya know.

### **Hot Rod Girls Save The World is Part Two of The Anywhere Trilogy?**

Yes. As I was developing Hot Rod Girls Save The World's backstory, Anywhere, Washington took on a life of it's own. I was making detailed maps of the town- to help figure out my shot lists, and locations and quickly realized I had alot more story to tell than I could fit in just one movie. Part One, The Legend Of D.B. Petty is about Hot Rod Girl Betty Petty's ill fated drag racing father set in 1967. Part Three is called Memories Of The Planet Earth and takes place mostly on the planet Moosha Maa in the near future. I have begun scripting both films and may release a novelized version and/or graphic novel version of all three films before we begin filming. I made Hot Rod Girls Save The World as Part Two of the Trilogy in a joking nod to Star Wars. I have also been thinking about making the Anywhere Trilogy in four or five parts. Now that would be funny!

### **Hot Rod Girls Save The World encompasses multiple styles and film genres. How do you view your film?**

I guess it's something like a Hot Rod, Partially Animated, Alien, Zombie, B-Budget, Dark Comedy, Horror, Sci-Fi, Film Noir, Crime Drama. It has all of those elements in it. I also used several editing styles to exaggerate different parts of the film. It's not as drastic as Oliver Stones Natural Born Killers, but I did segregate the scenes prior to assembly so that different sections would have different tempos.

### **Where did you shoot your film?**

Over the course of the three years of filming, we shot in Seattle, Shoreline, Edmonds, Renton, Roy, Olympia and Black Diamond all in Washington State. We did one major road trip to Medford, Oregon, on an invitation from The Dive Bombers Car Club. They located this old building that we turned into an impromptu gas station. We opted to do as much of the filming on friends private property as possible, so we wouldn't have all the Permit issues. We were lucky that so many area Gearheads loaned us their shops, homes and land to film.

### **What were your biggest challenges as a first time film maker?**

The special effects sections of the film that take place on Moosha Maa were the most difficult. When you write a screenplay you envision things a certain way. Without a big budget you have to find a way to get the results. We tried several make-up configurations for the Mooshian characters and nothing seemed to work. We shot a good deal of the film with the old make-up designs. I wasn't very happy with the results, so I went online and learned how to fabricate full face latex masks. We then re-shot close-ups and new scenes with the new make-up in my garage, which I had painted avocado green. In post I removed the green room using green screen techniques. For the backgrounds I used Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. I layered and manipulated scanned pieces of vintage cars from old car magazines and pictures of inanimate objects I took. Munchamaa's House, for example, is a 1960 Dodge Dart tail fin turned on it's side. The couch in Funkendaa's living room is a picture of a computer monitor.

### **Did you shoot Film or DV?**

Digital Video. When I was researching how to get the most bang for my buck I decided to go the DV route. I had been producing a Kustom Kulture TV Show for Seattle Public Access called Go-Kustom TV since 2002. I used Sony Consumer Digital-8 cameras to film and then edited the show on my Mac G4 using Final Cut Pro. I used the TV Show to teach myself how to edit and film. Then I rented a professional camera to shoot my first music video for my own song Monster Monster. In 2004 I bought a Panasonic AG DVX100. It's an incredible camera for the price. I didn't shoot anamorphic but did use the 24p (24 frames a second). mode. It looks as good as 16mm film, which is what I was going for. I love the look of film, especially old B&W, but can't really think of

a reason to shoot it now days with the new technology. I am considering shooting The Legend Of D.B. Petty (Hot Rod Girls Save The World prequel) in HD.

### **There seems to be quiet a bit of underhanded social commentary in your film- was that your goal?**

I am a socially conscious person, therefore I think it is inevitable that most anything I put my hands on will reflect this. Hot Rod Girls Save The World speaks volumes on American Entitlement, the Wars In Iraq & Afghanistan and Cultural Conflict, but like old cartoons, I wanted the film to work on two levels- both absurd and profound. Like Marvin Martian wanting to destroy the Earth because it blocked his view of Venus, Funkendaa wants to destroy the Earth because all our radio noise is messing up his Intergalactic TV reception. Buhgabaa is a metaphor for our own higher consciousness trying to navigate and this world of extremes.

### **What's Kustom Kulture?**

It's a recently popularize catch-all phrase for the artwork, music and cars within the old-new car culture. As far as I know the car "kustomizer" George Barris (Batmobile, Munster Coach, etc.) was the first person to exchange the "C" for a "K" in the word Kustom. He used to call himself the King Of The Kustomizers. Most of the music falls into the Psychobilly and Rockabilly genres. The artwork includes pinstriping tattoo, comic and poster art. Ed "Big Daddy" Roth and Von Dutch are two huge influences on the artwork. There is a definite 50's & 60's influence, but with a Punk Rock Do It Yourself mentality. Cars & Motorcycles are the center of the Kustom Kulture world with Fabricators and Kustomizers being treated like rock stars. I have been on the fringe of the movement for years with my TV Show and production work with Psychobilly/Rockabilly bands. As far as I know Hot Rod Girls Save The World is the first ever Kustom Kulture film- not intentionally. It just turned out how it did.

### **Are you a car guy?**

Hell yea! When I was in High School I dreamed of becoming an automotive stylist/designer and working for Chrysler. I had all these plans of attending Art Center College Of Design and doing the Corporate gig. At the time, I owned my dream car a 1970 Dodge Challenger (a car I wanted since seeing the film Vanishing Point). I had worked two part time jobs to get that car. Then something happened. I was at an art supply store getting pastels to complete a hand drawn giant poster of a 427 Ford Cobra. I was drawing for extra credit in my Drafting Class and I heard this strange music. I asked this Beatnik looking cat behind the counter what was on the radio and he said it was a cassette (remember those) playing Planet Claire by The B-52s. This was 1981 and I hadn't been exposed to Punk or "New Wave" music. I was a typical Aerosmith, UFO & Nazareth style Rocker. I flipped out! Instantly I went out and bought the B52s tape and dozens of other "New Wave" artists.

A few weeks later I sold my Challenger to buy a bass guitar and overnight changed my career plans from Automotive Designer to Punk Rock Bassist. Such is the mind of a sixteen year old. I never lost my love of cars though. It's hard to explain to non-Gearheads. When I decided to make a film I wanted as many bad ass cars in it as possible. I am no Barret-Jackson Hollywood poseur- I know what's cool. Not by survey, but by what I really really like. Kustoms, Traditional Rods, Rats, Mid-Sixties Mopars.

We had some great rides on camera- check out the scene in the Hot Rod Girls shop. This was done courtesy of Mike Volz at his shop Rocket Restorations in Olympia, WA. I was in Mopar heaven, Charger 500's, Coronets, Cudas, Challengers, Roadrunners. Un-f'ing-believable! We also got Tony Ririe and his Traditional '29 Ford as Betty Petty's ride and all his Car Club- The Rat Bastards involved as well as Chris Darland, Ryan Kezer and their Car Club The Dive Bombers in Medford, Oregon. One of my dreams is to get a Die-Cast manufacturer like Johnny Lightning,

Green Light or Hot Wheels to do a series with all the cars from Hot Rod Girls Save The World. We are working on the prequel for HRGSTW- The Legend Of D.B. Petty, and it's almost all Drag Racing and fist fights.

**Was it difficult Filming and Directing at the same time?**

Yes. In future I am hiring a camera man. When you are concentrating on getting the shot and following the action it is very difficult to direct the actors and pay attention to performances. I am sure I will film scenes in all my films, but not like I did on Hot Rod Girls Save The World.

**Whats next?**

Well we are shooting **Rat Rod Rockers** summer of 2009 which is loosely related to the Hot Rod Girls Save The World story line. I have already set up preproduction meetings and started picking cast and crew. Not really part of the **Anywhere Trilogy**, but set in the same little ficticious town of Anywhere Washington. I am also working on graphic novels for the series and a possible novelized version as well.

**Any advice for aspiring film makers?**

Follow your bliss. Film what you know. Never give up. Never look back.