

Interview June 25, 2021

DROPOUT by Jesse Read

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QUARANTINE SONGS

FAMOUS UNDERGROUND (FEATURING FORMER SLIK TOXIK FRONTMAN NICK WALSH) RELEASE NEW ALBUM "IM MY REFLECTION" AND NEW MUSIC VIDEO "THE DARK ON OF TWO"

Posted by Jesse Read | Jun 25, 2021 | ★★★★★

1	The Dark One of Two	5:06
2	Corrupted	4:13
3	Until the End	3:51
4	Ultra Mega	3:32
5	Like An Animal	4:08

Famous Underground have just released a new 5 song EP entitled "In My Reflection" and if you're a fan of old school metal, this is going to make the fact that the weekend is right around the corner that much more exciting. For more than a decade, the members of Famous Underground – Nick Walsh and Laurie-Anne Green – have consistently, but unsurprisingly, shunned musical trends in favour of holding the metallic hard rock torch high. And with the group's latest release, a 5-song EP, the torch burns brightly.

It's an awesome album, and it brought back the feelings of when I was much younger and first started listening to thrash and heavier rock. It's got that epic energy, grit and wit to get your head banging, while making sure not to miss the next lyric in the plot. Filled with aggressive riffs, crunchy guitars, ripping solos, and powerful and at times soaring vocals, each song on the album puts a fresh spin on a classic sound that I know many hard rock fans will be excited to hear. A great example is the single and music video for The Dark One of Two, which you can watch below!



While the musical relationship between Walsh and bassist Green dates back more than two decades, the former's history in music is even more extensive, having fronted the Juno Award winning Canadian hard-rock band Slik Toxik. Following the group's demise, Walsh immersed himself in a myriad of projects, running the gamut from owning a recording studio, working in film and television, and touring North America with Classic Albums Live.

Walsh and Green had worked on projects together in the past, and in 2011 decided to form Famous Underground. They released their debut album independently that same year, which was subsequently licensed for world-wide release in 2013. Leaning upon a veritable number of classic influences from the world of hard rock and heavy metal, Famous Underground's take no prisoners approach to music reaffirms guitar-driven rock music is far from dead.

"Famous Underground is my passion project. It's music that comes from my soul." Walsh explains. "I am grateful that the band share my vision and end up owning it themselves – that's what I call real."

Following the release of a digital 45 in 2017, the band, which also includes guitarist Darren Boyd and drummer Desche Sparboom, amassed 14 songs for a full-length album that was originally due out in 2020. Not surprisingly, the pandemic disrupted those plans, sending Walsh and Green back to the drawing board in some respects. After all, the dynamic vocalist has a unique perspective on the music business, having cut his musical teeth on the "old" model of record companies being the gatekeepers to success, through disruptors like Napster and file-sharing, up to the present day of music on demand.

"It's remarkable to watch how technology shifts the industry so quickly," says Walsh. "It's so important to stay on top of how the landscape is evolving. We wanted to ensure we were going about the release of this new music in the right way, rather than dropping all 14 songs with no fanfare".

One of the most notable facets that time has brought to Famous Underground is a sense of maturity and life experience. Although those facets of life might have been missing during his tenure in Slik Toxik – through no one's fault – Walsh embraces the opportunity to have gained valuable insights and observations over the last 30 years. It has given him a world view that could not be artificially manifested.

"Back in the early days of Slik Toxik, we were singing about reaching for the brass ring, women and partying; all pretty typical stuff for guys in their late teens and early 20's. I couldn't get away with writing about that shit now," he says, laughing. "I'm more interested in writing about the world around me and the human condition; the struggles within; duality; and the world around us. I'm a big believer in the whole yin/yang thing and how important it is to find balance in the world." Walsh acknowledges the public's tolerance for inauthenticity has kept him singularly focused on ensuring he projects his true musical identity in every note of In My Reflection.

"Fans, critics and most people can smell through bullshit. As an artist, my job is to make sure I'm comfortable creating it and presenting it," he says.

"What I love about our songs is how they usually tell tales of conflict, but they also have resolve," Green offers. "One of the things that keeps my interest with this band is how over the years the sound has kept evolving, I feel that we are now playing some of our best material."

The first single from the EP is "The Dark One of Two", a hard-hitting, thunderous track which is the equivalent of having an angel on one shoulder, and the devil on the other. It's a dilemma as old as time itself as people evaluate available options to endless questions and sometimes at the detriment to the well-being of themselves or others. *"Your perspective changes as you get older, but whatever decisions you make, they are based entirely off your principles,"* Walsh says.

Backed by a wall of crunchy, melodic guitars, "Like An Animal," documents Nick's relationship with music throughout his life and how topsy turvy the business has proven to be. *"It's what drives me but also what drives me crazy. But one thing that's true is that my lyrics always come from the heart. I proudly wear them on my sleeve."*

There is a polished, intense rawness to the songs featured on In My Reflection that is both similar and dissimilar to anything Walsh has done in the past. However, he might not have arrived at this critical junction in his career without the benefit of the experiences he's lived through. Coincidentally, in the not-too-distant future, Universal Music Canada will be re-issuing Slik Toxik's 1991 EP Smooth Deadly as well as their multi-award winning album Doin' The Nasty (1992). This will be the first time the band's catalogue will be available digitally.

"I've been fortunate enough to make my living as a songwriter and musician, singing in various styles," Walsh says. "When I'm writing for myself, it is rock and metal that naturally comes out of me. It's my penchant for the stage in bringing these songs to life for the audience. Not only do they get to hear the conviction but also get to see and feel it too. And of course, I do care what people think of the music I'm creating, but I'm not looking to reach the entire world. My aspirations have evolved over the years. I'm confident however; there is a pocket of people out there that will embrace our music. Maybe they'll click LIKE, or whatever the kids are doing these days...LOL"