

## STREET SCENE

## Dad is loyal fan to son's Jesus Lizard band



Jesus Lizard guitarist Duane Denison could call his father his biggest fan.

"I'm 70 years old and I'm not a fan of alternative rock and he knows that, but I do see them and listen to them," said Hal Denison of Plymouth.



**Local connection:** The Jesus Lizard - from left, bassist David Wm. Sims, guitarist and Plymouth native Duane Denison, singer David Yow, and drummer Mac McNeilly who has since been replaced by Jim Kimball.

Denison of Plymouth.

"His band is much better than some of the groups I've heard, like the ones I hear on Letterman. They had a group on there the other night called the Counting Crows. They were terrible. I thought, I'm always doing that - making a little criticism because I'm always putting them up against the Jesus Lizard. Of course, I'm a little biased."

Denison, a graduate of Plymouth Salem High School, returns home Thursday, Jan. 16, to play St. Andrew's Hall with his band, Lollapalooza veterans The Jesus Lizard.

Denison the younger chuckled when he heard his dad was making the press rounds to promote his son.

"That's my dad. I guess he doesn't have anything else better to do," Denison said laughing. He moved from the area to Austin, Texas, shortly after earning a music degree from Eastern Michigan University in 1984. Denison, who now lives in

Chicago, also studied flamenco music with Juan Serrano and jazz with Christopher Parkening. "The punk rock thing started happening and it was too exciting. I couldn't stay away from it. It made the idea of being in a band fun and exciting again. At the same time I wanted to finish up school. When I graduated from Eastern in 1984, the economy was really bad, and I didn't care for the music scene anymore. So I moved to Texas from there."

Denison has been a member of the alternative rock quartet since its creation in 1987. Bassist David Wm. Sims and singer David Yow, of Scratch Acid, and Denison, of Cargo Cult, started writing songs after the demise of their respective bands.

Their first recording was a five-song EP called "Pure" (Touch and Go Records). Soon afterward drummer Mac McNeilly (ex-86 and Phantom 309) joined the band. The Jesus Lizard, known for Yow's Iggy Pop-like stage antics, released its first full-length album "Head" in April 1990. Four albums followed before the band signed with Capitol and released its latest album "Shot" in 1995.

Denison said that the band is writing songs for its next album. In between tour dates, The Jesus Lizard will go to Detroit's White Room studios for a day to record demos with producer Dave Sardy (Orange 9mm, Slayer). "Shot" was recorded in numerous studios.

"While we were working on

"Shot," we were on tour a lot so we'd go into the studios of whatever town we were in. We did demos in New York, London, San Francisco, and Baltimore. We felt like we were Led Zeppelin."

The Jesus Lizard's resume includes tours with Rage Against the Machine and Ministry, as well as stints with Lollapalooza and "Big European Festival." Denison said those dates made The Jesus Lizard name more recognizable, but it didn't necessarily help album sales.

"To be honest, in retrospect we feel that that was a mistake. People who have liked us all along didn't go to those shows. Those people don't like those bands. When we go back to playing club shows and medium theater-sized places on our own, those shows were really well. Sales actually picked up."

Denison said future plans for The Jesus Lizard include "a couple more albums at least. We seem to always keep coming up with different ideas to amuse each other."

Besides The Jesus Lizard, Denison is involved in a number of different projects, most notably the jazz group Denison/Kimball Trio, now known as DK3. Denison has also played with Mule, and Firewater, the new band from ex-Cop Shoot Cop mastermind Tod Ashley. Rock music is closest to Denison's heart.

"To me, rock should be physi-

cally exciting. It should be high-energy excitement and sound. A good rock album or a good song can get you going in a way that nothing else really can. The stuff with the trio is more cerebral. You get to improvise more. It's a bit more abstract. It's not quite so immediate. It's a totally different thing even with the way you play instruments. Rock is really physical. Your hands can get sore or beat up."

"We just recorded a new DK3 album, but I think I'm going to be on full-on rock mode for the next couple years."

The Jesus Lizard, with special guests Brainiac, perform Thursday, Jan. 16, at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. Doors open at 8 p.m. for the 18 and under show. Tickets are \$10 in advance. For more information, call (313) 961-MELT.

If you can't make it to the show, The Jesus Lizard will broadcast their concert at New York City's Irving Plaza at 10:15 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, on SonicNet. The Jesus Lizard will also host a 9 p.m. chat in their

Palace site, a three-dimensional on-line chat environment which allows multiple users to interact at the same time. Visitors chat with each other through cartoon balloons as they travel through multiple rooms filled with interactive experiences. A trial version of the Palace can be downloaded for free at <http://www.thepalace.com> and The Jesus Lizard graphics and sound package can be downloaded from <http://hollywoodandvine.com/TheJesusLizard>.

The Jesus Lizard cybercast will carry live audio feed and photos from the show. The event will also be added to SonicNet's archive site.

Correction: In a Thursday, Jan. 2, story about Mudpuppy, Griot Galaxy was misspelled.

If you have a question or comment for Christina Fuoco, you can write to her in care of The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, or you can leave her a message at (313) 953-2047, mailbox No. 2130, or via e-mail at [CFuoco@aol.com](mailto:CFuoco@aol.com).

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