

Informal interview with Ryan Primack, lead guitarist with Poison the Well, 31/01/2005

1. You've got a very innovative style and you're getting bigger and you're still maintaining a very grass roots following, any thoughts?

Ryan: Well, yeah I mean I would hope that we could still maintain our grass roots following. I mean we haven't changed the way we do things very much other than sonically. As far as the politics of being in a band are concerned our shows are still cheap our clothes are still cheap we haven't really made any step outside the hardcore scene as far as that's concerned. The fact of the matter is, is that we were all hardcore kids in a hardcore band, and we started the band when we were 17 and 18 you know? We've changed as people but as far as the music we like and dislike it's still the same as when we were that age. But as the years have gone on we've drew inspiration from different areas and I don't know any musician who doesn't do that, except maybe a stagnant one.

2. Do you think the labelling of genres has gone too far? These days the case is that it's really spreading out do you think that it's a good thing for the music and the scene?

Ryan: I don't really think it's to do with the music or the scene, the only reason bands give themselves a specification is for subculture niche marketing, the only reason bands have titles is so they can sell more stuff to people. The reason to have subcultures and sub genres is to be able to sell stuff to people. You know, people need to realise music is art but everything past that is pretty much commerce. Any time a label is touting a band as this or that, I don't care if the band sold 5 records of fifty million it's all just to sell records to a certain group of people. It's quite well proven fact that people at labels know how to sell records, or how to sell things to people. So you know, genre specification to me is just salesmanship, someone who knows how to sell you what you want, you're not buying music you're not buying art you're buying a click to hangout with

3. *Do you think the music press and stuff like MTV have too much influence over kids?*

Ryan: Nah, I think the only reason they have any influence is because kids *let* them have the influence, so no I don't think MTV has too much influence but I think people are too apathetic to make up their own damn minds. People walk around saying oh, MTV is a demon, big record labels are the demon, but the demon is the people. It's the people that buy things and people who support bands, and I want to believe that 90% of the time it's because they actually like the music or care about the music when the fact of the matter is a lot of the time I really do feel like a lot of people daren't become big because people buy an image and not art. That's the one thing I'll give the indie scene over the main label scene is that it occurs less in the indie scene but right now it's going on rampantly across everywhere. Indie bands not indie bands everyone's trying to sell the next big image, it seems like bands are catering more to vogue than to music magazines these days it's pathetic actually (laughs) I'm not pissing you off am i? I just try to be really straight about things,

4. *What was it like being on the hardcore scene when you were so young especially when you were so revered?*

Ryan: well for a long time we weren't, it was a long while before that all happened. I dunno, growing up in the hardcore scene compared to how I see the hardcore scene now is much much different. Much more image conscious scene these days, I don't know, the first time I went to a hardcore show it was because I was wearing this punk t-shirt and a kid comes up to me and was like "hey, my bands playing this show we're a hardcore band you should come out" and gave me a flyer, now what happens is one kid sees another kid in a hardcore t-shirt and he's all "nah man fuck that I'm way more hardcore than him". I got into hardcore because I was invited into a show...I think a lot of kids right now, I see it in the States a lot, is that they want to act like their first show was like "my first show was with five people in this small place seeing this seminal hardcore band" when in fact their first show was probably nirvana in an amphitheatre, I mean people need to get real and realise they were also new to everything once. No-one woke up with an Agnostic Front t-shirt on, with like Shark Attack coloured press vinyl under their arm.

6. What do you feel it is that gives your band this very wide appeal?

Ryan: I think, with every tour we've done over the last couple of years we've tried to make it an eclectic affair, an affair where people are seeing more than one type of music, for our sake as much as the fans, I mean, I don't want to see four bands that sound exactly the same. And I think people really have to realise that music isn't a reason to dislike people music's a reason to like something, regardless of people. You know in a perfect world I think people should respect every kind of music but that shit isn't going to happen. Yeah, I mean I try to surround myself with people who appreciate music because it's good music not because it's the cool band of the moment. Certainly try to stay away from people who just like the NME band of the week after week. I do hear NME love Morrissey now which is pretty funny, talk about shooting yourself in the foot

7. Do you think the kids of the subculture are affected by what they read in the magazines?

Ryan: I think kids are affected by the press and what they read. I think it's bullshit that they are. Magazines are a good way to find out about a band but magazines are not a good way to find out if you like that band or not. I respect magazines, literary publications, periodicals and what not, for the fact of sheer information, but as far as opinion...I don't understand, in the real world wouldn't you respect some dude on the streets opinion as much as some person at a label? Like I mean, those dude are just as full of shit as anyone else,