

ControlMAG: The Sanctuary of Rock



Burton C. Bell
Frontman

City of Fire was formed three years ago. However, there are people in South America that still hasn't heard about the band yet.

Sanctuary of Rock: Could you please tell us briefly about the band's beginnings?

Burton C Bell: The band formed when Byron's old band Caustic Thought decided to do a reunion show in Vancouver. After the show they decided to re-record some old songs and some new ones, they brought in Terry "Sho" Murray in to help them as a second guitar player and as a producer. The music came out so well, they all thought they could use a new singer. Byron knew that I would like the music, so he asked me to listen to the demos. I really liked them, so I flew out and started jamming with them. They had a person to back them

An interview with

CITY OF FIRE

financially, like a benefactor, to help. This guy turned out to be a fraud. He was not in the music business and he messed everything up after the record was finished. That is why we never toured properly and the albums were never distributed around the globe

Sanctuary of Rock: But things seem to be much better now. Two months ago you started recording a new album. Tell us how the recording process is going. Is the album already finished?

Burton: Okay, things are better. We finally have a manager who is getting us the proper support and going through the proper channels for financing. We just finished recording our 2nd album, which is to be titled "TRIAL THROUGH FIRE". I am very proud of the work we have done. We "found" our sound on this record. Terry has been the main producer and he just finished cleaning up the tracks so that Greg Reely can begin mixing the album. The record is just about finished. All the recording is done, just the mixing and mastering is left.

Sanctuary of Rock: Ok, you have just answered half of my next question...

Burton: Great!

Sanctuary of Rock: Do you have a release date planned?

Burton: We are hoping for a March 2012 release around the globe!

Sanctuary of rock: Can you tell us what was the main difference between recording and writing the self titled album and the new one?

Burton: The main difference was that we knew what we wanted to achieve. We knew what our strong points were with the band's music. We all had a great understanding of the band itself. Terry has a great sense of what my voice can do, so he and the guys were able to write the music that suited everyone. We were very "cohesive" as a band. We knew everyone's strong points.

Sanctuary of Rock: On the first album you covered "Rain" by The



Cult. Byron mentioned in previous interviews that this song worked very well in the concept of the first album and had the Vancouver's vibe... Are you going to experiment with covers again?

Burton: Over the years, we did a couple of covers: "Children of the Revolution" by T REX, and "Veteran of the Psychic Wars" by Blue Oyster Cult. Terry proposed a song to do for the album, "Enjoy the silence" by Depeche Mode. It came out very grandiose, and it does fit the vibe of this album.

Sanctuary of Rock: That's a great song!

Burton: It came out City of Fire style!

Sanctuary of Rock: Now, let me ask you about the technical side of the album. The band has produced the first album themselves. Do you plan to produce it again or are you working with another producer?

Burton: We produced it ourselves again. We know our sound and all of us are seasoned veterans in the studio. Terry is actually the main producer. He has a great sense for songwriting and arrangement.

Sanctuary or Rock: Ok, now we just had to ask this: where did you get the idea from to collect money for recording the new album on PledgeMusic?

Burton: That was our manager. She found success in it with another band she has

worked with. IT was a fantastic idea. Not only did it generate the funds we needed, it also created a grass roots fan base that is important for a new band. It created a personal network between the band and our new fans, and they are a very happy, as we are.

Sanctuary of Rock: Music video to song "Bad Motivator" was filmed few weeks ago. Could you us when the video will be released?

Burton: The video was created thought the program of MUCH MUSIC in Canada - it is Canada's MTV. Every year, they give grants to new bands to make a video. We applied and got the grant. The video was made through all Canadian videographers, directors etc. Much Music has the video, but I am not certain when they are going to show it. I think it is soon.

Sanctuary of Rock: Very well. How did you end up working with Cody Calahan? Is he a close friend of yours?

Burton: It was the first time I met Cody Calahan, and I look forward to working with him again. He is very ambitious and I like his creative ideas.

Sanctuary of Rock: Tell us about the writing process for City of Fire. Does it differ from your other bands? Will be there any particularly theme for the new album?

Burton: The writing process is very similar to other bands. The guys had

music ideas and were recorded on a demo. I would sit with Terry in the studio and just sing out ideas. I usually have some words to "throw down" and I try to incorporate them into the song. A lot of times, I just say things that come out, like speaking in tongues. There is no theme, but everything we were writing bout was happening in our lives, so that is why we call the album "TRIAL THROUGH FIRE". It was a very difficult writing process.

Sanctuary of Rock: Difficult? Why? Can you explain?

Burton: We were all going through personal issues, and also the band was dealing with business issues. This record may have never been made if it were not for our manager. All the songs tell a story.

Sanctuary of Rock: Can you tell us more about the manager as well? How long has she been in the business? What bands has she worked with before?

Burton: She has been in the music business in Toronto, Canada for 17 years. She has worked with numerous bands. However, due to other contractual obligations, I cannot tell her name or other things, but she is great at what she does!



Bad Motivator Filming

Sanctuary of Rock: Of course, we understand that! We just want to get as much information out of you as possible for our readers)

Burton: She is a professional!

Sanctuary of Rock: Ok, I guess with your busy schedule it's not easy to rehearse very often with the band. Who is the main songwriter in the group? Is everybody allowed to

bring the ideas for the songs to the studio? We wonder how the creative process of the City Of Fire looks like.

Burton: We all are very busy, but when there is a tour, or album, we make the schedule to get together. Everyone brings ideas to the studio; however, Terry was the main songwriter for this album. The process is rather simple, for instance, I had an idea for a song that I had been working on. When I got to Vancouver, I played it for the guys and they loved it. Terry and Byron do the same. We sit and listen to each other's ideas. Then we quickly record the idea so that it is not lost and we build from there. That way, I am abler to absorb the song and begin doing words and vocals. It is actually a very exciting process. It is my favorite part of the whole creative process.

Sanctuary of Rock: Is City of Fire just a side project or a number one priority band in your musical career?

Burton: In this day and age, there is no such thing as a side band. A professional musician needs more than "1 iron in the fire". City of Fire has great potential and we as a band see that. With the right management which we have, it will do great things. With the proper scheduling, I will be able to do all the music I want to like Fear Factory or Ascension of the Watchers and other projects.

Sanctuary of Rock: Let us peak about Jed now. I know that Jed played guitar during the live shows. Is he still a member of the band?

Burton: Jed Simon only filled in on one tour. He is not in the band by his choice. We have a new guitar player named Steve.

Sanctuary of Rock: Can you tell more about him?

Burton: Steve Sal was in Terry's band Shocore. We auditioned him, and he is a great player, and he is a great guy. He will do just fine.

Sanctuary of Rock: You have already visited South America a couple times and you enjoyed Rock at the Park 2006 in Bogota, Colombia. Any plans for City of Fire to visit the Latin-American fans again?

Burton: That was a great show, would have been better if it had not rained, but it was fun. I do hope to get down to South America again someday, and with City Of Fire.

Sanctuary of Rock: Finances are a hot topic nowadays; a lot of people think that all musicians with a successful career are millionaires. After many



Burton tries to be the same height by spreading his legs way apart

years working on, what do you think about the actual status of the musical industry?

Burton: I know, I get that all the time. Only if you sell millions of records, that you can be a millionaire. I have been in the industry for 20 years as of today! (the 31 of October) and I have seen it change drastically and it is because of the internet. Illegal downloading has taken my royalties. If you are a fan of a band, you should support them properly. Illegal downloading does take the hard earned money from the artist. That is how we survive and if no one is buying records anymore, then I cannot support my 3 children and I will have to do something else. That is why I have 3 bands. I am still a starving artist, even after 20 years. It shows my dedication to my art.

Sanctuary of Rock: Let's hope with the new album you will become millionaires!

Burton: I am not holding my breath!!!

Sanctuary of Rock: All right, Could you say HELLO to all your fans from Colombia?

Burton: I would like to say a GIGANTE GRACIAS a SANCTUARIO DEL ROCK!. City Of Fire hopes that we can play to all of our new and old fans in Bogota very soon!

Sanctuary of Rock: Ok, Burton, thanks again for answering our questions! Anything else you'd like to say to all readers of the Sanctuary of rock.com and your fans from Latin America?

Burton: Please support your favorite artists properly, for this is how we survive, and without proper support, your favorite bands will not exist anymore. It is up to you!!!!

Burton C. Bell

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