

THE URBAN VOODOO MACHINE **OFICIAL BIOGRAPHY: MARCH 2016**

We know what you're thinking. You're thinking: "Why should I care about The Urban Voodoo Machine? They've been around for ages, haven't they? Aren't they a novelty band who wears funny make-up? Don't they sometimes play jazz? Aren't half of them dead or something?"

So bear with us, sunshine, cos you clearly need educating.

The story starts with **Paul-Ronney Angel**, a man with a double-barrelled first name. I could be a wanker about this and say the story starts with Bon Scott-era AC/DC – with Tom Waits, or the Clash, Louis Armstrong, the Pogues, the Sensational Alex Harvey Band, Johnny Cash, Lionel Bart or Bertolt Brecht – but let's stick with Paul-Ronney, it's quicker. Paul-Ronney Angel ate his parents and fled the fjords of Norway with just a bottle of moonshine and several slices of decomposing fish in his back pocket. (Before he left they tried him in the Norwegian Army – he lasted a total of five hours.)

After that, Angel washed up in London during the dying breaths of Thatcherism and took advantage of all that swinging London had to offer: he sold The Big Issue, busked Johnny Thunders & Robert Johnson numbers in Soho bus stops and played guitar for anyone who'd have him.

The Urban Voodoo Machine came to him in 2002 as a fully-formed idea. He'd lead a band who'd play '**Bourbon Soaked Gypsy Blues Bop'n'Stroll**'. They'd dress in black and red. There would be a LOT of them. And their music would sound like a great night out in a dangerous part of town. From the get-go, The UVM fused junkyard blues and stinging rockabilly with mariachi horns, fiddles, sinister cabaret and punk rock tangos. "I wanted to play rock'n'roll music with a different instrumentation," says Angel, "taking inspiration from everything from delta blues, latin and gypsy music without losing the spirit and attitude of punk." His lyrics – part Lemmy, part Bob Dylan – made other (more acclaimed) songwriters sound totally. Fucking. Boring.

"We're not Americana and were definitely not 'retro'," says Angel. "I write songs about living in London right now. Although having a shit time, no money, heartbreak, mental illness, addiction and suppression from the big guy is kinda universal and timeless, I guess..."

"Yeah-yeah-yeah," you're thinking, "but can they cut it live?" Well, there's a reason why they've played Glastonbury, Download, Latitude, Bestival, Hard Rock Calling and toured with The Pogues and New York Dolls. With an act honed alongside the burlesque dancers, snake-charmers and fire-eaters they call friends, The UVM have become one of the greatest live acts in the country – terrifyingly bizarre, hysterically funny; a riot for the eyes and sensation for the ears: a sing-a-long, drink-a-long, clap-a-long affair.

In 2006 they launched the **Gypsy Hotel** Club in the then-unfashionable part of London's East End, Dalston, a monthly Bourbon Soaked Snake Charmin' Rock'n'Roll

Cabaret night for likeminded misfits, movers and shakers. Time Out Magazine wrote, "If you have 12 hours to live, spend it at Gypsy Hotel!"

Magazines and newspapers have lauded them for their “mariachi-influenced blues, whiskey-soaked country rags and punkabilly-style rave-ups” (The Washington Post) and noted that they’re “drawing deep from a dirty well where Tom Waits, Nick Cave and Dick Dale are enjoying a burlesque all-nighter with Ennio Morricone” (Classic Rock). They became one of the few bands that could appear on Clive Anderson’s Loose Ends on BBC Radio 4 and Britain’s biggest heavy metal festival Download in the same year and win at both.

In 2014, when Paul-Ronney named their third album **Love, Drink & Death!** he had no idea what the year had in store. In October, fiddle-player Rob Skipper died of an accidental heroin overdose, aged just 28. Guitarist Nick Marsh (formerly frontman of Flesh For Lulu) fought throat cancer throughout that year. He died in June 2015, aged 53. The Voodoo Machine transformed themselves into a New Orleans-style marching band for his funeral. The Urban Voodoo Machine Marching Band also played the Classic Rock Awards that year - the only band to do so without electricity.

And that brings us to new album **Hellhound Hymns**. Marsh plays on eight of its 13 songs. (Angel: "He was really putting the hours in when he knew the cancer had come back. He was like, 'Right, these might be my last recordings with this band, so let's roll the tape and make it a good one!") To borrow one of the song titles, it's all mixed-up. It's part wake, part protest, part valediction – a party at the gates of hell – because the greatest tribute you can pay the dead is to live life to the full: “We will sing and we will dance/We will drink and we will laugh/We will not forget the past and our fallen brothers...”

Line-up:

Paul-Ronney Angel – Lead Vocals, Acoustic & Electric Guitars, Mandolin, Banjo, Harmonica

George 'Le Boner' Simmonds - Trombone & Vocals

Slim – Accordion & Piano

The Reverend Gavin Smith – Upright Bass

The Late J-Roni-Moe – Drums

Jary – Drums, Cajon

Ane Angel – Sousaphone, Gong

Lucifire – Baritone Saxophone

Joe 'Mongo' Whitney – Wasboard, Bouzouki & Vocals

Timeline:

2002

Paul-Ronney Angel is writing songs and plotting his new musical project, they will be called **The Urban Voodoo Machine** and play **Bourbon Soaked Gypsy Blues Bop'n'Stroll**. Joe Strummer dies in December and P-R plays a London Tribute show with a rhythm section made up of **Gavin Smith** on upright bass and **J-Roni-Moe** on drums.

2003

First show at **London School Of Economics** supporting **The Flaming Stars** which features **Joe Whitney** on drums who will join the band later in the year. The 6-piece line up is: **Paul-Ronney Angel** (Vocals, Harmonica & Guitar), **Nick Marsh** (Guitar), **Barney Hollington** (Violin), **Gavin Smith** (Upright Bass) **J-Roni-Moe** & **Jim Jones** (Drums)

2004

Release first E.P. "**Sounds From The Urban Voodoo Machine**" Play many weird and wonderful club nights and parties around **London** town including **Dirty Water Club**, **Lady Luck** and the world's largest fetish club, **Torture Garden**. **Dr Lloyd Savy "Gomez" Deville** joins on trumpet.

2005

Second E.P. "**Ladies and Gentlemen, The Urban Voodoo Machine**" is released. The song "**Killer Sound**" is used in **hardcore US sex flick "Black Light Beauty"**. They take their show out of London for the first time to the super muddy **Glastonbury Festival**. Also first shows abroad for **Ireland's Electric Picnic** and club shows in **Oslo, Norway**. **Lady Ane** starts appearing with the band playing gong and fire breathing.

2006

Third E.P. "**With Love From The Urban Voodoo Machine**" is released. Play **Spitz Festival Of Blues** along **Seasick Steve** and others. **Jary** starts standing in for **Brother Jim** on drums as he is about to get busy with **The Jim Jones Revue**. **Gavin Smith** is **ordained** & **J-Roni-Moe** is pronounced **living dead** earning them the titles "**The Reverend**" and "**The Late**". The band plays the first ever **Gypsy Hotel** event in honor of **Lady Ane's 30th**, **Slim** guests on accordion at this show and ends up being a permanent fixture.

2007

Play **Shambala Festival** & **Latitude Festival** where **Lucifire** appears with the band on saxophone. Return to more mud at Glastonbury Festival. Star in shock rock theatre show **Texas Chainsaw** along **The Damned**. Do a 4 night stunt at **Edinburgh Festival** with **Lost Vagueness** which they are still owed money for!

2008

Tour the **USA, UK** and **Ireland** as support to **The Pogues**. Play headline shows in **France, Portugal, Italy** and **Wales**. Meet **Space Eko Studios** owner **Alex McGowan** and decide to start work on their debut album with him. Play a very muddy **Bestival**, Isle Of Wight.

2009

Release debut album "**Bourbon Soaked Gypsy Blues Bop**"n'Stroll" to rave reviews. Headline London's **Hackney Empire**. Tour the UK with **The New York Dolls**. Play a benefit show for **The Big Issue**, the magazine P-R used to sell while he was homeless. Release the singles "**Always Out**" and "**Orphans Lament**". Their debut album makes the **Top 50 Albums Of The Year** in **Classic Rock** and **Big Cheese** Magazine as well as on numerous web sites.

2010

Release the single "**Love Song 666**". First stadium show alongside **Goran Bregovic** in **Lviv, Ukraine**. Also play **Hungary, Finland, Belgium, Holland and Germany** for the first time. Play to **9000** people supporting **Ska-P** in **Milan, Italy**. Star in the award winning short film "**Leave Without Running**" along **Son Of Dave**. Take **Download Festival** by storm despite not being a metal band, and play **Hard Rock Calling at Hyde Park** alongside **Paul McCartney**. Record "**Hells Bells**" for **AC/DC** Tribute CD. Barney Hollington is abducted by aliens and replaced by fiddler **Robb "The Kid" Skipper**. Lady Ane starts playing **the tuba**. Nominated for "**Best New Band**" in the prestigious **Classic Rock Awards**, they don't win but P-R gets a free booze up and a 3 course meal. Release single "**Goodbye To Another Year**" on red 7' vinyl as well as the soulless download format.

2011

Release second album "**In Black'N'Red**" the fans and press generally agree it's even better than their stunning debut. Play **Passpop Festival** (Holland), **The Hells Angels' Bulldog Bash**, **Wilderness** and **Endorse It Festivals** in **36 hours** (UK), **Open House Festival** (Northern Ireland), entertain the inmates in **Iper Prison** in the daytime before an evening show at **Dranauter Festival** (Belgium) and throw a launch party at London's legendary **100 Club** for the single "**High Jeopardy Thing**". Feature on the CD "**Gypsy Hotel Vol 1**" compiled by **Paul-Ronney Angel** and former Tour DJ for **The Clash**, **Barry 'Scratchy' Myers**. Provide the half time entertainment at a Superbowl match at **Crystal Palace Stadium**. Write and record a song with autistic children at **Pendragon School**, South London. Play their first **BBC Session**. Lady Ane and P-R marries **11/11/11** in **New Orleans** and the band and Gypsy Hotel crew play and take over the city for a week. "**In Black'N'Red**" makes **Classic Rock Magazine's Top 50 Albums Of The Year** & the song "**Cheers For The Tears**" makes their **Top 100 Songs Of The Year**.

2012

Release the single "**Rather You Shot Me Down**" with a launch party at London's Garage.

Celebrate Mardi Gras alongside Mama Rosin in Rennes, France.

Play **Bearded Theory Festival**, **Port Eliot Festival**, **Liverpool Tattoo Convention**, **Boomtown Fair Festival** and return to a warm welcome at **Bulldog Bash** (UK)

Other memorable tests that year were **Sjock Festival** (Belgium), **Eysines Goes Soul Festival** (France) and **Into The Great Wide Open** (Holland) Release the single '**Cheers For The Tears**'. A lot of the year is spent in the studio working on their 3rd studio album 'Love, Drink & Death!

2013

The group celebrate their **10 Year Anniversary** by releasing a 22 Track Compilation album **Rare Gumbo** and do a UK tour that ends up at London's historic **Leicester Square Theatre**. Other notable shows that year was **Power Festival** (Belgium), **Secret Garden Party (UK)** and **Glastonbury Festival** where they stormed the stage only a few hours before **The Rolling Stones** got their Ya Ya's out. They record the single '**Help Me Jesus**' / '**Heroin**' with legendary **Dr.Feelgood** guitarist **Wilko Johnson**. P-R Angel said at the time: "Wilko is one of my all time favourite guitarists and he'd been given a few months to live after being diagnosed with cancer, so I thought I'd ask him if he wanted to record with us - we were chuffed he said yes and were super pleased with the results." The Gospel-inspired song '**Help Me Jesus**' made the **Number 1** spot in Classic Rock Magazine and received heavy rotation on many radio stations. Hallelujah Motherfucker!

2014

Release the single '**Pipe & Slippers Man**' which featured UK Punk legend **Rat Scabies** in the video. Noteable festival appearances that summer were **Guilfest**, **Stockton Weekender**, **Grillstock & Red Rooster** (UK), **Ezperanzah** (Belgium) **Sziget Festival** (Hungary) & the **Silja Rock Cruise** between Finland and Sweden. Release their 3rd studio album '**Love, Drink & Death!**' ("*Furiously energetic and versatile*" - *The Guardian*) **Robb 'The Kid' Skipper** dies in October aged 28 after battling heroin addiction. **Love, Drink & Death!** makes the top 50 Albums of the Year in many publications including **Vive Le Rock**, **Classic Rock**, **Uber Rock** and some that don't have Rock in their title and wins the Pure Rawk Award for **Artwork Of The Year**.

2015

Headline **Vive Le Valentine** in London along with comrades **Los Plantronics**, this was to be Nick Marsh's last ever show with the band and new trombone player **George 'Le Boner' Simmond's** first ever show. Release the single '**Goodnight My Dear**'. Spend a lot of the year back at **Space Eko Studios** with **Alex McGowan** working on their 4th studio album '**HELLBOUND HYMNS**'. **Nick Marsh** dies in June aged 53 after a long struggle with cancer and the band give him a New Orleans Second Line style funeral. Nick's death spawns **The Urban Voodoo Marching Band** and they are the only band to play the **Classic Rock Awards** that year without electricity. They tour the UK, Europe and elsewhere and release the Single '**Crazy Maria**' in December which created a dance craze in a small village in **Mexico**.

2016

January: A Chinese company stole their logo for their sports wear (lycra cycling gear to be precise!). Apparently the big corporations could not sue the Chinese bootleggers, so what chance does a Bourbon Gypsy Blues Bop'n'Stroll Orchestra from East London have? None. "Even if they paid us we would not have endorsed that bollocks!" screamed **The Late-J-Roni-Moe** from his coffin when he found out about it.

February: Paul-Ronney Angel is nominated for '**Front Person Of The Year**' in the Pure Rawk Awards. His reply: "That's cool that someone would think that of me, but right now I'm off to the Calais Refugee Jungle with **Jary** to distribute some rice, so

whoever gets the most internet clicks seem a little unimportant right now."

May: HELLBOUND HYMS will be released. Their 4th studio album has 13 tracks from the band who is now in their 13th year and features the late Nick Marsh on 8 of the tracks.

To be continued...