

The Cosmic Crew delivers an other-worldly album

*Chris Colepaugh dishes out an album
that proves to be out of this world*

Skeletor's Picks - Brodie Birt

Artist - Chris Colepaugh and The Cosmic Crew

Album - In Your Backyard

Bandsite - www.colepaugh.com

Myspace -

www.myspace.com/chriscolepaughandthecosmi

I was first introduced to the New Brunswick native Chris Colepaugh, by the heartbreak kid himself, Ashley Gorman, of local jam band Stride.

Ashley has been heard occasionally ranting public comments such as "Colepaugh is the shit, son!!" And "Colepaugh fucking rocks!"

Taking his advice I caught a Colepaugh show in late August. I was not disappointed as Chris appeared with a double-necked Gibson electric guitar and one of the largest guitar amps I've ever seen.

Shredding solos out of nowhere, he kept everyone entertained and on edge throughout the entire performance.

When word of a new Colepaugh album appeared before me I jumped at the opportunity.

The name of Chris's new album is *In Your Backyard*. His usual band, The Cosmic Crew, backs him keeping the chemistry alive. The album incorporates a heavy southern rock sound with a variety of instrument combinations. "Don't Want You 'round No More" fuses mandolin and acoustic guitar with some country slide to create a soothing melodic song similar to something from the O Brother, Where Art Thou? soundtrack. While heavier rock tracks "Spotless Mind", "Never Mend", "Runnin' Out" and "Caught Up To You" show Chris Colepaugh and The Cosmic Crew can rock with the best of them.

In "Spotless Mind" Chris's vocals create a catchy chorus and nicely flowing song, which ends in a fading out guitar solo.

This is what separates the album from his live performances, instead of fading out you would be introduced to 5 minute long solo jam that would impress even the deaf.

"Never Mends" begins with a drumbeat and a bass line.

Although the song consists of intense guitar riffs after the chorus it is one of his less catchy songs on the album.

Chris shines his chrome slide for "Runnin' Out" to create a heavy blues rock song from start to finish. "Caught Up To You" creeps into a more pop-orientated rock song that ends in guitar solo.

"Summer Nights" will have you raising your lighters in the air, as it is a very mellow song that will make any hippie believe they found their inner happiness.

Liam and I enjoy slow dancing to this song. "Forgiven" fades into a great repetitive short song that works well in contrast with "Summer Nights". "Halfway" has well-written written all over it. Lyrics that have strong meaning and a guitar solo that has leave your ears bleeding. The smooth transitions of "Hard To Say" impress in a way that's, well, hard to say.

Strong vocals and another ear ripping solo are the heart and soul of "Lost My Way."

"Never Enough" has a typical country rock sound with yet another Colepaugh masterminded solo two-thirds through the song. Beginning with soft vocals from Colepaugh, "After the Gold Rush" manages to mix a soft rock song with a heavy rock song via an explosive guitar solo. "California Mountain" is a soft rock song with clean guitar leads and a strong bass line.

"Coffee Shop" is the most unique sounding track on the album, mixing a bit of funk with some rock n' roll and a soft rolling solo, which quickly turns heavy and upbeat transforming back into the chorus to end the song.

Chris Colepaugh continues his southern rock and guitar shredding ways with his Cosmic Crew in "In Your Backyard". The strongest singles on the album are "Spotless Mind", "Halfway", "Runnin' Out", "Caught Up To You", and "Don't Want You 'round No More". It is recommended that you see the legend himself perform live if you are interested in this style of music or just loving watching great guitar players work magic. Overall this album rates an 8 out of 10 on the Skeletor Scale.

Harmless video game? Or substitute for creativity?

By Kirk Avery

A new phenomenon is sweeping the land.

It involves numerous internet videos of people doing it, mad rushes to the store so people can buy it, and in my experience, countless gatherings that have ended up with this as its central highlight.

The phenomenon is Guitar Hero,

and over the past few years it has become one of the most successful video games on the market.

Many people are at least aware of the game by now, and judging by its popularity, a great deal of them are playing it too.

For those who don't know though, it is essentially a game that uses a controller which resembles a guitar, and is used much like a guitar to simulate some of the most popular rock songs from the past thirty odd years.

It is the perfect way for someone who may not be able to actually play guitar to live out their "fantasies" of being in a band and "rocking out" to their favourite songs. While this is completely harmless, one can't help but wonder why people are so drawn to simulate playing their favorite songs, as opposed to picking up an actual guitar and learning that way.

As someone who doesn't really play an instrument, at least efficiently, I can somewhat relate to the sense of accomplishment that comes from "beating" a difficult song. At the same time though, it has also made me want to pick up my actual guitar more than ever and learn to play on that. I know if I were successful at it, my sense of accomplishment would be a lot greater.

Miles Kinnee is a local musician who isn't exactly a fan of the game.

"I can't understand how it is somehow more fulfilling to pick up that controller and to pretend

that you are entertaining people, or jamming then it is to actually do it. Not only that, but a lot of the thrill of guitar is the thrill of creation and discovering new things. Finding new abilities in yourself and using them to express your feelings accurately."

He feels that making an effort to pick up an actual guitar and play would be much more rewarding, and even offers that "if you want to do it, spend \$100 on a beginner

guitar and I'll teach you your first chords myself."

I guess what it all comes down to is that by creating simulations of the real thing, people are losing the skills

they are capable of possessing by actually taking the time to learn the craft. Perhaps you're thinking that I'm a bit too uptight on the subject, and need to loosen up and realize that it's just a game.

Well, I know it's just a game, but do you?

Don't think that by beating a song in the game, you are actually capable of the real thing, because I know there are people out there who think that.

Playing Guitar Hero does not make you a better guitar player, and the controller is basically only equivalent to playing five notes on one string. When you take into account the endless combinations of notes you can play on an actual guitar, there is really no comparison.

Another thing that worries me is how something like this could come to replace the real thing, that instead of pulling out an acoustic guitar at a party and singing songs, people will gather around to watch someone play a video game.

I guess I'm just a sucker for sitting around at a party and actually talking to people, or connecting with them on some level, but this game just seems to be another step in disconnecting us from reality and each other, when all some people want to do is shut the damn thing off.

