

VOLUME

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VMAG EXCLUSIVE!

DROWNING POOL

INTRODUCING JASON "GONG" JONES

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**EVENTS CALENDAR
AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...**





THE FUTURE OF DROWNING POOL WITH STEVIE BENTON

By: Stace Jareti

Outspoken, Friendly, and instantly likeable, Drowning Pool bassist Stevie Benton kicks back and chats with VEM. With the utmost respect and the desire to not open old wounds, I asked Stevie if there was anything that he preferred not to discuss.

Stevie's Answer: "Bring it on!"

The bass player is the coolest guy in the band. Everyone knows that!

If they don't I'm sure you'll tell them.

Why, of course! We are also the most modest.

Absolutely... I could have told you that being of the "bass player persuasion" myself.

You are? See, I knew you were cool.

Ok, so, who is your absolute favorite bass player of all time?

Of all time? Paul McCartney. Now, if you want to go to the technical side of playing, I was a big Iron Maiden fan. I would have to say Steve Harris. He's really high up on my list.

Robert Trujillo!

Oh man, that's what I was just going to say. As far as bass players right now... Oh, God!

He's sick, isn't he?

*He's amazing! He's a f**king animal out there! He scares the hell out of me!*

You've listened to all of the Infectious Grooves stuff haven't

you?

Oh, hell yeah! That's crazy stuff. That dude can play anything.

It's no secret that you are a huge fan of 80's metal...

Oh man, those eighties hair bands. I was in the 7th grade, and I remember when a friend of mine brought a cassette tape of Motley Crue's Shout At The Devil to school. Up until that time, my entire life, all I had ever listened to were the Beatles. If there was music playing in our house, it was the friggin' Beatles. So, as far as I was concerned, that's all there was! So, then this kid shows up and plays me "Shout At The Devil." I was like, "What the hell?!" It probably helped that they had a Beatles cover, "Helter Skelter"; because, it

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was a song that I instantly recognized. I fell in love with them pretty quick.

Having the album was so taboo because of the pentagram...

*Oh yeah and all of the warnings! **This music may contain backwards messages***

Man, I was on fire! Because of that snippit inside Shout At The Devil, Dave had the idea to put something backwards on our album.

On "Sermon"?

Yeah, because of the Motley Crue "thing"

What was Dave saying backwards on "Sermon"?

He says, "Tell me what you believe." There wasn't any Satan stuff. That would have been funny! We would have been down for doing it! We had already finished recording when we had the idea to do the backwards message. James, the engineer, took something that we had down already on tape, flipped it around, played it backwards, and stuck it on there.

"Are you ready for the joke – Are you ready for the great deception." What do those lyrics from "Sermon" mean to you?

*That is about the evangelists on TV. We would spend a lot of time, Dave and I, watching those shows especially that Robert Tilton guy. He'll be preaching, and then, all of a sudden, he'll start talking in tongues and all of that crazy sh*t. We would watch that guy and just laugh. "Sermon" is one of our favorite songs. We won't play that again. That song was Dave's baby. I won't be able to play that song with anyone else. I know that people really*

like that song. We'll play "Bodies", but "Sermon", man, I couldn't do it.

How long was it before you could rehearse again after Dave passed?

*We started going back into the rehearsal room 4-6 months after, but even when we started back, it just didn't feel right. We go up to the rehearsal room, play a couple of songs, and just say, "F*ck this." It took a long time to go up there and start vibing again.*

Did your label (Wind-up Records) have any involvement with the decision to start back to work again?

*No, they have always said, "Take your time. We'll be here when you're ready." There was no pressure from them to get back to work. If there had been, it probably would have taken us even longer. You know how you are when someone is pressuring you to do something and on your ass about it. The way I am I would have said, "F**k this... I'll go back when I am damn well ready." They were very supportive. They were happy to hear that we were back at it. There was never any of that, "Hurry up, and get your shit together."*

I am sure that approach, on their side, made you feel even more loyal to them and feel more inspired to get back to it.

They were great through the entire thing. They didn't make us feel, in addition to mourning the loss of Dave, worried about our own futures. We didn't have to worry about having a career and providing for our own families. They always made us aware of the fact that we would have a future and tour again and make records again.

That had to be so difficult to open your heart and mind to a new band member...

Even to start the whole audition process was a huge step. Just having someone new come into our rehearsal studio, not even as the singer, just someone auditioning was a tough thing to do. Even though most of them were pretty good, they really didn't have a chance. We weren't in the state of mind to say, no matter how good they were, "Hey! You're the Guy!" Those first few guys came in wearing a target. They didn't even walk in the door and we were saying, "Man, we don't like that guy. The vibe's not right." Of course it wasn't going to be right! We weren't over the loss of Dave, yet. There is this one guy that I am thinking of in particular. He was a really good singer. He just happened to be one of the very first guys we brought in. He was discriminated on a bit I am afraid. We just weren't ready.

Was the singer who came in to audition people that you already knew; because, the auditions were obviously kept on the "down low."

Our manager had put "feelers" out and had been taking demos for a while. So, after we got back into the rehearsal room, we started taking demos from him.

Did you even know that he was taking demos, or was he doing it and not telling you?

You know? I don't know when he started taking them.

I am sure that wouldn't be something that he would flaunt in front

SEE STEVIE PG24

of your face especially since the circumstances behind it were so painful...

He probably took tapes from people he already had some kind of relationship with. I don't know if he put out the big "word."

How did you end up finding Jason?

*He came to us through a mutual friend, Sonny Mayo. Do you know Sonny? He played with Snot, Amen, then Hed (PE). Him and "Gong" (Jason), at one point, tried to start a band together. After Sonny went and joined Hed(PE), he came to us and said, "I was doing a demo with this singer. You guys need to check him out." And he gave us the demo. What was funny about that was that a few months earlier Mike had come to L.A. to hang out, and someone had passed him on the same demo. At that time we weren't ready to audition any singers, yet. He came home with it and tossed it aside. It had been laying around our apartment for a few months. Then, we get the same tape from Sonny, and I was thinking, "This looks familiar." That's when I hunted around and paired the two up; because, it had been sitting around our house for so long, I had initially assumed that it sucked. It had been lying around. If it were good, we would have already contacted the guy, right? I wasn't even going to play it, but we had a friend over at the time that asked if he could hear some of the people who had been sending in stuff. I figured, "O.K. I'll play you a couple." I threw that demo in, and I was like, "Sh*t this is actually pretty damn good!" It started rolling from there. Mike and C.J. came in, listened to it. They were like, "Hey! That's pretty damn good." We then had our manager contact Jason. He flew in, and, once again, he sounded "pretty damn good." It wasn't like "Hey"...Bamm..."You're hired." He came down and jammed with us*

a couple of times. We said, "Hey why don't you move here, we'll rehearse, and try to write some songs." We wanted to see how that would develop. We're lucky. We all became really good friends and wrote some really good songs.

So did you "haze" him?

Oh, hell yeah! He's the new guy!

I didn't really think you would let him off easy. I read your journal on DrowningPool.com, and I know that you are hardcore.

I don't think that he even knows if he's in the band yet! We are always on him. "Dude, you better get your shit straight, or you're out of here man!" I love making fun of that guy! You're going to talk to him pretty soon. You'll see. He's an easy target.

Come on, lay off the new guy.

Oh, man! You're going to make it to easy on him.

So, I'm supposed to give him a hard time?

*Hell yeah! Make him work for it! Ask him, "How is this whole audition process going?" Here's something! He has this thing that he always says, "If you are doing some-Thing. You are getting your _____ On!" If he wants to go get something to eat; Listen to what he says, " I need to get my food on!" It drives me f**king crazy!*

So, you haven't thrown him out of the bus naked or anything?

Oh, I am sure that's coming. That stuff comes from being on tour so I guess we haven't had the opportunity to bust his chops too much... (Stevie's gets quiet and is contemplating everything that they haven't done) Man, you're making me feel like I am letting you down here. Shit! I need to really start making that guy's life hell. Hijinks from now on I promise. We'll talk a few months from now, and I'll have tons of material.

Have you finished recording the album yet or are you still in the studio?

We wrapped up the drum tracks today.

Have you named this album yet?

No, not yet. I guess that is something that we are going to have to do here pretty soon. We're kicking around some names.

What are some of the names that you have come up with so far? Can you tell me?

We've been kicking around Desensitized, Lowest Common Denominator; and...those would be the frontrunners up to this point. (One week after the interview the album was dubbed, Desensitized)

Is Jay Baumgardner the producer on this disc, too?

Johnny K is working with us. He's produced Disturbed, Soil, Finger 11...

When is the album slated to be released?

The release date is 4/20...

Nice of that date to fall on a Tuesday...

Have you had any tour opportunities come up yet?

We haven't even started with that yet. We are actually supposed to have a meeting next week.

What is the main focus of Drowning Pool when you hit the road?

We're going to start out by touring the small clubs where we started, and we're going to go back out there and win people over again.

DP info: www.drowningpool.com

***The Hazing Continues!
Check out VEM Exclusive with
Newly Revealed Drowning Pool
Frontman, Jason "Gong" Jones.***

JASON GONG JONES - DP'S NEW FRONTMAN GETS HIS "INTERVIEW ON"

A *Volume Entertainment Magazine Exclusive* with "Just Revealed" Drowning Pool frontman Jason "Gong" Jones.

-Stace Jareti

DROWNING POOL have officially recruited ex-**BUILT XL** singer Jason "Gong" Jones to fill the frontman position left vacant by the untimely death of vocalist **Dave Williams**.

A "native" of Los Angeles by way of South Carolina, **Jones**, has snagged the **Drowning Pool** gig and is now recording **Desensitized** whose release date has been slated for 4/20. **Desensitized**, **Drowning Pool's** sophomore release, has a huge line to tow in order to match the sales of their 2001 debut, **Sinner**, which has sold over a million copies in the U.S.

A relative unknown on the national scene, **Gong** had previously auditioned for the then-vacant singer slot in **SEPULTURA** during the Brazilian band's vocalist search in 1997 and was briefly a member of **CHOP SHOP**, the short-lived Los Angeles group led by ex-**MANHOLE** guitarist **Scott Ueda**. More recently, **Jones** was linked with the new project formed by ex-**FEAR FACTORY** guitarist **Dino Cazares** (with whom he recorded a three-song demo) and was believed to be involved with **FIVE-O-CLOCK**, the new group featuring former **AMEN** guitarist **Sonny Mayo**, ex-**WHITE ZOMBIE** drummer **Ivan De Prume**, and bassist **Stevo Bruno**.

How did *Volume Entertainment Magazine* snag this exclusive interview? *Sshhh... We'll never tell.* Thrilled for the opportunity to have the first shot at this rising star we went right to it.

Is this your first magazine interview? Tell me the truth...

It is totally. Be gentle...

So how is the Drowning Pool audition process going for you?

Auditions? They're over. I'm in the band.

That's not what Stevie said!

What! That mutha...

Sorry Jason. Stevie told me to bust your chops a little.

Oh... Nice. Pick on the new guy. The hazing continues.

Stevie said they didn't really "haze" you, yet...

Not really bad... I'm the "New" guy so "Up Mine."

So are you saying that they are getting their "Haze On"?

(Laughs) You could say they're getting their "Haze On" here and there...

How did you get the nickname "Gong"?

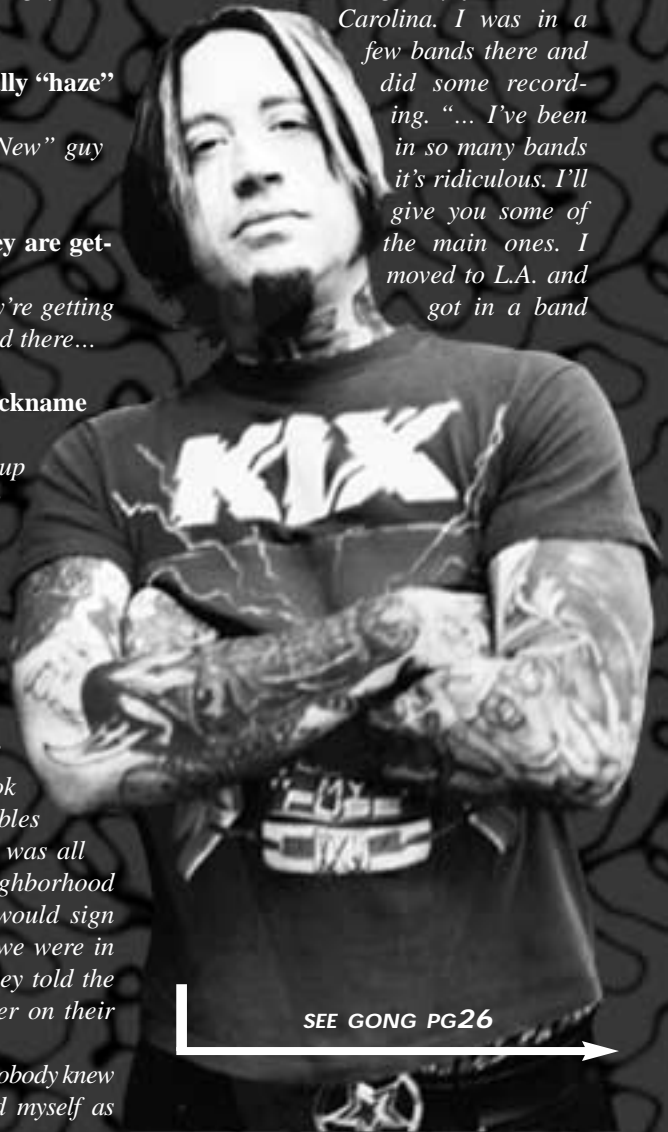
I was staying with a family up in Stockton and there was like 11 of them and all of their names were, Chi "Something" Chang, Like, Chi Ming Chang, Chi Sing Chang... on and on. Practically part of the family they decided to give me a "Chi" name. There was a book lying on one of the tables titled, "Chi Gong." That was all she wrote... In their neighborhood was a store where you would sign for things on credit. So we were in there buying beer and they told the grocer I was their brother on their mother's side.

This went on for so long that nobody knew who I was if I introduced myself as

Jason. Now if I said Jason Gong... Oh yeah! Hey man... What's up?

Tell us a little about your music career prior to hooking up with Drowning Pool... This was probably the most intense interview to try to prepare for because your identity was kept so secret that I had no background information on you.

I am originally from South Carolina. I was in a few bands there and did some recording. "... I've been in so many bands it's ridiculous. I'll give you some of the main ones. I moved to L.A. and got in a band



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called *The Mad Sons*. I was in a band *Chop Shop* with Scott Ueda from the band *Manhole*.

How did you get your demo tape to the “powers that be” to even begin the whole audition process?

John Corabi (formerly of Motley Crue) knew the guys and he actually hooked me up first. He gave me Howard’s phone number, one of the guys from the live shows. I talked to him and mailed the tape in. I was also in a band with Sonny Mayo and he hooked it up and put in a good word for me. It was cool because I had good references I guess. Then one day I was at work, I used to do tattoos for a living, I got a call and they told me that they wanted me to come down.

What kind of audition process did they put you through?

I know this sounds weird but I wasn’t even nervous. I knew that I had the songs down and from what everyone had told me I knew that the guys were cool. I walked in and they were just all so cool to me that it wasn’t nerve-racking at all.

That’s good because that could have been a really awkward situation

to walk into...

Plus, I had a dream that I got the gig even before I left to go to Texas.

I’m sure that helped ease the nerves some...

It was strange because I got there and it just seemed to all fit.

How was the first audition? Did it last for hours and did they rake you over the coals as far as the material was concerned? Or, was it more of a hang out and vibe type of thing to make sure they liked you personally?

We were there for 3 to 4 hours. We played some of the old stuff and then we went out. I guess they figured, “He can sing now let’s see if he’s a jackass or not.” Once they decided that I was a jackass they were all cool. I guess they figured if I was a jackass I would fit in.

Ok! What’s your drink of choice?

Jager!

That’s why you’re hired Jason, Damn!

Yeah, Pretty Much... They damn near killed me the first night. They took me to some stripclub.

No Way!?! Those guys? Get Out!

Yeah, Imagine That! (Laughing) We

were out in Dallas and they just proceeded to pour Jagermeister down my throat...

So the next day you felt like...?

Oh Man, Hungover... and they had the manager coming down to rehearsal and he hadn’t seen me yet. We were out the night before until I don’t know when. We had gotten rowdy, knocked over a couple of tables, broke a bunch of bottles, got thrown out the club, but we went in and played. We got two songs in and Mike stopped us and said, “How are you doing that?” I said, “Doing what?” Mike says, “You sound better than you did yesterday!” Hell, I didn’t really know I guess the Jager made my voice sound better.

It’s going to be such a huge year for you and Drowning Pool. What are you looking forward to most?

*Finishing the record and touring. I want to get my “Tour On” and get *Naked, Drunk, and Debaucherous*.*

Check out Jason “Gong” Jones belt it out for Drowning Pool on their new single “Step Up” featured on *PUNISHER: THE ALBUM* - in stores March 23, 2004. Listen to “Step Up” MP3 style and get up to the minute Drowning Pool info:

www.drowningpool.com

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