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Atom Willard Interview For Offspringnation.com

By David Becker

D: How does it feel to be part of a punk/rock phenomenon such as The Offspring, which has spanned two decades and counting?

Atom: It's killer. People are so excited to see the band, and that's fun to be a part of.

D: Do you feel that you have big shoes to fill with the departure of Ron Welty?

Atom: There's definitely a responsibility that goes along with the drum spot for this band, to keep songs (in the set) moving and to have fun. I think I'm getting by.

D: What bands have you been part of in the past?

Atom: Most recently The Special Goodness with Pat from Weezer. Also Moth, Melissa Auf Der Maur, The Alkaline trio, and Rocket From The Crypt was where I grew up for 10 years.

D: After seeing your performance at the Opera House in Toronto, it is very apparent that you are a very accomplished drummer. Do you play any other instruments?

Atom: Not so much.

D: What makes up your musical gear?

Atom: Mostly drums...a few cymbals....

HA!

I play Orange County Drum And Percussion drums and Zildjian Cymbals

D: Many musicians are self-taught, and have a natural "ear." Is this the case with you, or did you study music while growing up?

Atom: I got my first drum set when I was 4 so there were a few attempts at formal lessons but nothing lasted more than a couple of weeks.

D: How did you acquire the opportunity to join The Offspring, and have you known them for a long period of time?

Atom: I was recommended by Josh Freese and a few other people the guys knew, which was lucky because I didn't know them at all before that.

D: As you a resident of sunny California, how do you feel about traveling around the world – sometimes to colder climates such as Canada?

Atom: It's great. It makes you really appreciate yr home.

D: What other bands or musicians do you listen to? Anything of late that you are particularly into?

Atom: I listen to all sorts of music! I like the new Black Eyed Peas record. The newest and oldest Queens of the stone age records. Loudermilk from Washington state is great.

D: I'm really jealous of your black-rimmed shades! Where did you get them? Would this be a throwback to Buddy Holly's influence?

Atom: This awesome store in Pasadena, CA called Old Focals. They have all the good shit.

D: Do you surf/skateboard/snowboard?

Atom: I skated a lot through high school, but now I just snowboard.

D: While in Toronto, Noodles expressed his love for American beers, particularly Budweiser. Do you have a favorite brew?

Atom: GUINNESS

D: Dexter has recently spoken regarding the new album Splinter, expressing that the album "splinters off into different musical directions." How has this been accomplished? Do you have a favorite single from Splinter?

Atom: I think that the songs on this record are all great. They have a wide variety of sounds along with tons of energy. I like Head around you quite a bit.

D: Many fans are curious to know if Atom is your birth-name, or a nickname that you particularly like?

Atom: I've been Atom for about 14 years.

D: What is your favorite song to play live?

Atom: Da Hui and/or Head Around You.

D: I understand that The Offspring have recorded seven albums. Did you find it difficult learning all the songs in such a short time before touring with the band?

Atom: Luckily Greg K and Dexter gave me an abbreviated list of songs to learn...whew!

D: What are your outside hobbies and interests? Do you have time to pursue them with such a demanding schedule?

Atom: Mostly hot rods and mountain biking. The bike thing I can do on the road, but it's harder to bring your garage in the bus.

D: How do you feel about fans downloading/sharing music? Do you believe that this helps to promote artists?

Atom: You know it's a sticky thing. People get so worked up about it. I think it's neat to be able to hear music you are curious about.

Once a group of songs is available to buy, like a bands new record, and people want to know what the rest of the record is like (besides what they hear on the radio), it can be a cool tool for those people. I'd like to think that if your record is good enough ,people are going to buy it no matter what.

D: How difficult is it for you as a celebrity to go out and do ordinary/everyday things? Are you mobbed, or do fans respect your privacy.

Atom: It's not really like that at all for me. I rarely get recognized on the street, a little more often at rock shows, but it's not the norm.

D: What role do you think that fan sites play in promoting the popularity of The Offspring?

Atom: Kids that want to find out about anything these days go to the internet. If there's a gang of sites for The Offspring, they will have all these avenues, these opportunities to check out the band with. I say the more the merrier. Just get yr facts right!

D: Thank you once again for the opportunity to get to know you better. I hope you guys come back to Toronto soon. All the best with your touring schedule.

Atom: Right on. Thanks