

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

ASKING ALEXANDRIA

New Singer, Album & Attitude

QUARTERLY PRINT EDITION ISSUE #10

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CAN-DO-MUSOS

If you ask someone to close their eyes and describe a "Rockstar", very few would say someone with no arms, no legs, or mention someone with other disabilities. But there is a world of musicians who are different abled than the rest of us. They, like everyone else have a passion for music, but above and beyond the common issues they have to overcome to become musicians is also the task of doing gigs with their disabilities. There is an amazing, global organization out there that has been formed by musicians with disabilities to assist other handi-capable musicians. Meet Can-Do-Musos and their Board of Directors: Dom Famularo, Andrew Hewitt, David Segal, Mike Mignogna and Joe Hardy. Here is the back story of Can-Do-Musos and some of the exceptional people involved.

"Founded in March 2013 Can-Do-Musos was established to promote and support musicians with disabilities from all over the world. A Can-Do Muso is a musician with challenges who is very passionate about their music. We use the word "challenges" with Can-Do-Musos because, quite often disability gets mis-interpreted as inability. People with challenges can overcome them and be empowered and successful. Can-Do-Musos was established to promote and support musicians who face "challenges" in their lives from all over the world." Over the past 2 years I have met some of the Muso's first hand and I can tell you the talent and passion they possess blows away many fully able bodied musicians I have seen on stage.

Instead of me telling you what I think of who they are, let them speak for themselves. Here are some quotes from a panel that I was able to see live at NAMM 2016. The Can-Do-Musos panel was in my opinion the best event at the NAMM show, for the second year in a row. I got to hear the musicians both speak and play. I was touched, inspired, and rocked.

Dom Famularo:

Speaking about drummer Andrew Hewitt... "His drive to want to play drums, and to want to play music was awe-inspiring."

About the musicians involved in Can-Do-Musos... "Disabled sounds like they are not able, and you know what? They are, at the highest level."

About the inspiration behind Can-Do-Musos... "That's when we started Can-Do-Musos. What impressed me so much was their Can Do attitude. Whatever came down, they said, "I can do it."

Regarding the cost of being involved..."It is zero cost for anyone with a challenge to be involved."

The inspiration and goal..."To me, it's all about playing music. And when you have a challenge and overcome it, that's inspiration at it's highest...The goal is to someday have a thousand musicians from 50 different countries."

Andrew Hewitt:

"When I first started playing drums there was no Google, or Youtube. There was no way of contacting other musicians. You had to figure it out for yourself, and as a ten year old it was pretty difficult.... We want to get rid of the word disability within the music scene. We want people to take notice of musicians with a challenge."

Regarding the current membership... "We have 220 musicians from 20 different countries.... They all share the same story. They're driven to be involved in music."

David Segal:

"It's bigger than me, or anyone else, and it's become this whole big thing of helping each other.... I had to have 20+ surgeries to even be able to walk, and even then they weren't sure. So after that, I said, "I want to be a drummer!"

Joe Hardy, drummer, born without legs:

"It's always been my dream to help other musicians with disabilities to achieve their goals."

Mark Goffeney:

"I was also born with a disability... one of having a really humongous nose, and also I was born with no arms... I didn't want to be inspirational. I didn't want to be someone who you said to, "Wow! You can play with your feet." I just wanted to rock. That was the way to meet girls, that was the way to be cool. And I loved the music... Music has to find a way to come out of you. It's not your privilege, it's your responsibility."

Brandon Mendenhall:

"I started playing guitar when I was 15, and my hand was partially paralyzed. When one finger moved, they all moved."

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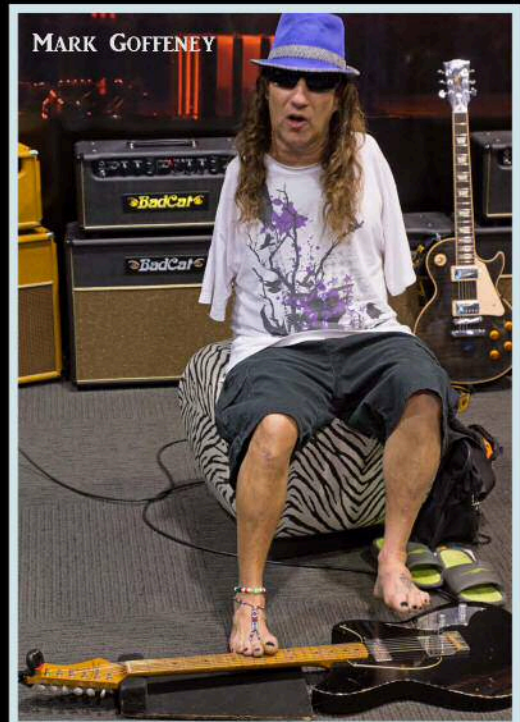


Brandon Mendenhall... "Nothing in life is impossible. You can do and be whatever you want to be, you just have to put your mind to it. Mind over matter."

Rusty Bryce, drummer:

"Ten years went by, and I was pretty much done playing the drum set. I was ready to pack it up and just say, "Welp, that was a time in my past I guess." Certain things led to other things, and it just made me say, "There's got to be one more way."

These are the people of Can-Do Musos. They have spent their lives following their musical passions... they just happen to have a different road than the rest of us. Many of them will tell you they do music because music heals them in some way. The Can-Do-Musos community is growing so be sure to stop by the page and see where and how you can be involved. I promise you, whether you know it or not, there is a Can-Do Muso in your community.



MEMBERS OF THE CAN-DO-MUSOS PANEL 2016 GET READY TO BEGIN...



CAN-DO-MUSOS

ANDREW AND WIFE JENNI HEWITT AT NAMM 2016



ANDREW HEWITT

Rockwell: Hey it's Rockwell Anderson here at NAMM 2016 with Andrew Hewitt from Can-Do-Musos. Tell us about Can-Do-Musos Andrew.

Andrew: Can-Do-Musos is about showcasing musicians with disabilities living all over the world. We're trying to take the word disability out of music, because everybody has their own purpose for playing music. We have 220 musicians from 24 countries on our website at the moment, and we also run Can-Do-Musos TV.

Rockwell: Andrew is the guy to contact for anything Can-Do-Musos. Everything kind of filters through you, doesn't it?

Andrew: Yeah.

Rockwell: This is a brand new organization that needs your support, and is well deserving of your support. So make sure you check it out.

Andrew: Check out www.candomusos.com.

Rockwell: Make sure you check out the radio show, and Can-Do-Musos TV, and get a hold of Andrew. He's over in Australia, so the time of day might be weird for you, but he's always available.

JOE HARDY

Rockwell: Hey it's Rockwell Anderson here at NAMM 2016 with Joe Hardy. Joe, you're the one that introduced us to Can-Do-Musos. Tell me, from your perspective, what it's all about.

Joe: This whole organization was started as a grassroots program to help disabled musicians be able to express themselves, and be able to share their music and their artistry. We just wanted to show the world that even though they're disabled and have challenges, they can still play music. That's why we started the Can-Do-Musos organization.

Rockwell: Tell people about your drum setup; how you deal with your disability.

Joe: I was born with no legs. I always wanted to play drums, but obviously there's the issue of playing the bass drum. So I designed a pedal that uses a double-bass drive shaft from a double-bass pedal, and I hooked it to the footboard of my pedal, I connected it to what existing leg I have left, and so now I have a pedal that I can use. That's how I play the bass drum, and then I took it a step further and designed a wheelchair with an electronic drumkit attached to it that I can play and roll around on.

Rockwell: Joe, where can people find you on social media? What bands are you in?

Joe: I'm actually in a band called Unit 287. We have a website, it's www.unit287.com. We're an Orange County (California) alternative punk band, so come check it out.



UNIT 287



THE MENDENHALL EXPERIMENT INTERVIEW

Rockwell: Hey it's Rockwell Anderson with ROCKwell UnScene Magazine and Radio and we are outback in the alley of Mission Tobacco Lounge in Riverside, CA. I'm here with?

Mario: The Mendenhall Experiment. I'm Mario, I sing.

Brandon: Brandon, I play guitar.

Nate: I'm Nate, I play the bass.

Mike: I'm Mike and I play lead guitar and backing vocals.

Bruce: I'm Bruce, and I play drums.

Rockwell: There's something about you guys that makes you stand out from other bands. I want to talk about NAMM 2016, and you guys being part of the Can-Do-Musos panel. Why were you a part of that?

Brandon: At NAMM 2016 we were a part of the Can-Do-Musos panel for empowerment for disabled musicians, and we were joined by Australian drummer Andrew Hewitt, Rusty Bryce, Dean Zimmer, etc.

Nate: It was our first time ever being on the panel, and it was really cool meeting all these other disabled musicians and seeing what they do and their background.

Brandon: A cool story about what happened at the panel... we've been filming a documentary film about my life for the past two and a half years, called "Mind Over Matter", and the inspiration behind that film came from Dean Zimmer's video called "Drummer Wanted". It was a short film about Dean's affliction and everything that he goes through just to be able to get up on stage and perform and be a real gigging drummer. That kind of inspired me to make a movie about my life. We were on the panel, in the process of it, and I realized I was sitting right next to the guy that inspired us to do a film about my life. It was a really cool full circle moment. And then Dean played something on the drumkit, and he just took over. If anybody says these guys aren't capable of playing, they don't have eyes and they don't have ears.

Rockwell: Can you tell people what you're overcoming?

Brandon: I was born with Cerebral Palsy, and what that is, is a neuromuscular disorder. In my case it affects my left side prominently, so my left side is weaker than my right side. Obviously affects my speech, it affects the way I walk, and most of my motor function on my left side. It left my left hand almost completely paralyzed. Everybody in my life growing up said to me that playing an instrument would be an impossibility. I'm the type of guy that doesn't like to take no for an answer from anybody. So I said, "To hell with that." I followed my dream and my passion, and once I got going and got playing an instrument, I wanted to be in a band; I wanted to be a Rock Star. I wanted to use that power to help other people, and that is what The Mendenhall Experiment became. It is my literal experiment to see if a kid with Cerebral Palsy can write songs, start a band, and then elevate that band to a national level of success. And I think over the past two and a half years we've proven that pretty well.

Rockwell: What kind of struggles do you have (Nate)?

Nate: I was born with hearing disabilities. I hear 12% in one ear, and 8% in the other, unassisted. My parents didn't find out about it until I was about three years old, so for three years they just thought I was strange and weird. By then it was too late for me. They called me stoneface and stuff like that, you know.



PICS BY ROCKWELL UNSCENE



THE MENDENHALL EXPERIMENT CONTINUED...



Rockwell: And what do you play in the band again?

Nate: I play the bass, and it works out that way. Hearing the way I do, I hear low tones especially well compared to all the other tones. I started playing guitar when I was twelve, and I could never do it right because I could never hear what I was playing. So when I turned 21 my dad got me a bass, and the second I started playing it, it was destiny. That was in 2001. I've been playing off and on with different bands until this band.

Rockwell: That means you're going to be thirty-six. You're getting to be an old bastard. I'm much older, but Mario tell us about singing with these guys.

Mario: There's a lot of energy. They're very alive up there.

Mike: To add to that, I think the energy really comes from Mario, and then we just give it back. Being a leader, the way he is, I think that's where most of the energy comes from

Rockwell: It takes a good frontman.

PICS BY **ROCKWELL UNSCENE**

Brandon: I've always referred to Mario as the band amplifier. He intensifies and amplifies everything on stage. If we're going 75%, he pushes it to 150% every night, and that's what I love about playing with him. I say it every time, my favorite singer is the one in my band.

Bruce: I think we would just be standing there playing our instruments and Mario would be doing his thing, and people would still love it.

Rockwell: You guys have a show to play, so all we'll wrap this up shortly, but first, tell us where people can find you on social media.

Mike: Instagram is @TMXOfficial as well as Twitter..

Bruce: We're on Youtube as @TMXvevo.

Mike: And then Facebook is just Facebook.com/TheMendenhallExperiment, and then also you can find all over those links on our website, at www.themendenhallexperiment.com.

Rockwell: Are you guys linked to Can-Do-Musos at all? Do they have you on their site?



Brandon: Yes, there's a Mendenhall Experiment page on Can-Do-Musos as well. We're soon to have a page on MonsterEnergy.com.

Rockwell: Tell us about that real quick.

Brandon: I started this band eight years ago, and because we're a band based on raising disability awareness, I didn't want to go the route of supporting an alcohol company. So I went after energy drinks companies. It's more towards our demographic. Eight years ago I started chasing Monster. It took eight years to not only find this golden line-up, but to find a contract with Monster, but now we have a full ride with Monster Energy. We couldn't be more happy about it.

Mario: If I could add on to that, I feel so blessed with these guys. It's all about keeping that energy, doing something with your life that you can only do because you're an individual. You have to find something that's you, even if that's flipping off of roofs. Whatever it is that makes you feel alive. I feel blessed to be born into this place with these people, so the least you could do is find something to feel happy about.

