

Parabstruse Interview

Editor's note: This interview was originally published on Sadness By Name back in January of 2010 as "Interview with Garry Brents of Parabstruse". Garry Brents has been a close collaborator for many years and it was an absolute delight doing this interview with him three and a half years ago. Perhaps we will do a follow up to this interview in the future!

-Hey Garry. Will you quickly introduce yourself, and mention your musical background to begin with? The bands you've been in, including collaborations.

Hello, first of all I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be interviewed. My musical background started when I was at the age of 7. I started playing piano for a few years. I didn't enjoy it at first, but I grew to like it. I'd always try to make up something instead of learn how to play other songs. A few years later, I learned how to play the trumpet but only played for 2 years. I wish I still knew how to play. When I got into High School is the time I started thinking about writing my own music. I took bass guitar lessons for 2 years, but continued to teach myself and learn more on my own. So I've been playing that instrument the longest for about 9 years now. I self-taught myself guitar based on some of the knowledge from bass lessons and just feeling it out, maybe 6 years ago. The list of bands that I've been in (serious or not) are the following in chronological order: Ghastrah Proxiima, Garrsinn, From a Residence of Stars & Gnosis (changed to smoosz in '08), Lunarian Sea, Darkphone, Semen Across Lips, Synthetic Onslaught, Sugar Highlands, Parabstruse, Cara Neir, They Mostly Come Out At Night, bunrage, Writhe.

-So Parabstruse originally started out from an idea you had with Semen Across Lips? This project was around from

2004-2007. What can you tell us about the early states of the band? How did you take the music you made with S.A.L. back then?

That's correct. The early stages of S.A.L. wasn't based on anything with serious intent. I honestly just wanted to have fun, whether it was silly or not and to just go with it. People began to think it was serious, because I denied that it was a joke, but that was the point of it all. It was just to poke fun, the music and idea. I obviously grew out of it over the years.

-The first time i heard the band name I almost refused to think there was any connection with Parabstruse lol. Where was the name inspired from?

At the time, I was trying to come up with an album name that was just one word. I have always liked using combined words or meanings, and I came up with Parabstruse. Abstruse is already a combination of abstract and obtuse and para is a prefix.

-The first demo, "Leporidae Libra", was self-released (as most of your releases ended up being in the future). How many copies were made of this? Was this just for friends/promo or was it pushed as an actual release at the time?

I believe there were 100 copies released. A label by the name of Wolves Fight Good pressed these back then. I never really saw it as a serious release from the beginning.

-What was the music to you back then? The music itself is rather technical and shows how an incredible musician you are, but it has the experimental/funny twist to it, that leads a first time listener to wonder if this was a serious project or not.

The music was about experimenting, whether the results were silly or not. It was not a serious project, even if it were

portrayed as one in ironic fashion. Prior to S.A.L., my From a Residence of Stars & Gnosis was a project that I had serious intent with – writing music that was very similar to what Parabstruse had become, but obviously more primitive due to inferior equipment at the time. So I was going back and forth between the two projects – one serious and one not so serious.

-The next release was a split with Psychiatric Regurgitation. Even at the time SAL was pretty death metal oriented. This would explain the choice in the grindcore band. How did you come to work with them?

One of their members is/was an active member in several metal bands in this area and I had always wanted to release something with one of his bands.

-You guys self-released this split CD. How many copies were made?

I don't remember exactly, maybe 50-100.

-You then hooked up with Bastard Son Productions out of Ohio. How did this happen? They released your full length, entitled "Parabstruse". Is this still in print?

They were supposed to release it physically, but due to financial issues it never came to fruition. So it was never pressed.

-There were also a split with Xrin Arms, and a compilation "Dumped Down the Toilet". What can you tell us of those lesser known releases?

The split with Xrin Arms was something he and I had planned for awhile, but I don't think any copies were made, at least none that I know of. The compilation was something I had been a part of several months after S.A.L.'s first demo was released.

-How did the band name change occur here? What does the name Parabstruse mean?

I lost interest in trying to portray that S.A.L. was serious and lost interest in the idea/image/music as a package. So I started as Parabstruse, wanting to start something new. It roughly means "beyond unfathomable".

-You then had two demos released under the new name, still in 2007, marking a total of four releases that year. Were those two demos composed under Parabstruse, or were they just composed period, and ended up being released after the name change?

Yes, they were composed completely under the idea and name of Parabstruse at the time.

-The demo is in a form of post-metal. What were your influences at the time?

At the time, the following would sum up my influences well: Ulver (but they always were and are still a primary influence), Agalloch, Drudkh, Yndi Halda, Mono, Explosions in the Sky, Do Make Say Think, and Red Sparowes.

-By the release of the second demo, "And I, the Cape of..." you had acquired a strong post-rock sound in the music that had evolved to black metal. What were the influences within this change?

The influences were the same, but I just felt like involving more of that post-rock style into my sound. I felt that not a lot of 'one-man' projects were involved with that at the time. So it was a combination of trying new things and evolving my music.

-In February 2008, your best known work was released. "Old Sentimental" is considered by many a masterpiece, and is solely a post-rock/ambient album, with very little connections

left of the metal movement (except maybe the guitar sound at certain points). The artwork was created by Ham, who did a marvelous job, and you self-financed to produce CDs. Lets elaborate about this album and this period in the bands history. I'll let you ramble on...

This was a time when I was going to a recording school to learn more about production/audio engineering. I recorded all of this music prior to finishing my time at school, so I sometimes regret in not waiting to finish the album after I had more experience and the knowledge that I had after graduating. I would have made it much better, but I guess every artist says that about their own work, especially their first album. I was and still am proud that I was able to self-finance/produce and sell the album myself and make a profit. I put the money right back into what I was doing by buying more equipment that would help me later on in my endeavors. So "Old Sentimental" was a nice start to my musical journey, if you will.

-You didn't waste much time after that because by September of that year you had also released an ep, "Back and Forth", which once again had a limited CD pressed by you. Who designed the artwork for this?

My friend Kortis Kerst (photographer) took the pictures and I had arranged the design of the booklet and layout on my computer.

-Both of those CDs are now sold out? So you left them for free download all over the net, which got you even more fans. How would you describe your "digital fan feedback" concerning Parabstruse?

Certainly. I felt that giving the music for free was the best option at the time. I still think giving music for free is truly invaluable, bringing in more than twice the listeners a band would have if the only option was selling

physical copies. I like the best of both worlds. The fan feedback was rapidly growing after releasing my music for free and positive for the most part.

-In January of 2009 you recorded a new exclusive song, "Turning Back", for a compilation, "Diluvian Temperals". This was also your first record label collaboration (even though the compilation only came out in August, a month after your final ep). Why did you chose to work with Abridged Pause Recordings, and how did this come about?

This was a song that I had solely worked on for this compilation. It was something that was different for Parabstruse at the time. The title says it all. It was a bit of a homage to my older project, From A Residence of Stars & Gnosis, but executing the songwriting and production with more current knowledge and equipment. I felt this compilation and label was the perfect situation for releasing this song.

-Being that it came out in August 2009, it was actually the last released work of yours. Was this the only compilation appearance you had? Were any of your songs featured on other compilations, even if not exclusives?

I believe this was the only compilation for Parabstruse and very fitting as the last released song.

-Your final ep, "An Unconventional Future" was digitally released on Dedicated Records in July 2009. Your ep is somewhat of a concept album, being "dedicated to sleeping" and also to "help a friend". What exactly was the story behind that? Did the label have this idea or was this coming from you?

It was the label's idea and concept, so I put the music to it. It sort of followed the writing after "Turning Back", so I had the same mindset in creating almost purely ambient pieces; something that I hope helped Brad's (label owner)

friend in relaxing and sleeping. I won't go into detail about the disorder, but she had a rare disease where she had trouble sleeping.

-The final Parabstruse output was indeed the Diluvian Temperals compilation song, which was released only six days after you officially announced the ending of Parabstruse. In a single word question, Why?

It's sort of a similar situation with the decision to end S.A.L. I felt that I did everything I could under Parabstruse. I wanted to have a fresh start in my music and ending Parabstruse to begin a new project was the next step.

-The last news of Parabstruse were that you were looking for female vocalists to add an element to a new album you were working on. Have you had guests on your past releases, either from S.A.L. or Parabstruse? what did each do?

My friend Michael played the Violin intro to the beginning track on S.A.L.'s Parabstruse album. Another song on that album featured a vocal spot by a friend who shared projects with me before (Ghastrah Proxiima and Lunarian Sea). There is also one song on the Parabstruse Myspace that featured drums and piano by my friend Jose. I basically just played guitar over it. It was the second song under the name of Parabstruse.

-What happened to the material you were working on towards the end? Has that been reused into one of your new projects? Any demos of it exist with any female vocalists?

All of that material is being used; there is a finished version of one of the songs already and more to be finished in the near future.

-Was there much more material recorded than what was released? Do you plan a compilation of this material, or a general Parabstruse compilation in the future?

Not much more, maybe 3-4 songs. I probably won't release a compilation in the future.

-It has been mentioned from people talking with you that it was sort of a relief for you to end that project. Was that in a manner that it was starting to become too serious? Or that it was becoming too big for the little time you dedicated to it with all the other bands you were doing at the same time? How do you feel now, half a year later?

All those questions are pretty much the answers themselves. Although it wasn't becoming too serious, I just didn't have the same feeling for the project and idea. I didn't see myself having fun anymore in the long run, for Parabstruse.

-What are your current and since musical plans?

Since then, I've been working on another solo project (using some of the songs I had started while still pursuing Parabstruse and writing new material already). I also have been involved with another project for a year and a half now: Cara Neir. I had a brief stint in another project called Writhe, but it came to a halt and we never finished mixing our first release, as the members left.

-Whats the word with Bunrage? This space is yours to introduce the band to all new readers of your output.

It is my current main project now. The idea is just to write songs without hesitation, without too much thinking in the process. Just having fun again, yet balancing it with the serious intent of having a following for it. Obviously the production part takes more thinking, but the songwriting process and the regard to the style of music is much more open and spontaneous. I don't want to put too much thought into describing the project. Feel free to check it out yourself, readers: <http://bunrage.bandcamp.com/>

-I wish you the best of luck with your projects, and thanks a

bunch for taking your time with this interview Garry!

My pleasure, and thank you once again for giving me the time and opportunity to have an in-depth interview about my music and past projects.