

Scott McDougall Interview



by Michael Erlewine

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INTRODUCTION

This is not intended to be a finely produced book, but rather a readable document for those who are interested in in this series on concert poster artists and graphic design. Some of these articles still need work.

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Interview with Scott McDougall

by Michael Erlewine

Michael Erlewine: When and how did you get interested in art in general, and posters in particular?

Scott McDougall: Like others, I was first influenced by Rick Griffin's Murphy and later by the Griffin/Stoner illustrations in Surfer. I first saw an FD- 26 flyer the week of the show up in Eureka, CA. I couldn't believe it. At that point I started collecting and decided I'd be an artist, for sure. I was 12 years old.

Michael Erlewine: What kind of art influenced you?

Scott McDougall: After paying close attention to the big five in 1967, I began to seek out THEIR influences which opened up the whole graphic world to me. It was great, because these guys had the taste of masters, which sent me in all directions and almost exclusively to the past.

Michael Erlewine: What concert- posters artists influenced you?

Scott McDougall: Rick Griffin, Victor Moscoso, Wes Wilson and Mouse & Kelley - all for different reasons. The pace in which these artists improved has always blown me away. They really opened the doors and set the pace, which is why they are so important.

Everyone that followed had the path laid out. I've also been taken by the bits (mostly concepts) I've seen by George Hunter. John Van Hammersveld, Lee Conklin and Bob Fried have also turned out some gems.

Michael Erlewine: What was your first concert-music poster (date, venue, bands)?

Scott McDougall: My first paying job was in late 1967 when I was 13 for a band my older brother was in at the time. I don't recall the venue, but the band was the Delta Rhythm Band, or something like that. It was in Eureka, CA.

Michael Erlewine: What are the main venues you have done posters for?

Scott McDougall: Since I don't often work for promoters, I have no main venues. I did the HORDE tour a few years back. Lots of big venues there. Mostly, the halls and theatres in the San Joaquin Valley, a few in So. CA and the rest in northern CA. Does EMP in Seattle count?

Michael Erlewine: What are the main bands you have done posters for?

Scott McDougall: Well, in the 70's I did posters for Cold Blood, Tim Rose, Norton Buffalo, Stoneground, Stuart Little Band, J.B. Hutto, Sons of Champlin, Canterbury Fair, Mimi Farina, Cheech and Chong, Black Ghost and a ton of unknown bands from California. In 1998 I did the HORDE tour, which had a bunch of acts, most notable might be Ben Harper, who incidentally got the job for me after seeing one of my book covers.

Michael Erlewine: Please describe the media and size/formats you have most used?

Scott McDougall: Almost exclusively hand-separated pen and ink. Old technology that is slow, but rich. I still do a couple of pieces this way each year.

I've done a few in air brush and a couple with pencil for the illustrations. I like to work at 1:1 ratio.

Michael Erlewine: What other poster artists have you collaborated with?

Scott McDougall: I did 3 years of collaboration with Tom (Tommy) Cook who is still doing graphics and sign painting in Kauai. Amazing artist! I've done one poster with Gary Houston (Voodoo Catbox) (another talented guy who can really crank 'em out!). I've also shared a few projects with Art Chantry, who most current poster artists have paid some, if not whole heaps of attention to.

Michael Erlewine: Who are your favorite current poster artists?

Scott McDougall: There's so much of it

- I appreciate some of what's currently out there, but I have to say most of it doesn't do much for me. Part of that is my distaste of computer generated art. Real craftspeople like Art Chantry, Gary Houston, Bob Masse, Alton Kelley, Stanley Mouse and all of those artists who are still drawing their art and type tend to be my favorites.

Michael Erlewine: What are your favorite bands?

Scott McDougall: Back then, most of the S.F. bands especially Quicksilver Messenger Service (although most of the bootlegs of their live stuff don't hold up so well) Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band and Frank Zappa/Mothers. Today, I like a lot of old stuff, mostly early blues, early Hawaiian, Asylum Street Spankers, Ben Harper, Bad Livers and some of the stuff my kids listen to like the White Stripes. The New Dutch Swing scene in

Amsterdam is turning out some amazing improvisational jazz.

Michael Erlewine: Your comments on artistic philosophy, world views, anything:

Scott McDougall: There is a ton of great work out there in almost every period of history and pre-history. There is also a lot of crap.

Michael Erlewine: Please list any poster shows of your work (dates and place):

Scott McDougall: Outside of Wes Wilson's poster shows, I've shown my airbrush work in a few group shows over the years. Being an illustrator doesn't lend itself to the gallery/exhibition scene too often.

In January of 1968, when I was 13, I went to my first full-on psychedelic rock concert. I'd been collecting posters for over a year then. The Grateful Dead and Quicksilver played at this little Hall in Eureka, CA which at that time Humboldt County was like light years from San Francisco. Humboldt surely wasn't known for the agriculture that followed in the later 1970's. The bands played on a 3' stage and Jerry Abrams' Headlights lightshow filled the place. Both bands played 2 sets of extended jams. At that moment I figured out that almost anything could be possible to pursue.