

Speech  
Introducing Guest Speaker  
Sam Dunn, Documentary Filmmaker

Anthropology and Heavy Metal.... one might struggle to find a connection between these two subjects. But an individual by the name of Sam Dunn, a metalhead, turned anthropology major, turned filmmaker, managed to not only connect the two subjects, but make a career out of it and a name for himself along the way.

Growing up in Victoria, British Columbia, a city he describes as the "land of the newlywed and the nearly dead", is the last place you may ever expect someone to find heavy metal. But he did, and entered a whole new world.

At the age of 19 he entered university, and since metal studies wasn't on the curriculum he decided to major in Anthropology. Anthropology is the study of human cultures, and though he got to study cultures vastly different from his own there was always one culture he has wanted to study above all others: heavy metal. This genre of music has millions of devoted followers around the world, yet it is consistently condemned by millions more. Determined to answer the question of why metal sparks such polar reactions among people, he set out on a journey that he documented along the way.

The documentary entitled *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, explored the roots of heavy metal dating back to the days of Black Sabbath and how the genre has expanded into a seemingly endless amount of sub-genres that eventually brought us to the metal that's being made today. But more importantly, at least for Sam Dunn, he explored the culture of heavy metal fans and anti-fans alike, and what exactly elicits the reactions from each of the clearly divided groups. What he discovered was metal is more than music, it's an identity.

His documentary was initially screened at select film festivals, in fact the first time I saw it was at Sudbury Cinefest in 2005, but after overwhelming praise across the metal communities it was eventually released worldwide on DVD. Following its release on DVD he was flooded with e-mails from metalheads across the world thanking him for giving this community the respect it deserves, but what he was not prepared for was how many different countries the e-mails came from. Many came from places that he had no idea metal even existed.

For years anthropologists have studied the effects of globalization, but the stories he received from fans brought him to consider heavy metal's role in this process. As metal has spread across the globe it has taken on different meanings for fans in countries with such different cultural, political and religious backgrounds.

Clearly, there's a whole world of metal out there that he has not discovered by studying it within North America and Europe. Taking his anthropology studies on the road once again to understand how metal has gone global he has filmed yet another documentary entitled Global Metal.

This documentary tracks his journey through Asia, South America and the Middle East as he explores the underbelly of the world's emerging extreme music scenes — from Indonesian death metal to Chinese black metal to Iranian thrash metal. Global Metal reveals a worldwide community of metalheads who aren't just absorbing metal from the West – they're transforming it. Creating a new form of cultural expression in societies dominated by conflict, corruption and mass-consumerism.

In addition to his film making endeavors he's also an active part of the Toronto metal scene as the bass player in an extreme metal band called Burn to Black, who performed in Sudbury this past May. And now, making his return to Sudbury to promote the upcoming release of Global Metal hitting stores tomorrow, please welcome Sam Dunn.