



Infected Mushroom – Converting Metalheads

Israel's psytrance treasures have relocated to L.A. and discovered dubstep!

By Jon Monsoon

ISRAELI PSYCHEDELIC TRANCE GOD-father Amit Duvdevani (Duvdev to his mates), is a man who speaks without punctuation. To hear him talk is to understand a small part of what allows him to create the type of fast-flow, trip-sonic psychedelic structures that have made his band Infected Mushroom (alongside partner Erez Eisen), undefeated psy-scene leaders since 1997.

"January is my favourite month because we get to take some time off," he tells me in an Israeli accent from L.A., where he now lives. "I spend most of this time with my family". In the background a door slams and Mrs Mushroom can be heard trying to calm a screaming child in what sounds like part-curse, part-Israeli lullaby. "But come February we are again on the road, going around the world for almost the whole year," he adds. The relief in his voice is tangible.

Part of that world tour will see them touching down in South Africa this month for two performances as part of the line-up on touring-hard rock event RAMFest. While it may seem odd that a psytrance act would share top billing with heavy metal heads at a festival known for its lack of lumo anything, Duvdev is less surprised. "Me and Erez actually come

from a heavy metal background and I am still today very involved in that scene," he relates in a tone so earnest as to be believable. "In fact just the other day, we did a track with Korn!" And the YouTube clip confirms it – even metalheads have been infected.

"Back in the day there were rules against having metal guitars in trance, but for us it was just about music and so we brought in guitars, and it just happened to flow super easy with our music," explains the producer on their almost singular ability to rock a wide format audience. "If you come to see Infected Mushroom, you come to rave. It doesn't matter what kind of music you like."

So what can ravers expect of their show? "You will be getting the full live experience of five musicians on stage heavy metal guitars full drum set me singing super electronic!" says Duvdev in a pant. "We will play a lot of new stuff off the forthcoming album meaning a lot of dubstep drum 'n' bass electro and all that besides the psytrance," he prattles off arrhythmically, disregarding any grammatical pauses.

Speaking (breathlessly) of the new album, what should fans be readying themselves for, from a band that loves to challenge the listener's perception, putting out experimental gems such as 2003's critically-slashed double album *Converting Vegetarians*? And generally not giving a flying fungus what anyone else thinks?

"Look, I know the two latest albums

were really heavy-metal oriented and a lot of fans didn't like the direction, or they didn't understand where it was going, but for me it was a natural progression for my music," he starts. "I am inspired by Pantera (I grew up on that shit) and Pink Floyd. Oh, and I love Queen. But the new album is full of stuff that we never had before – glitch-hop, dubstep, drum 'n' bass – so it's really an evolved album. Our first single is called 'You Are So Fucked' and it's a heavy, heavy dubstep release. I'm trying to keep the fans happy, but to a certain point I gotta be happy about it as well."

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The screaming toddler goes silent.

Ah, he did say "dubstep". The big sound of now that's ruling dance-floor pastures from Parow to Poland. "Dubstep? It's the biggest scene here in America at the moment! Some of it is good, some of it is really bad. On our new album there are three dubstep tracks, which we call 'psystep' (that's a term we made up)," he grins.

"Hopefully the fans like it. Because our fans take our music really seri-

ously, it's hard to please the ones are stuck on a certain sound. When we put out *Converting Vegetarians*, of our fans instantly lost it. Ironically, today it's their favourite album back in 2003 they almost crucified me," he coughs.

Maybe it has something to do with the drugs? Or rather, the lack of them.

"When I started in psytrance it was this completely crazy drug scene, but this scene has dropped off. I'm not gonna say it doesn't still exist, of course it does but much less than how it used to be. I think it's cool because I don't see or yes to psychedelic drugs. I don't do it. 'Oh don't do this don't do that', I do say that if you take something at our show, please just be responsible and enjoy yourself."

Speaking of responsible living Infected Mushroom vegetarians? "No! Completely not at all," he laughs. "In fact, I am looking forward to trying some good South African steak when I am down there."

So what would he be doing if he wasn't touring the word in a psychedelic metal psystep trance band? Probably be living in Israel, owning a restaurant because I really like food. And making a lot of babies."

Last word: will the world end in 2012? "No. Definitely not. I have a Mayan vibe in me, I don't disrespect the Mayan calendar, but I don't think we're going anywhere. Life is gonna continue and we're gonna be here another fucked-up year!"