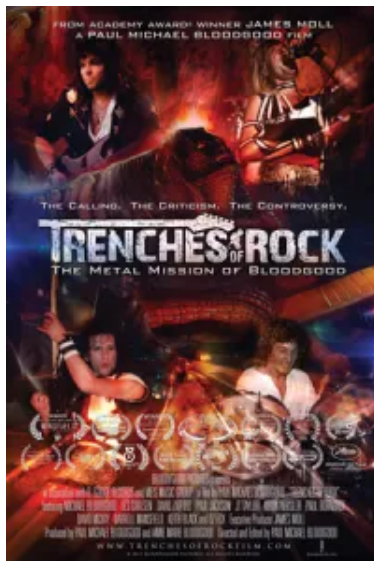


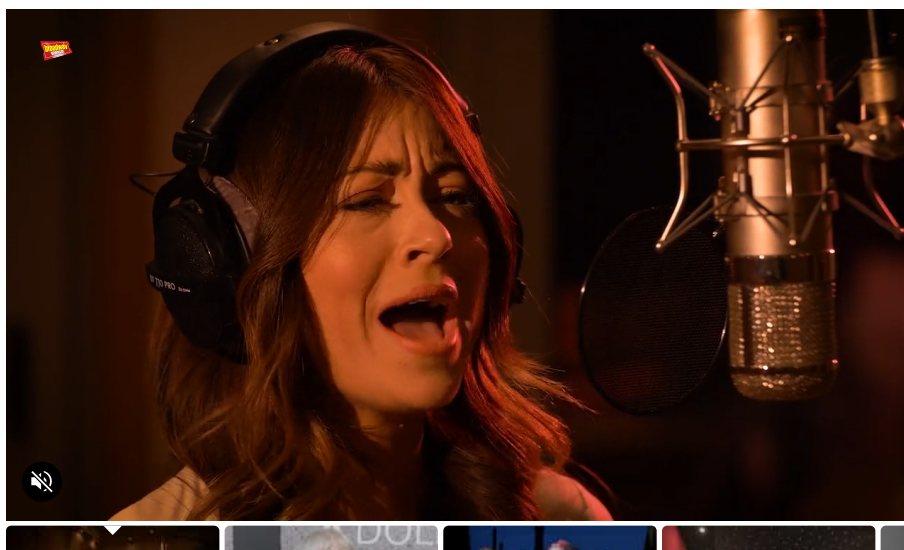
“Trenches Of Rock” Explores The High And Lows Of Christian Heavy Metal Band Bloodgood

by Stephi Wild Feb. 17, 2018



Film maker Paul Michael Bloodgood chronicles the dynamic exploits of 1980's Christian heavy metal band Bloodgood in the fascinating documentary, **Trenches of Rock**. See the NYC Premiere on March 1, 2018 @7:45pm at Cinema Village (22 East 12th Street) as part New York City's **7th Annual Winter Film Awards International Film Festival**.

Trenches of Rock, a music documentary directed and produced by Paul Michael Bloodgood, tells the tale of the band Bloodgood, a '80s Christian heavy metal rock band that has spanned three decades while living the rock star lives and enduring the trials and tribulations that typically come with the territory. Though Bloodgood didn't intend on forming a Christian heavy metal group in 1984, that's what the music industry labeled them. Unfortunately, its faith-based lyrics caused a stir in mainstream music, especially among hard rock bands who thought Bloodgood was too soft for its ear-piercing, rocking genre. In addition, Christians believed Bloodgood's music was the evil doings of the devil and banned its music and picketed its concerts in the cities it toured.



Bloodgood pushed all that adversity aside and became one of the top four Christian heavy metal bands by 1988. Today, Bloodgood is comprised of original members Michael Bloodgood, Les Carlsen, Paul Jackson, and later additions of Kevin Whisler and Oz Fox, who's a former member of **Stryper**, arguably the most popular Christian metal band in music history.

Winter Film Awards Jerry Del Priore spoke with Paul Michael Bloodgood about his film.

What made you decide to make this movie?

In 2011, when I was searching for the subject matter of my first feature-length film, some of the advice I had been given was, "At first, stick to what you know." I have a lot of knowledge in the worlds of dance and music, but at the time I felt the former had been over-saturated in the entertainment industry, so I naturally gravitated to music. When I realized I had this amazing story in BLOODGOOD right under my nose, it just felt like a natural fit and a unique story that hadn't been told before.



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What is your background in film making?


I have been a film fanatic since I can remember! My office is filled with movie memorabilia from Ridley Scott's Alien to older genre classics like The Sound of Music. There are so many interesting aspects to the creation of film that warrant incredible conversations about humanity - and, of course, the technological stuff is always great fun to discuss as well.

My very first time in front of a film camera was back in '93 as a dance student for an episode of Bill Nye, the **Science** Guy in Seattle, Washington. The energy of being on set was just palpable for me.

Although acting has never been my primary focus, I ended up joining the Screen Actors Guild (now SAG-AFTRA) through the occasional film or television project in Los Angeles while I was performing with a dance company that used to be based in Orange County called Ballet Pacifica. After many years of in front of the camera work, I eventually started shifting my focus behind it. I found that being the painter instead of the paintbrush was very fulfilling in a completely different way, and it was another way to express myself as an artist. At one point in my dance career, an injury forced me to take some time off and I ended up making my first short film. I've been hooked ever since.

How long did it take to make the movie?

This is a tough question to answer! Back in 2012, we had a successful Kickstarter campaign which gave us the initial funds to get started. My wife, Anne (who's also a producer on the film) and I applied and received an additional grant from an organization in New York known as Career Transition for Dancers. This grant allowed us the means to obtain the additional camera, lighting, and audio equipment needs that we lacked at the time.

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Interviews for the documentary were filmed in five different states, with b-roll of the city of Seattle thrown into the mix as well. The following two years were spent gathering hundreds upon hundreds of pictures and videos from the band's 30-year history, as well as personal photos from the individual band members. Of course, there's the usual copyright hoops we had to jump through in order to secure the rights to use the band's music catalog and the aforementioned photos and videos, but ultimately everybody we dealt with

were extremely helpful and excited about Trenches of Rock coming to fruition. I must also give a shout out to our Oscar / Grammy / Emmy-winning executive producer, **James Moll**. James mentored me through the entire production and editing process, helping me find my own voice throughout. I am entirely in his debt.

What did you have to do or say to get everyone (band) on board with the film?

Getting the band members on board was surprisingly easy. In my attempts to "find the truth" from each person, I interviewed each member separately without other members on set. I truly feel that this approach aided their willingness to share their stories more openly. Admittedly, we did have one former drummer who refused to join in. After multiple attempts over several years to persuade him, we had to let it go and move forward - for reasons we'll probably never know.


How well has the movie been received by music people and fans alike?

Outside of the film festival circuit and our Kickstarter supporters, the film hasn't been seen by too many people yet - by choice. I am very protective of intellectual property, so my willingness to share the film in a public manner is understandably limited, especially prior to any potential distribution deal we might hopefully obtain.

That being said, the feedback from those that have seen it has been very positive! We have been an official selection of 15 film festivals, with multiple accolades for "Best Feature Documentary," "Best Director" and "Best Editing." An award is just an award and it collects dust the same as anything else, but I have to admit it is very humbling and an honor for complete strangers to acknowledge your work in such a way. I am extremely grateful for the opportunities the film has had and continues to have.

What was the hardest parts of making this movie?

By far the hardest part of making this film was the editing process. I had 30+ hours of interview footage alone, not-to-mention the countless hours of archival footage I had to sift through.

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My very first draft of the film was roughly three and half hours long, which was never going to be the final cut! But that just gives you an idea of how difficult it was to decide upon which stories to focus on in order to present a cohesive 87 min. film that still captures the crucial elements of a band that's been around for three decades.

How strong is your Christian faith, since you've been around it for a while?

I was raised in a non-denominational church, and that is something that is still very much a part of who I am. Not to change the subject, but Trenches of Rock should be seen by anybody that has interest in music documentaries. My goal was to create a film that could be watched by an atheist and Christian alike with equal entertainment. I did not make a "Christian film" for Christians. If anything, my film shows the hypocrisy and assumptions people make and how everybody likes to put everyone else in a box.

BLOODGOOD didn't label themselves a Christian rock band - the industry did. There are bands that like to focus on one type of subject all of the time: drugs, sex, politics - but we don't label them as such. Ever heard of an "Atheist rock band?" Or what about a "Buddhist rock band?" Me, neither.

How often does Bloodgood play gigs now?

BLOODGOOD doesn't play nearly as much as they used to - but they still do the occasional performances in Europe and the United States. I believe they're open to playing more often, but it's difficult with so many people's schedules that don't live in the same cities. Personally, I would love to see them perform more often and make more records. I think there are plans in the works for both...

By **Jerry Del Priore** for Winter Film Awards. Jerry Del Priore is an accomplished writer, author, blogger and reporter. He has written on topics such as sports, health and fitness, NYC lifestyle and food, as well as movies and music. Del Priore runs his own weblog called www.BrooklynSportsWorld.com.

New York City's **7th Annual Winter Film Awards International Film Festival** runs February 22-March 3 2018. Check out our jam-packed lineup of 93 fantastic films in all genres from 31 countries, including Animation, Drama, Comedy, Thriller, Horror, Documentary and Music Video. Hollywood might ignore women and people of color, but Winter Film Awards celebrates everyone!

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