Synthetic Division: A Symptom of Life

April 7, 2010 By Shawn Decker

Last month marked the 20-year anniversary of Depeche Mode's *Violator*, which just so happened to mark the 20-year anniversary of my dying wish to meet the band. Next month I'm releasing some new Synthetic Division (that's my music monicker) music to commemorate surviving all these years.

It's going to be called *A Symptom of Life*. Here's the cover of the album...

That's actually HIV positive blood coming out of that flower, though not my own. The blood belongs to the artist responsible for this powerful image: Barton Benes. It has traveled the world, and it presents a pretty heavy visual. I'm so lucky that Barton has let me use it for what is a deeply meaningful piece of art of my own.

I'd mentioned in my Violator blog entry that I was up to something and this is it: I've been holed away writing and recording new songs, inspired by the simplest joy of being alive and surviving that dying wish. Though I'm a very happy and content person, writing music has always been a great outlet for those darker feelings that we all have, usually indulged in our most private moments. Listening to my favorite bands was my outlet after my diagnosis- I couldn't or wouldn't talk about my status, but when I jammed out in my room with the door closed, my favorite

musicians were singing my feelings for me.

The cool thing about getting older has been developing the ability to write my own feelings into music. Though I still turn to influences (and enjoy being part of a thriving music scene in Charlottesville), it is nice to put on the headphones and write a tune. For two decades, music has been my purest form of meditation.

At the end of last year, when for a very few brief moments I thought I was checking out of this wonderful world, I realized that it was time to write some more music, which I'd been putting off for quite a while. When it dawned on me that the 20-year anniversary of my Make-A-Wish encounter with Depeche Mode was this year, that sealed the deal.

I'll be posting more about the May release soon, and how I hope to raise awareness about HIV prevention while also helping to shake a few booties along the way with music that would make Depeche Mode proud.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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