

anathema device

511 Ave. of the Americas PMB 29
New York, NY 10011

info@anathemadevice.com • <http://anathemadevice.com>

Bio

by Brian Stillman, editor at Guitar World and Revolver

“I’m sick and tired of today’s cookie-cutter approach to music,” rails Kerry Smith of Anathema Device, the latest musical force-of-nature to crawl from the depths of New York City. “Every band sounds like it came off an assembly line—generic and weak. Music needs to change and grow. I want to evolve.”

More than simply aggressive beats and slash-and-burn electronics, Anathema Device is a return to the days when songwriting was key and a good hook itself in the listener’s brain like a barb. Which isn’t to say that the band lacks all the chaotic mayhem and intensity that drives people to acts of dance-floor violence. Indeed, Anathema Device kicks harder than a mule on PCP, while at the same time employing melodies, textures and sonic craftsmanship that calls to mind, on a bad day, the brutal dichotomy of such bands as Nine Inch Nails or Jane’s Addiction.

And on a good day? Anathema Device is a maelstrom of electro-rock mayhem all it’s own.

Take, for example, the songs on Anathema Device’s debut “*Something Lurking In The Dark*”. The whiney scream-fests and generic, over-produced beat-box rhythms common to most contemporary “modern rock” tracks are absent. Melodic, airy and atmospheric one minute, *Something Lurking...* quickly shifts to a flurry of boot-to-the-head beats and spine-shattering guitar riffs, taking listeners on an emotional roller coaster ride. In the background, subtle electronic gurgles and bleeps percolate up from the mix, filling space without detracting from the songs. And through it all, Smith’s vocals, emotional without being melodramatic, force the listener to sit up and pay attention.

“With Anathema Device, I want to create something that combines the drive and groove of electronic dance music with the life and energy of rock and punk,” says Smith. “I didn’t want the songs to feel lifeless or static. It’s technology struggling with humanity. And I like to think that the humanity comes out on top.”

When Smith joined forces with keyboardist Stephen Baker, bassist Dan Levine, guitarist Batz and drummer Eric Reed, the results were electric. Every time they performed, the crowds grew and the applause grew louder. They released their debut 5-song EP, performed for hundreds at the Convergence 7 Festival, (following indie legends Coil, to close the show) and were immortalized as among “The Best of Gothic Radio” on a compilation of the same name...all within a year. The live show is just the kind of controlled explosion that makes dragging yourself out at night worthwhile. It’s dynamic, exciting, sexy, powerful, stirring and intimate without taking it self too seriously.

It’s somewhat ironic that Smith’s day job consists of writing award-winning jingles for a top-rated music house. With such mainstream credits, Smith doesn’t seem like a musical avenging angel, come to wreak havoc on a meandering music scene. But then again, viruses grow inside their hosts, subverting a system from the inside out.

Smith will be the first to admit that working on commercial music has its upside; by forcing him to write in such diverse genres as retro, hip-hop, world, techno, and all-out cheese, the commercial work arms Smith with a knowledge of musical styles that far surpasses that of his contemporaries. The result shines through clearly on songs like *Guilt Is a Word...* and *The Paragon of Animals*. The other member's skills show through as well: Batz's major-label remix skills tore up the promo tape, Stephen's art and Dan's design are featured on the debut CD. Eric's background as a recording engineer is shaping recordings to come.

If what you're looking for is music that, quite simply, kicks your ass from one track to the next, then you're in the right place. Because *Anathema Device* is nothing short of a jack-booted wake-up call to all the weak-kneed middle-of-the-roaders, those who are complacent enough to be satisfied with the Britney's and boy-pop or the one-trick headbangers. *Anathema Device* is another wave of music, a different wave of culture. *Anathema Device* is knocking on your door. Are you ready to open it?