



Glamorous Obscurity: THE DARK

Heavy bass, rhythm, a touch of 80s glamour: THE DARK are a band fronted by singer, guitarist and producer Brandon Ashley. Their most recent release is the single 'Nightmare on Lexington Street', a track about a very special period in the frontman's life.

A question of philosophies

Darkness is a familiar element in the goth scene. For The Dark, darkness symbolises everything we fear, whether as children or as adults. It is the things that remain unseen that fuel our fears - and, ultimately, the fear of being unable to find meaning in our own existence. The idea behind this is that we are engaged in a constant struggle between the visible and the invisible, that darkness is ultimately nothing more than a reflection of life. It is into this darkness that The Dark now wishes to step and help overcome it.

For Brandon, a key idea here is that you grow from your mistakes. "Every time you have to fight a battle, you learn." Music is the link that helps people empower themselves for all these battles, no matter how big or small they may be. The band also has its roots in punk. Brandon comments: "The only way to be

happy is to become yourself. But nobody wants that – parents don't want it, society doesn't, and certainly not politics. The system fears free people." And this is precisely one of the reasons to fight for it.

In his exploration of different philosophies, Brandon encountered numerous sources of inspiration. However, the greatest inspiration is found when one engages with ideas that are completely at odds with one's own views. Brandon also studied philosophy in his hometown of Turin and, during this time, encountered philosophers such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard. He was also influenced by his classical piano training – and so Beethoven remains one of his idols.

If one takes a closer look at the concept behind *The Dark*, what emerges is an organic interweaving of glamour and darkness – a kind of 80s dark glamour. The artist's broad musical tastes allow him to incorporate a wide range of influences into his own body of work. Even though the aesthetic often gives a glamorous impression, there is a darkness hidden behind all the glitz that has yet to be grasped. However, the 80s, 90s, rock, grunge, glamour and darkness are definitely integral parts of it, according to the band leader.

Brandon's first inspiration was David Bowie. As a child, he saw the musician singing on TV and was deeply impressed. At the time, he was convinced he would never see anything like it again in his life. That moment led Brandon to dream of becoming like Bowie: artistic, authentic, talented. Jim Morrison and The Doors are also high on the list of influences that have shaped Brandon into the musician he is today. "The idea with music is that it isn't just music, but an organic, fundamental part of a whole life."

After all, the influence on the young Brandon was immense: "They basically ruined my life." The musician laughs as he says this and explains that, deep down, he is very happy to have dedicated his life to art, but that he has also had to make many sacrifices. That, too, is an ingredient of art.

Something new, something special

The latest single, 'Nightmare on Lexington Street', tells the story of musician Brandon Ashley's early days. Released on 1 May, the track describes the five years Brandon spent living in Los Angeles – or, to be more precise, on Lexington Street in South Hollywood. He says they were the most difficult years of his life so far, but at the same time the most inspiring.

Immediately after splitting up with his partner at the time, Brandon had been looking for a flat and moved to this neighbourhood, which turned out to be a large artistic community. Everyone wanted to make a difference with their art, be it music, visual art or writing.

It was also during this period that Brandon played a regular DJ set at Angels and Kings, a bar that remained open until 2009. "The owner gave me Tuesday evenings back then because it was a 'dead night' and I couldn't do any damage. It was always important to me to feel the audience. Soon, the Toxic Tuesdays – that's what I called my night – became the most successful nights."

The artist lives by the principle of taking risks, of not being afraid to show his true self, and of occasionally breaking things. He believes our world has been artificially constructed and is no longer authentic. It is clear that he does not wish to be part of this. That is why he has spoken out. "Especially as a teenager, it was all about me against the world, me against the system. It was a lonely time."

The track "Nightmare on Lexington Street" also deals with the excessive lifestyle that is to be described. A music video complements the track and offers further insights into that era. Another song from the upcoming album will also tell the story of Brandon's life. "Ghost of Turin" thus fits into a musical biography, for whilst the years in focus were characterised by excess and partying, they were also marked by art. And the result is definitely something to be proud of.

How to tell a story

It's also clear that this has to be told and performed in exactly this way. After all, one of the defining aspects of punk is that a song shouldn't be polished and smooth, but should have rough edges, rawness and grit - and thus become a mirror of reality. Because, as Brandon puts it, punk isn't just a genre; it's a way of life. And that includes being genuine and honest right down to your very core.

From a technical perspective, it is the lower-tuned guitars, familiar from harder bands, combined with melodic vocals, that define The Dark's characteristic vibe. At its core, it is not about whether the audience likes the music or not. "Being in the spotlight just to be liked is not a good reason to make music." It is much nicer, he says, when the audience accepts the artist's true self and likes the music for that reason.

If you go to one of the band's concerts, you can expect a big, loud and powerful show that people will remember. For Brandon himself, the focus is on connecting with the audience and immersing himself in the feeling that, for that moment, the whole room becomes one.

People should be able to relate to his lyrics; music should be for everyone. That's why Brandon also loves seeing people sing along at a concert. He finds the connection with the audience and the sense of community magical: "When I'm on stage, I'm in a state of ecstasy. It's as if I'm in another dimension and become one with the audience."

Scrolling through history

It was a unique experience for Brandon Ashley to open the show for Iron Maiden at the Rock in India festival, which took place in Bangalore and other venues between 2008 and 2012. When Brandon received the invitation from the festival, he was on a European tour with his band at the time, Brandon Ashley and The Silverbugs, alongside Lordi, who had just won the Eurovision Song Contest.

"The whole thing was a bit like a dream. We played our last concert in the UK, in Sheffield, and were then driven to the airport. After only about an hour's sleep, we were already being taken to the festival site in India - we had our own trailer and in the backstage area we met all these wonderful people. Around 24 hours later, we were already on our way back to London to continue our tour with Lordi."

About the future

For Brandon, connecting with his audience is important: listeners often get in touch with him, and their messages frequently mention how his music moves them or helps them through difficult times in their lives. It's one of the reasons he makes music. He wants to continue being authentic in this way and not

follow any particular trends. That also means being able to take criticism on the chin and not being afraid of not being liked.

The musician is always searching for a deeper meaning in his songs. He has long since left the wild life of Lexington Street behind him: "Being a musician doesn't mean owning a huge estate with a sea view; it means not being able to do anything else because the music is so deeply rooted within you."

In 2026, listeners can look forward to new singles and a new album in early October. In addition, several shows in Europe are already planned.

Read more

More information about the band can be found on the official website. The artist shares the latest updates and insights on his own account (often referring to Corlyx here) or the official band account.