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On Yer Bike with Studio Wizard Max Norman

By [Michael Fischer](#), Writer, Cartoonist
Tuesday, June 19, 2007 @ 4:13 PM



"The first time I met Ozzy<

MAX NORMAN

Famed British Recording Engineer/Producer **Max Norman** has been serving the music industry for over three decades. His studio mastery, body of work and contributions to rock are unheard of! (**Bad Company, Ozzy Osbourne, Y&T, Loudness, Megadeth, Malice, Lynch Mob, Fates Warning, Savatage, Lizzy Borden, Coney Hatch, Ian Hunter, Sly, Grim Reaper, 220 Volt, Dangerous Toys, Armored Saint, The London Symphony Orchestra**). In one hundred years, Max's work will be compared to Moses parting the Red Sea, or rival **Sharon Osbourne** parting OzzFest with a rotting ham. Bottom line, **Max Norman** is instrumental in designing music that has influenced the spirit of generations of Rock Fans!

Max is a friendly, straightforward chap who has a big heart for creative things, and an amazing gift for the recording studio. He is a Pure Genius! When you see Max's moniker "On Yer Bike LTD" on the back of a record. It's a first class certified stamp that this material is going to kill! Max has tweaked the knobs of the greatest rock records of all time like **Ozzy's** first two Triple Platinum Masterpieces **Blizzard of Ozz**, and **Diary of a Madman**. Those are not just records, they are Rock n' Roll Bibles! Max has worked 1000's of live concerts with everyone from **Uriah Heep** to **Motorhead** and he was the man behind the curtain for all the infamous **Blizzard of Ozz** sessions at Ridge Farm Studio's with **Ozzy** and **Randy Rhoads**. Let's face it. If Pure Rock didn't have great Wizards like **Max Norman**, all your favorite Metal CD's would sound like a McDonald's Drive Thru

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Speaker, or a **Brittney Spears** Record!

It's Earth Day 2007! What a perfect day to get "On Yer Bike" and chat with the greatest guy On-Earth, "Mr. **Max Norman**" as he reflects on life in the "Merry Old Land of Ozz" with **Randy, The Prince of Darkness**, and the infamous duck pond!

KNAC.COM: Hi Max! How are you mate!?!

NORMAN: I'm good, how are you?!?

KNAC.COM: Great! What have you been up to?

NORMAN: Well, I'm not into the music biz anymore at the moment. I'm in the computer business.

KNAC.COM: I understand you began your music career playing guitar?

NORMAN: I started playing guitar when I was 11. I don't play much anymore. I played a Ukulele. It was easier when you we're little.

KNAC.COM: How did you get into mixing sound?

NORMAN: When I was around 18 years old in 1971 I did live sound for the original **Skid Row** band from Island. When I got out of college in England I went to Germany to work with a couple studio guys out there and a band called **Wind**.

KNAC.COM: Didn't you once do live sound for 70s Rock Gods **Uriah Heep**?

NORMAN: Yes, I did six tours with them. After Germany I moved back to England and got a gig with a big sound company called TFA Electra Sound. That's when I got a chance to come to the U. S. We did lots of tours like **Queen, Pink Floyd, Todd Rundgren, Little Feat, and The Eagles**. I did the delay towers for the **Bob Dylan** outdoor show in Nuremberg Germany for quarter of a million people. So all that was kinda interesting.

KNAC.COM: How did you enjoy life on the road?



NORMAN: I didn't mind all that stuff. Touring's pretty good. I was on the road for 7 years and then I built Ridge Farm Studios in England.

KNAC.COM: That's where **Ozzy Osbourne** recorded?

NORMAN: Yes! The first thing I did there was a bunch of demos for **Bad Company's** sixth record **Rough Diamonds** which was the last record with the original band.

KNAC.COM: What was it like to first meet **Paul Rodgers?** (Singer **Bad Company, Free, Queen**)

NORMAN: He's an extraordinary singer! I was in back of the studio one day and he was messing around on the piano. He's was grunting and groaning and making all these sounds. It was really awful! I thought, "I can't believe this is **Paul Rodgers**, it sounds so bad!" Then he straightened up and started singing properly and this voice just came out like "Paul Rodgers." It was really strange. I thought, "Holy shit"! I guess he's got like two brains or something. The one brain is doing one



thing, and his other brain is doing another.

KNAC.COM: What was it like working with **Paul Rogers** in the studio?

NORMAN: Paul sang all those songs on the record at the time we put the tracks down. He only sung them once. He's used to singing with a Shure SM57 hand held microphone. So we taped the cable to his arm. You don't use any compression on him at all. He moves the mic in and out. He has amazing mic technique! As he would sing, you get the needle to his arrow and it would stay there. He would just hit zero all the time. Even if he was doing a long note, and he's constantly moving the mic in and out. You don't see singers doing that much anymore. He's probably one of the best singers that's ever been really. He used to be a bass player in a band called "Peace". One day the singer didn't show up so Paul said "Fuck it, I'll do it"! Everybody started freaking out on him because this amazing voice came out and then he formed the band **Free**. I used to go see them when I was 16 on Friday Nights at a Blues club in England.

KNAC.COM: Didn't the original **Bad Company** break up while recording with you at Ridge Farm?

NORMAN: Yes, unfortunately when we did that record, things were degenerating within the band. Culminating in **Paul Rodgers** punching out drummer **Simon Kirk** one night. I was sitting right next to **Simon**. **Paul** was sitting right in front of **Simon** and he was saying to **Paul**, "Yeah go on, fucking hit me...go on...I dare you!" So Paul hit him! Simon walked out and said, "Fuck that guy" and he quit the band. Paul can get pretty aggressive sometimes. He's a black belt, so you can't mess with him.

KNAC.COM: How did you hook up with **Y&T**?

NORMAN: I quite like doing that record **Black Tiger**. That was one of the first times we did solo's sitting in the control room for **Dave Menikietti's** guitar parts. We used to do that with **Randy**. I was great friends with **Y&T's** drummer **Lenny Haze**. I remember going to his house and he had this one room reserved for cats. It was knee deep in cat shit. For that kinda music, **Lenny** is one of the best drummers that's ever been. That guys a real slugger, he slugs his way through. He's a true drummer! **Y&T** got busted by customs for coming into England to track **Black Tiger** claiming they were not working there. We just told customs "They're coming over to do an album" and they said "Well all right then, now get outta here!" I wanted to do the next record **Mean Streak**. I think they got mad at me or something so they got **Chris Tsangarides** to do instead.

KNAC.COM: So when did you first meet **Ozzy**?

NORMAN: The story is...the first time I met **Ozzy**...I thought he was a roadie! (Laughs) I was the resident engineer at Ridge Farm Studio and **Ozzy** was coming in to record **Blizzard of Ozz**. I knew of **Black Sabbath**, but that day I didn't know who **Ozzy** was actually. I didn't recognize him.

KNAC.COM: (Laughs) That's funny!

NORMAN: That day I first met **Ozzy**, he came in to the studio and I said to him, "Go sit in the control room, I'm going to make some tea". **Ozzy** said, "All right, put some music on". So I put some music on, and I brought him some tea thinking, "He's a roadie and where the hell is the truck with all the gear?" And then this guy comes hopping up the stairs and says, "Hey **Ozzy**, what's happening?" And THEN I realized it was **Ozzy**! It's a good job I didn't say anything to him...know what I mean?!?

KNAC.COM: Where you a big fan of **Black Sabbath**?

NORMAN: Yes, I just didn't recognize him. Maybe because he didn't have a lot of make up on. That was a lot of fun. We did a lot of records down there with **Ozzy**. We did **Blizzard of Ozz** in 4 weeks.

KNAC.COM: So who was originally hired to produce *Blizzard of Ozz*? Chris Tsangarides? (Exodus, Helloween, Overkill, Judas Priest, Anvil, Yngwie Malmsteen, Y&T, King Diamond, Tygers of Pan Tang, Gary Moore, Bruce Dickinson, Loudness, TNT, Tom Jones, Concrete Blonde, Depeche Mode)

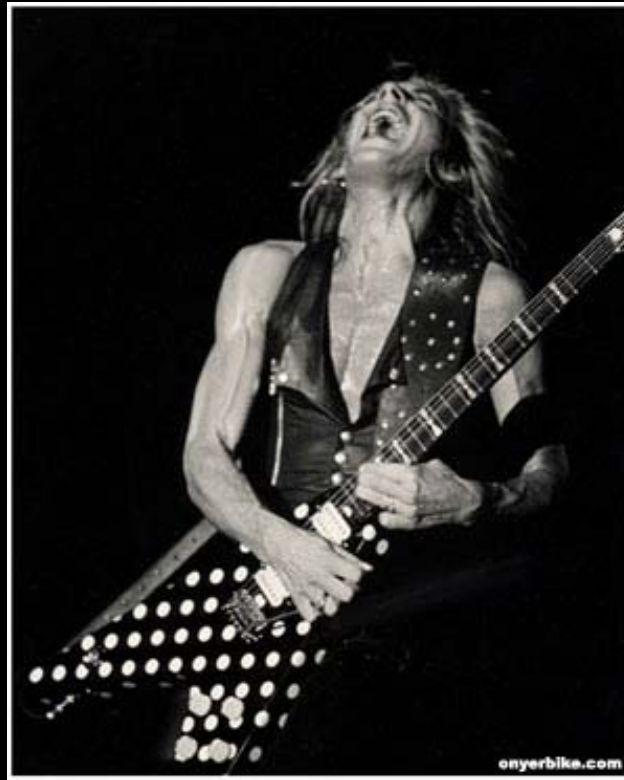
NORMAN: Yes. I was just the resident studio engineer. We had just built that room and put in a new Solid State Logic Board. It was the 2nd one in England. At that time, it was a big deal. I didn't want *Blizzard* to sound like crap. But it didn't sound too good with Chris to start. He was doing some things that we're fundamentally that we're really bad like: He put the drums in a very low ceiling room that was all concrete. So if Lee hit the cymbal it was like the whole room turned white! It was very ambient and difficult to control. The band were looking a little glum... When Chris would leave the control room, I would replay the tape in the headphones and rebalance the mix to make it sound decent. After one week of that I said, "Fuck this guy" I was tired of fixing his mistakes, he was just not getting it. Then **Ozzy** fired him and then called me and asked me if I wanted to do the record. And I said "Sure"! That's how I ended up producing and engineering that record and the next four.

KNAC.COM: What was it like working with guitarist Randy Rhoads?

NORMAN: Randy was a great player! He spent a lot of time playing. That's all he ever did really. He didn't drink or do drugs. He was a clean living guy and was very quiet. All he did was play guitar and he was obviously pretty good because he was playing 12 hours a day. He was a big fan of **Eddie Van Halen**! When it came to his guitar sound, he wanted it a lot brighter than **Eddie's**. We did some pretty interesting things at that time like triple tracking solos which have never been done before.

KNAC.COM: The first time I heard *Blizzard of Ozz*, I noticed how different the guitar tones we're.

NORMAN: Yeah, that record has a lot of tonality. We had a lot of doubling. Randy would describe what he wanted and we would get that sound. There are quite a few clean sounds on there and acoustic stuff. Mainly the guitar sounds good if the guy playing it is a good guitar player.



KNAC.COM: So you think the sound comes through your fingers?

NORMAN: That's it! I remember when I first met **Gary Moore** and he was 18. I just got a Les Paul and took it to his gig to let him check it out. I was astounded when he started playing it. How good it sounded. That's when I realized it's all in the player. Gary used to play some steamy fast stuff which he stopped doing. It's a shame. Now he just plays the Blues which is OK, but I like him to rip out some heavy rock stuff as well.

KNAC.COM: How did Randy create and construct his guitar solo's?

NORMAN: Randy wanted me to give him a loop of 15 second before the solo starts, then the solo, and then 15 seconds after it. I would give him a loop of the backing track, and rather than loop it on the 24 track which would just kinda wear the tape out which in those days was all analog 24 track. I would make him a loop of like 20 or 30 loops onto a two-track machine. And then he could just

start that in the control room and then play through those 30 loops, roll it back and then start it again. Randy said, "You don't need to sit here and do this because it's going to take me probably 3 hours to work this out". He would systematically work through the solo, write down stuff and make notes. When it came time to put them down, he had them all down.

KNAC.COM: Do you think **Ozzy** has a lot to thank for Randy?

NORMAN: Yes, he really does. The other thing is that whole band kinda gave **Ozzy** his new sound. There's no doubt drummer Lee Kerslake made some great contributions. And I believe a lot of the lyrics we're written by Bassist **Bob Daisley (Ozzy, Gary Moore, Uriah Heep)**. Although they might want to dispute that now.

KNAC.COM: **Bob Daisley** even came up with the song titles like **Crazy Train**.

NORMAN: Well yeah. **Crazy Train** might have been Bob's idea.

KNAC.COM: Did Randy write all of **Ozzy's** music?

NORMAN: Yeah pretty much. I wasn't present at the Blizzard rehearsals but was for **Diary Of a Madman**. The band would rehearse while **Ozzy** would bob up and down and listen to music. **Ozzy** would eventually come up with a melody line. **Ozzy** writes all the melody lines pretty much. It's what he's good at! I listened to the master tape of **Blizzard of Ozz** about 10 years ago and when we soloed up his singing, it's really good.

KNAC.COM: **Lee Kerslake (Uriah Heep, Ozzy)** played drums on the first two **Ozzy** records and not **Tommy Alridge** correct?

NORMAN: Yes! I knew Lee from the ole' **Uriah Heep** days and had done a whole bunch of touring with him. He's a happy, harmless guy. He's a great drummer. **Uriah Heep** was a fun heavy band.

KNAC.COM: What was it like to work with **Ozzy** in the studio?



NORMAN: **Ozzy** was very funny when he was singing, too. Because it would take a long time to do those vocals. We would start at 2pm and would end about 9pm or later. He would start out pretty straight and sober, probably take a bottle of Scotch in there with him. He'd be nipping away at the Scotch as we were doing a song. The way he does a song is he sings the first line, and he goes, "How was it?" I'd say, "Not bad **Ozzy**", and he'd say, "Do it again!" We go back and re-record that line, and he'd say, "How was it?" I'd say "Pretty good **Ozzy**" and he'd say, "Do it again!" And then he'd sing it again and say, "How's that one?" I'd say, "That's good Ozz, I like that one." He'd go, "Well all right, double it!" So you pop him onto another track and you punch in the same line. When you get something that has some sound to it, or sounds kinda flangey. That's close or not to close that works well with the other one. Then you move to the next line. That's one of **Ozzy's** signature sounds, is that pretty tight vocal doubling on almost everything that he does.

KNAC.COM: Didn't **Ozzy** puke in the microphone once while singing?

NORMAN: Oh yeah, he'd do all kinds of stuff like that. If he wanted to take a piss in the middle of the take, he'd do it right there on the floor. I remember once **Ozzy's** band was on the road and they came in to do a single for a couple days for a B-side. **Ozzy** was sitting up in the control room in my chair and I was down on the studio floor working on some mics and setting something up. I walked back towards the control room which was up a flight of stairs, **Ozzy** was coming down these stairs and he was all wet down the front of his pants. He was pretty fucked up, and he goes "I'm going to bed". I said "OK Ozz I'll see you later". I thought "what a mess." So I went back upstairs and I sat down in my control room chair and at first I thought "Oh this is nice and warm, I guess **Ozzy** must have been sitting here." Then it went COLD! I was like "Oh shit!" I guess he relieved himself in his pants and on the chair as well and I sat in it. I had to relieve myself and go change my pants.

KNAC.COM: You could have sold that chair on E-bay!

NORMAN: Yeah right (Laughs). It's probably sitting somewhere in a dump by now. **Ozzy's** a great guy. He used to come up with some funny stuff. Some of the time he's a bit out of it, but other times he can be astute and very funny.

KNAC.COM: He doesn't seem aggressive at all. **Ozzy** seems really humble?

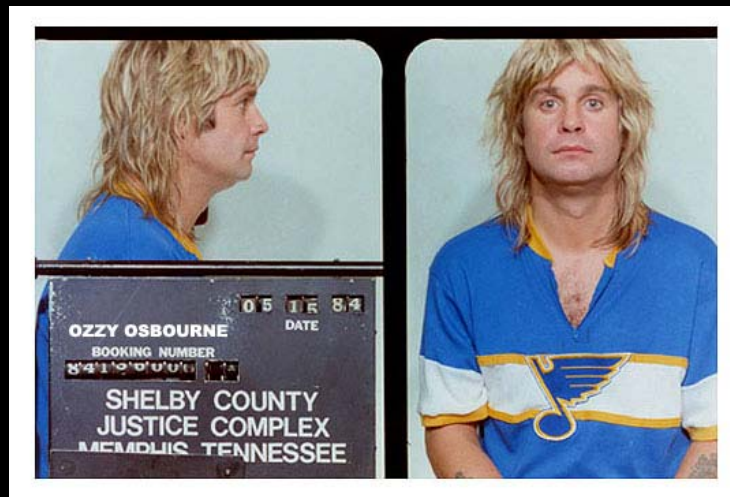
NORMAN: No, no I never saw **Ozzy** fight with anybody. He would never fight. Sharon's a different story. He would fight with **Sharon**. (Laughs).

KNAC.COM: What do you think of **Sharon's** success? It's amazing how far she's come in the last 25 years now a music industry giant?

NORMAN: She's an entrepreneur no doubt about it. She's a very hard businesswomen. She's on it. Without her, **Ozzy** would have probably sunken into obscurity...or be dead.

KNAC.COM: Share with us the funny story about the infamous duck pond.

NORMAN: I remember one time her and **Ozzy** had a huge fight and she picked up a big wooden rack that had the stereo system in it. I think she picked it up and threw it at him. There was this huge dent in the washing machine in the kitchen. I guess it missed **Ozzy** and hit the washing machine. The whole place was just trashed. And she took all of his stuff, and **Ozzy** had some nice clothes because they had a bit of money at this point. **Sharon** took everything **Ozzy** owned and threw it in the duck pond! He had a \$20,000 Rolex and she threw that in there too!



KNAC.COM: (Laughing) Now that's a Kodak Moment!

NORMAN: Yeah, people still go in that duck pond looking for that Rolex. They never ever found it! I remember seeing people out there trying to find it. Crappy old duck pond.

KNAC.COM: What was it like working on the **Randy Rhoads** Tribute Record?

NORMAN: An interesting story about that was, they sent me two different tapes. They said look "We got these two different shows, which show should we use?" So I listened to these 2 tapes.

One of them was really pretty good, and the other one didn't seem very good at all. It wasn't very exciting. I was trying to work out why, and what was going on because it seemed a little weird to me. Then I finally realized they were the same show, with radically different mixes. They told me one was King Biscuit and one was Cleveland. It had been mixed completely differently. And I realized that the one that sounded really good, was the one with Randy really loud in the mix. The one that didn't sound very good was the one where Randy was down in the mix. Randy was rushing so much, and was so ahead of the beat on stuff. If you turned him up it all made sense. But if you turned him down, then it sounded very chopped out. So it gave me inkling about, well I'll use this one, I'll just mix it like this. Because that's the way it works. That gave me a good clue about how to mix it. I mixed it in CBS Studios in New York City on 71st and Broadway. I mixed **Grim Reaper** there as well.

KNAC.COM: When did digital recording replace analog for you?

NORMAN: **Loudness *Lightning Strikes*** was the first record I did entirely digitally. Which is quite interesting. That was the first time I used 2 Sony 24 Digital's, which I ended up using quite a lot. They were excellent machines and they sounded really good. They had excellent automatic punching capabilities. When it came time to do records like **Dave Mustaine's first Megadeth** record. He wanted it to be ultra precise. Using the SSL console and the logic on that, we were able to do some extremely, what I used to call window punches. Which I could set up very quickly. I used to be able to set them up on a Sony Machine in 20 seconds I could set up a punch and get it absolutely perfect, and perfectly repeatable. That way we were able to patch up solos and fix most anything right on the spot. That became a technique that we used extensively for bands like **Loudness, Megadeth, and Lynch Mob.**

KNAC.COM: What was it like to work with **Loudness**?

NORMAN: **Loudness** was great! I did quite a few things with them. The first record we did **Thunder in the East** at Sound City in the Valley. There's an interesting story about that album title. I was flying back from Tokyo and found them that title looking through an old book of film titles. I came across that. I think it's a film from 1943. It's made at the beginning of the 2nd world war for the US. It's about the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor and starting the war with America. I saw it and thought, "Look at that, '**Thunder in the East!**' "Perfect!" That's what we can call the record. I called them up when I landed and I said, "I think I have the name for your record!" Of course they all loved that title. That was a good steal.

KNAC.COM: Did you help **Loudness** write lyrics too?

NORMAN: Yes, I wrote a lot of the lyrics for the 2nd record I did with them called **Lightning Strikes** which we made in Tokyo. I wrote quite a lot of those lyrics like **Black Star Oblivion.** I wrote that in a club I used to go sit in until 4 am. We had an English interpreter in the studio because they knew very little English. During a studio session I told the band "Go back a measure!" The interpreter said they said, "What's a measure?" They we're all very good players. But they we're Japanese! They couldn't feel the beat sometimes. They had to find it!

KNAC.COM: What was it like working with guitarist **Akira Takasaki**?

NORMAN: He was a very interesting player that guy. I'd say probably one of the top 5 rock guitar players in the world. He's still around actually. Akira was a really excellent guitar player. We would sit there and work out fingerings for his solos. Sometimes he would come and ask me because he knew that I played as well. I would be watching him playing, and I'd say "Wait, why don't you do that this way" and change his fingering so it would be able to keep it smooth without too much hand movement. We would plot out all his solos. The guy was just a wonderful player!

KNAC.COM: I believe Akira became the guy to carry the torch after **Randy Rhoads** died.

NORMAN: Yeah he's real good. As so was their drummer **Munetaka Higuchi.** He is in **Sly** now

another project I worked on at my studio Fat Planet in Los Angeles. I like that record. They were going to come back and do another one and they blew it out because I guess the record company wouldn't give them the money.

KNAC.COM: I heard you're a big fan of the 70's band **Sweet**.

NORMAN: Oh yeah, **Sweet** was out when I was a kid still going to school. I met up with the bass player Andy Scott years later producing. They were actually a heavy band. They were pretty rocked out if you went to see them. They're all good singers, too, which makes a difference. They can really rip those vocals out. They're good at it. I always found that very gratifying when you work with somebody who's really good and can really do it. It really makes a difference, and you're so thankful to be there because a lot of the time a lot of the albums you do are real turd polishers. You get to appreciate any kind of talent you work with.

KNAC.COM: You've certainly worked with a lot of amazing people.

NORMAN: I was very lucky. I got to work with a lot of good people. I remember doing those strings for Blizzard of Ozz. We went over to Landsdown Studios in West London, which was where **Uriah Heep** used to record. It was a very famous studio in those days. I remember using the London Symphony Orchestra String Section for Blizzard of Ozz first record. We also had a choir over there. Your paying scale to these guys so you only actually do 2 takes. Once they know how to do it, that's it. You just do one take and they get it right and that's it. They always tell you "Look record one take, and then switch tracks and record it on another couple tracks." So you get to double it, because if they find out your doubling it, they'll charge you more money. You have to try and sneak a double out of them.

KNAC.COM: Where did you do strings for *Diary of a Madman*?

NORMAN: We went to Abbey Road and we did them the same studio the **Beatles** used to use: the big studio C downstairs. We used a guy named **Louis Clark** who arranged **ELO (Electric Light Orchestra)**. Funny story, it was a 10 am session and about 10:30 am Louis still wasn't there. So we had no music, everything was working and I'm standing there thinking, "Man this is bad news." You only get 3 hours or otherwise if you break another hour it's going to cost you double. It was a 26-piece string section out there. It's expensive to have all those guys. We were freaking out. And then Louis finally shows up one hour late all hung over, fucking hair flying in the wind. He was carrying two pints of John Courage in his hands. And he says, "all right where's the copy guy?" I give him credit! Man, this guy ripped out all these charts for these string guys in just 16 minutes. Louis had written the whole thing. Just wrote it out! He didn't even have a tape recorder or nothing, he just wrote that shit out and he gave to them. And then he got up there and conducted the thing. He said, "OK play it back." We went through the track and fuck he got everything right the first go. It was unbelievable! Seeing stuff like that, you walk away shaking your head, "Holy shit, that's some amazing stuff." I was lucky I've seen a lot of amazing stuff like that.

KNAC.COM: How many records did you do with **Ozzy**?

NORMAN: 5 total. I did 2 albums for **Ozzy** at Ridge Farm. In 1982 did the 3rd record, *Speak of the Devil* with guitarist **Brad Gillis (Ozzy, Night Ranger, Vicious Rumors)**. We took a truck down to the Palace in NYC and record live for about a 2,000-seater hall. Since **Ozzy** was on a limited budget and fulfilling a contractual obligation with Jet for 2 more records. They could only do this one time. So I made **Ozzy** play a whole show in the afternoon with no audience and record that. Keep that in the can, and then if something happens on the night or is no good. At least we've got a choice and we'll have more material to draw from. Three of the tracks on that record were done in the afternoon and not live in front of the audience. If you got nothing to do for a couple of days you could just lie there and listen to them in the headphones and figure out which songs had the real audience and which ones didn't. I did **Ozzy's** 4th record *Bark at the Moon* at The Power Station back in New York in 1983. Ridge Farm Studio was losing money at that point so I flew Concord Air to NYC to start mixing because we were so short of time. *Tribute* was the last record I did with **Ozzy**.

KNAC.COM: I always thought **Brad Gillis** never got enough credit for taking Randy's place during the **Diary of a Madman** Tour. He nailed everything.

NORMAN: Brad's a great player and a nice guy. I think that's why **Ozzy** got him. He's good enough to play any of that stuff. **Rudy Sarzo** was not a particularly accomplished bass player I'm afraid. He's a showman. I liked **Tommy Aldrige**. He's a great drummer.

KNAC.COM: What bands would you like to work that you never have?

NORMAN: **Kings X**, **Tool**, I wouldn't mind working with **Queensryche**.

KNAC.COM: Would you like to work with **Rush**?

NORMAN: I almost worked with **Rush** one time. I don't know if I would work with **Rush**. Although I really like them, I am not very fond of **Geddy Lee's** voice. It's hard to make a voice sound good if you're not that fond of it. I might not be the right guy for **Rush**. Although I could probably do all the rest of it, I might not get the vocals right. I met **Geddy** once and it was a big thrill for me because I think the guy is really good regardless.

KNAC.COM: Would you like to work with **Iron Maiden**?

NORMAN: (Laughs) I've always liked **Iron Maiden**. I don't know that singer **Bruce Dickinson** is particularly fond of my work. Although we're cordial towards each other, I don't think he's a big fan of my stuff. I used to hang out with **Rod Smallwood**, their manager, because we're both from Yorkshire, so he always liked me. Rod used to live right behind the Famous Rainbow Bar and Grill on Sunset (In Hollywood, CA). When the Rainbow closed, we would go around to Rod's house. He used to live in actor **Peter Sellars'** old house which was right behind the Rainbow. I remember seeing some really crazy parties there. Rod actually had a pub upstairs in his house built on the back with pumps and all kinds of beer. I used to hang out there a lot with **Iron Maiden's** drummer **Nikko McBrain**.

KNAC.COM: **Nikko** used to play drums with **Pat Travers Band**.

NORMAN: I like the **Pat Travers Band**. I did a tour with them. I was also the sound engineer for 2 years for **The Tubes**. That was a lot of fun. We used to have a lot of stuff going on in that show. It was a great time. I think I did about 1000 shows in one year. We used to do 2 shows a day sometimes. That was one of the hardest working bands I've ever seen. They got 22 people on stage sometimes. That was one of the first bands where we had T.V's onstage, we would blackout the stage and the T.V's would talk to the audience. It was pretty wild! Unfortunately **Vince Welnick (Keyboards Tubes, Grateful Dead)** killed himself last year in front of his wife. I was pretty shocked to hear that.

KNAC.COM: Just like **Brad Delp** the singer from **Boston**?

NORMAN: Yeah I heard about that. That was really strange. Maybe he wasn't making any money. Who knows? I never met any of those guys from Boston. Things just keep going around. It's surprising how long lasting some of these bands are. They just keep coming back.

KNAC.COM: Speaking of comebacks. There are rumors floating that you're going to do the new **Malice** record. I thought your work on **License to Kill** was superb.

NORMAN: Those guys called me up and wanted me to do something. I actually do have a studio here at my house in N.J. but it's only suitable for mixing. My wife might not dig the tracking. We might do an EP and I'll fly out to L.A. I liked that **Malice** record **License to Kill** we did. That's right when I first moved to the U.S. I liked the songs "**Sinister Double**" and "**Chain Gang Women**." I like the way **James Neal** staggered the vocal on the chorus on that song. We did that record at

night because we could only get the night shift so it was very odd. We started recording at 8 pm and I'd be going to bed at 7 am. It was very tortuous doing it that way. We did that record on an Ampeg 1200 Machine. The machine was not adjusted correctly and it would change speed depending on where you were on the reel. And we were having enormous problems with stuff going out of tune. We had to constantly retune. I think the sounds are really good on the record like the drums. We worked very hard on that and we mixed it at Yamaha in Glendale.

KNAC.COM: Why do you think the bottom fell out for **Malice** back then?

NORMAN: Well the management was a little funky. I thought they had a good chance, but they couldn't control James their singer. Which is unfortunate, because that guy's got an amazing voice. That guy can rip it out. We got some good takes. I used to like **Cliff Coruthers** their drummer. And there's some good solo's on there from **Mick Zane**, too.

KNAC.COM: What's your funniest **Motorhead** Story?

NORMAN: I was doing a live show with **Motorhead** when they were recording **No Sleep Until Hammersmith**. They used to shoot these pyro rockets down these wires from the back of the hall to behind the drums on stage like bottle rockets. Problem was, these studio guys set the drum mics up so high they were blocking the special effect wires. So when they fired off these pyros from the back of the room. They took off blazing down the wire and stopped right over his the drummers head "**Philthy Animal**" **Phil Taylor**. Poor **Phil** is getting showered with these sparks and he's beating on himself. I was cracking up watching him flailing around trying to put himself out and keep the beat as well. Every time he flailed and hit one more sparks would come down. **Phil** comes off stage and he's all burnt and shit. (Laughing) **Lemmy** was going, "You really fucked that song up!" **Phil** replied, "We didn't play that song!" So **Lemmy** says, "Look, I played it! I don't know what you we're playing!" Obviously **Lemmy** didn't know what had happened with the pyro.

KNAC.COM: Since you traded in your studio console for a set of golf clubs. Will we ever see The Norman Unit "On Yer Bike" and back in the studio again?

NORMAN: (Laughs) You might! I don't really have time. I also have another company I'm running with a partner so I'm pretty busy. But you never know...You never know your luck!

KNAC.COM: You have lots of Platinum and Gold Records on the wall dude. It's pretty intimidating!

NORMAN: I've got a few. My daughter Aja is a pretty good singer. She just turned 16. My son Hunter is 13, and he plays drums in a rock band, and he's continually asking me to do stuff for him. I'm like, "Ah, I don't think so. You guys just keep practicing."

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READER RANTS

7thRingofHell - 7/10/2007 1:21:00 AM

Digi-Aussie. Ron Nevison Produced an Engineered The Ultimate Sin. Not Max. Killer record though. Killer of Giants that is.

7thRingofHell - 7/10/2007 1:15:48 AM

Were. We're. I'm spell check guy. Phil is the editing gate keeper not I.

cucaracha - 7/8/2007 10:22:23 AM

who is this guy again.

wira99 - 7/7/2007 7:24:31 AM

Dear Mr Michael Fischer (Writer, Cartoonist), do you know the difference between "were" & "we're"? Haha. Good interview, though.

ocillotist - 7/5/2007 1:11:36 PM

max did one of my bands ep's, got a great sound

ken_masters - 7/5/2007 12:25:53 PM

for a sec there i thought that pic of max was dave mustaine!!

scrapmetal - 7/4/2007 7:09:01 AM

Oh and you insufferable idiot,booze & weed are all considered drugs.Your moronic idiocy never fails to amze me.

scrapmetal - 7/4/2007 7:08:05 AM

ANd still having a better time than you,Blob Face.The only thing that would be better than you being permanently banned from this site would be a public torture session on Osama Bin Laden.

heem - 7/3/2007 9:11:27 AM

...livin in Ma. acting the fool

heem - 7/3/2007 9:11:06 AM

...scrap the o' bastard

heem - 7/3/2007 9:10:11 AM

scrap is fighting the triple threat of booze,drugs,weed

scrapmetal - 7/3/2007 2:44:05 AM

Ultimate Sin is definitely the best produced album in Ozzy's heydey before SHaron took over & schlocked him up.

digi_aussie - 7/2/2007 12:45:17 AM

I remember that Max Norman produced The Ultimate Sin record by Ozzy with Jake E Lee on guitars. I really admired Max for his work on that album. I was in high school when The Ultimate Sin was released and I remember listening to it and thinking how Max had done a really cool sound throughout the album. Cheers, Digi :)

hearmyhate - 6/29/2007 8:02:32 PM

Max has produced some of my favorite metal albums, like Megadeth, Loudness, Ozzy, Grim Reaper etc.. It has been good reading about him. help Maiden improving their sound. 1-Max Norman 2-Terry Date 3-Martin Birch

RaymondLugo - 6/29/2007 6:46:03 PM

Jake rules!

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