

# \$ skinny puppy ®

It is impossible to describe the sound of Skinny Puppy by referring to any one album, they were not a band to repeat themselves. Rather than stagnating, their sound constantly changed, grew and morphed. To try to catalogue and evaluate each release would take a small novel not just a one page synopsis! So I am going to try to encapsulate an overview of the driving forces and ideas behind the band rather than listing a release by release biography.

Skinny Puppy started out as cEvin Key (Kevin Crompton) and Nivek Ogre (Kevin Ogilvie). cEvin created most of the music and Ogre did lyrics and vocals. The project arose out of their desire to create something raw and experimental in complete juxtaposition to the inane pop music going on around them. There were many bands that were influential to Skinny Puppy: SPK, Cabaret Voltaire, Nocturnal Emissions, The Legendary Pink Dots as well as, very importantly, Throbbing Gristle and Kraftwerk. cEvin apparently once said that when he got his first Kraftwerk album, he threw away his entire record collection and started over! Early Skinny Puppy has sometimes been described as the bridge between the harshly industrial TG and danceably electronic Kraftwerk. Experimenting with harsh, caustic, electronic sounds, Skinny Puppy would indulge in 'brap' sessions, (described as "getting together to hook up electronic instruments, get high and record") to create 'aural sculptures' and some of the most innovative, expressive and unique music ever made that ranged from sparse electronica to dense, complex and unrelenting soundscapes of noise.



cEvin had come up with the name 'Skinny Puppy' even before he had met Ogre but they both shared an abhorrence for the horrors of vivisection which was a theme explored in many of their songs. The basic idea behind the name was of an abused, neglected animal who doesn't speak except in a pain-filled yelp. An early concept for the band was to see the world through the eyes of a neglected dog, this resulted in Ogres lyrics for 'K-9' one of the very first Skinny Puppy songs. Their thematic content expanded over the years to confront listeners with the cold hard facts not just of animal abuse but of chemical warfare, industrial pollution and many other political and social problems. Ogre also aired the misery of his own personal battles with drug addition, paralleling the pollution of his body with chemicals to the environmental pollution of the earth.

Skinny Puppy live shows were theatrical pieces filled with blood, gore, hyperdermic needles and machinery (it has been suggested that Ogre's taste for live theatrics was a result of him being a fan of Alice Cooper!). A favourite prop used extensively in there live shows was an extremely realistic model dog called 'CHUD' who would be filled with blood and entrails and then 'operated' on by Ogre, graphically symbolising the horrors of vivisection. During their VIVisectVI tour an audience member apparently mistook CHUD for the real thing and called the police resulting in Ogre and Key spending the night in jail. Ogre released a statement about the event: "I find it paradoxical that the police can justify arresting us on the assumption that we mutilate and experiment on live animals for a theatrical performance when the inhuman reality is that it occurs in over 300 laboratories every day." The VIVisectVI Tour exposed many people to the hidden horrors of animal experimentation and would make the band forever synonymous with animal rights.



There have been many interesting and influential people involved with the band over the years. When they first began recording in 1984 they hooked up with producer Dave ('Rave') Ogilvie. He worked on their first studio track, 'Sleeping Beast', and would continue to produce their music and remain a major contributor and unofficial band member of the band through most of it's existence. Al Jorgensen of Ministry fame made a firm friendship with Ogre and collaborated with SP on their Rabies album; while Ogre would tour with ministry and also appear with him in the industrial supergroup Pigface. Another artist of note to work with Skinny Puppy is Legendary Pink Dots frontman Edward Ka-Spel. Ka-Spel collaborated with the members of Skinny Puppy in a project called Tear Garden and also did sound and support acts for live Skinny Puppy shows. When Skinny Puppy started playing live they acquired a second keyboardist by the name of Wilhelm Shroder. He didn't stay with the band for long and quit during the recording of their third album "Mind: the Perpetual Intercourse" but went on to form Front Line Assembly as 'Bill Leeb'.

After the departure of Leeb, classically trained keyboardist Dwayne Goettel entered to fill the spot. Goettel became a vital member of the band and this line-up lasted for the many years until Dwayne's tragic death from a heroin overdose in 1995 during the recording of The Process. There had been much tension in the band in the years leading up to this point and Ogre had left the band shortly before Goettel's death. Both Ogre and cKevin Key worked on various projects after the break up (including Download, Tear Garden, Hilt, Rx, ohGr) but put aside their differences to reunite for the Doomsday concert in 2000 and have this year released "Doomsday: Back and Forth: Series 5".

[www.skinnypuppy.com](http://www.skinnypuppy.com)

[www.ohgr.net](http://www.ohgr.net)

[www.litany.net](http://www.litany.net) - Music news covering Skinny Puppy, ohGr, Download and related projects

[www.subconsciousstudios.com](http://www.subconsciousstudios.com) - cEvin Keys record label featuring a wide variety of related artists