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Meet a musical member

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Name: Andy Shernoff.

Where I live: Greenpoint, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Family: My beautiful fiancée Carla Rhodes and my rescue dog Duchess.

Education: P.S. 148, Flushing High School, State University of New York at New Paltz.

Occupation: Songwriter/musician/producer.

How I got where I am today: I was raised in a safe, supportive environment by parents who nurtured an appreciation for art, music and different cultures. They provided me with the solid foundation to pursue my dreams. Probably the only issue in which religion and I are in accord is the importance of a strong family structure. The world would be a better place if every child was born from love. Of course, that doesn't require the supernatural, just sensible birth control.

Where I'm headed: We come from stardust and we will return to stardust.

Person in history I admire: John Lennon, for inspiring me to become a musician and setting a high artistic standard. Neil deGrasse Tyson, the smartest man in the room and a noble warrior for science, reason and logic.

Quotations I like: "With or without religion, you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion." — Steven Weinberg

"One man's theology is another man's belly laugh." — Robert Heinlein

I love to hear Christian apologists try to squirm their way out of this one, and why does an almighty god need an apologist anyway? "However, you may purchase male or female slaves from among the foreigners who live among you. You may also purchase the children of such resident foreigners, including those who have been born in your land. You may treat them as your property, passing them on to your children as a permanent inheritance. You may treat your slaves like this, but the people of Israel, your relatives, must never be treated this way." — Leviticus 25:44-46, New Living Translation

These are a few of my favorite things: Music, wine, barbecue, travel to exotic locales, Jon Stewart's "Daily Show," focusing on the process not the destination.

These are not: Faith, original sin, people who call themselves "spiritual."

My doubts about religion started: As a child, I found that no matter how hard I prayed, I never got a response. I eventually realized I was simply talking to myself.



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Before I die: Life is simpler when you know what makes you happy, and I know that every day I make music is a good day. I hope to continue to enjoy its healing power as long as I am on this planet.

There's a reason why many churches open their services with a band and sing-along. The magic in the music gives the congregation a high, which is then misconstrued as being closer to god. I strive to get that feeling without delusion.

Ways I promote freethought: I recently released a CD of songs about religion and faith. I felt the need to take a musical stand and "come out of the closet." I resent the stigma attached to atheism. The nonsense that we lack morals and can't be trusted is appalling. According to a recent poll conducted by University of British Columbia and the University of Oregon, atheists are trusted less than rapists!

In my lifetime, I've seen blacks and gays improve their status by demanding equal and fair treatment. I think it is time for atheist liberation!

I wish you'd have asked me: What's the story behind your song "Are You Ready to Rapture?"

I come from New York City, where nobody thinks Jesus is actually returning to Earth. I grew up completely unaware of "the Rapture." A few years ago, I was surprised to learn that evangelical Christians were offering financial support to settlers on the West Bank of Palestine in an attempt to destabilize the tense situation and accelerate the End Times prophecy. It could all be dismissed as the rantings of religious fanatics, except there are powerful people in government who believe this implicitly. It used to be just nutjobs standing on a street corner in Times Square screaming about the end of the world, now they are running for president.

I would never mock somebody's religion, but if it's going to affect public policy, then I have a right to satirize it. And if I can get a good laugh out of it, even better.

'Are You Ready to Rapture?'

Andy Shernoff modestly omits his decades-long musical influence as a rock journalist and co-founder of the early punk band the Dictators in the mid-1970s, predating the Ramones by a year. He later collaborated with Joey Ramone and several other groups. Shernoff played at the March 2012 Reason Rally in Washington, D.C., the nation's largest secular gathering ever.

He released his first solo EP "Don't Fade Away" in 2012 and his second solo EP "On the First Day Man Created God" in 2013. The latter features "Are You Ready to Rapture?" "Skeptical," "Fisher of Men" and "Get on Your Knees for Jesus." Check out andyshernoff.com and cdbaby.com/cd/andyshernoff3 for more. Google "shernoff rapture" too see the "Ready to Rapture" video.

He wrote "Rapture" to poke fun at the late Pastor Harold Camping's predictions of Armageddon. Shernoff told Dangerous Minds online: "I had the phrase Jewish zombie rolling through my brain and wanted to incorporate it into a song. I developed a fascination with Christian eschatology and researched it extensively. I wanted everything in the song to accurately represent what these knuckleheads believe. It took a few months, and I probably wrote 25 verses until I had the right combination of drama, truth and sarcasm."

Are You Ready to Rapture?

The skies part

as a light shines through

guess who's back

it's the zombie Jew.

He's really pissed

at the unmarried fornicators

the stem cell crusaders

and the butt hole invaders.

So the towers fell

and the earth did quake

just a little taste of his vengeance

America prepare for your fate.

'Cause when the trumpets sound, he will astound

watch the rivers turn to blood

the sinners cry and the dead will rise

judgment day has come.

Are you ready to rapture?

The savior that you spurn

Loves you forever

But the unbelievers must burn

When the zombie Jew returns. . .



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