IKF INTERVIEW

▪ Interview by Chrissy Koeth

KUNG-FU UNPLUGGED

FOR GODHEAD VOCALIST, GUITARIST AND WRITER JASON MILLER, KUNG-FU ALLOWS HIM TO UNPLUG AND TUNE OUT THE REST OF THE WORLD

Kung-fu probably doesn't come to mind when you think of rock bands, but for Jason Miller, vocalist guitarist, and writer for the rock group Godhead, kung-fu balances his body, mind and music. Not only does kung-fu improve his physical health, it allows him to unplug and tune out the rest of the world.

With six studio albums, including the recently released "At the Edge of the World" on Driven Music Group and over 10 years in the music industry, Godhead has survived where many others haven't. They've toured with Marilyn Manson, Disturbed, Static X and played at OzzFest. They've performed before small groups to the tens of thousands. By ignoring the trends, Godheart has developed a unique sound and continued to grow a strong, steady fan base. Miller is proud to be part of this process, along with connecting to fans through his lyrics, which are more and more influenced by his kung fu training and Buddhism.

In this exclusive interview, Jason Miller discusses his martial arts roots, his current kung gar training and the role kung-fu plays in his kung-fu training.

C. K.

Jason Miller (right) is on the receiving end of this grab from grandmaster Buck Sam Kong.

Martial arts photos by Benoit Watteau

INSIDE KUNG-FU: *You grew up outside Washington D.C. in Virginia, the same place where God Head was formed. When did you become interested in martial arts?*

JASON MILLER: I always wanted to train kung-fu since I was a kid and tae kwon do was the closest I could get at the time. It was Bruce Lee movies all the way. He was like a superhero that could do all those amazing things, but a real person. To a kid, he was larger than life. Then years later, when I moved to Los Angeles, I discovered the wealth of kung-fu schools here. There was a praying mantis school near my house and I trained there for a year, but it wasn't right for me. There are so many great schools, but when I found Buck Sam Kong's school, I knew where I wanted to be.

IKF: *You've trained with Buck Sam Kong for four years. What drew you to his school?*

JM: I really liked the atmosphere; it's very laid back and I appreciate that. If you're there and want to work hard, want to learn, he responds to that. Here he is, a legend, one of the first masters from Hong Kong to teach Americans in Hawaii during the 1960s, on the covers of many martial arts magazines, and he's teaching the class. He could easily pawn it off to one of his senior students, but he's there teaching, which I think is great.

IKF: *Why did you decide to return to martial arts?*

JM: I wanted to get into better shape and continue to do things for myself that are healthy. Also, it's a guilty pleasure. When I'm training it's like I'm a kid again. It was a combination of wanting to be healthy and wanting to have fun.

IKF: *What part of kung-fu do you enjoy the most?*

JM: I enjoy training a form and getting it down really well, which is probably the performer in me. A very close second is sparring. Talk about knocking everything out. If you're distracted, thinking about something in your career or life, you're going to get

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"Kung Fu Unplugged"

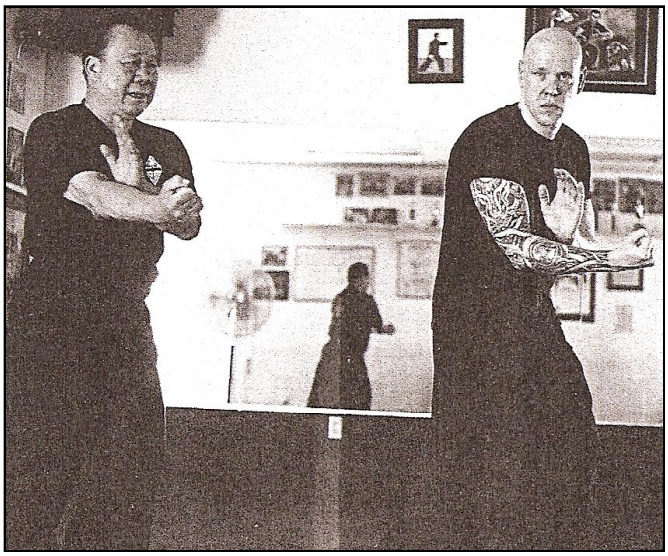
"Inside Kung Fu" magazine July 2009

"Kung Fu has made me more confident, more self aware of my body, inspired me to be more healthy" says Jason Miller; vocalist. guitarist, and writer for the rock group Godhead. "Its enabled me to be a calmer person. You get that aggression out when you're doing kung fu." Miller, a student of Sifu Kong for 4 years says "It has helped me when I'm tense"

In the July issue of "Inside Kung Fu" , Miller was interviewed by Chrissy Koeth, the magazine's 2009 "Writer of the Year." The following excerpts are from her interview. She says "Kung Fu probably doesn't come to mind when you think of rock bands, but for Jason Miller kung fu balances his body, mind and music. Not only does it improve his physical health, it allows him to **unplug and tune out the rest of the world.** With 6 studio albums and over 10 years in the music industry, his group has performed before small groups to the tens of thousands."

Miller, who wanted to study kung fu since he was a kid, got his chance when he moved to L.A. years later. He says " I discovered the wealth of schools here. There was a kung fu school near my house and I trained there for a year, but it wasn't right for me. There are so many great schools, but when I found Buck Sam Kong's . school, I knew where I wanted to be. I really liked the atmosphere; it's very laid back and I appreciate that.. If you're there and want to work hard, he responds to that. Here he is, a legend, one of the first masters from Hong Kong to teach Americans in Hawaii during the 1960's, on the covers of many martial arts magazines, and he's teaching the class. He could easily pawn it off to one of the senior students, but he's there teaching, which I think is great."

When asked "Why did you choose to study Hung Gar?" Miller's reply was "I wanted to get into better shape and continue to do things for myself that are healthy. Also it's a guilty pleasure. **When I'm training, it's like I'm a kid again. It was a combination of wanting to be healthy and wanting to have fun."** The part of training I enjoy the most is form training and getting it down really well, which is probably the performer in me. Kung fu has definitely made me more confident, more self aware of my body, inspired me to be more healthy. Its also made me a calmer person. You get that aggression out when you train. Kung Fu keeps me focused. it's an exercise of both mind and body.



"When I go to class, my phone is off!" says Miller. There's no outside influence, nothing affecting me except training. It's something I really need. I do so many things, wear so many hats, I'm always getting phone calls and to block it out and simplify my life helps so much.

The music business in general, is extremely stressful and having an outlet like kung fu has helped me handle the situation better. The industry has changed so much in the last 10 years, and having that focus helps me not go crazy."