

## Atheism is music for an ex-Mennonite and an ex-Mormon



# MONSTER ON SUNDAY

Tally and Steve Cass front the Atheist rock band Monster On Sunday, which released its first CD in August. Formed in 2012, with Tally as singer/lyricist and Steve as guitarist/composer, the band has performed to rave reviews on the San Diego music scene and in Portland, Oregon. Joining them this summer for their album release show in Ramona, California, were Atheist folk singer Shelly Segal and comedian Steve Hill. They also appeared at the first annual Godless Gala in June, hosted by the Humanist Fellowship of San Diego. Their first video, for their single “Just Like You” is slated to premiere on Atheist TV. They sat down with American Atheist to talk about how the band got started and what’s in store for the future.

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### What's the story behind the title *Baby Eater*?

**Tally:** A lot of religious people try to pretend that they have some sort of monopoly on morality. Our whole album, especially the title track by the same name, challenges that view. The title track is about how religious thinking can cause many immoral acts which can only be justified through indoctrination.

### What are your religious backgrounds?

**Tally:** I was raised Mennonite Christian, but belief in god never really took. I've called myself an Atheist since I was a teenager,

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which caused me to have painful family issues throughout my life. Monster On Sunday is a place where I can freely speak out on these topics that affect so many of us. A lot of our songs deal with my personal experiences of being the only Atheist in a very religious family.

**Steve:** I was raised in a devoutly Mormon home, and I grew up really buying into the religion. I even went on a two-year mission in Tucson when I was nineteen. Now, I’m an outspoken Atheist. I think my story is similar to a lot of people who were devout. Losing my religion was a slow process that took years as I realized more and more that there was no good evidence to justify my religious beliefs.



## What about your musical backgrounds?

**Steve:** Tally and I both fronted our own rock bands for many years. Our groups played shows together—that’s how we met. I started going with Tally to Atheist meetings and events, and eventually we decided to join our passions for music and Atheism to create Monster On Sunday. We consider ourselves to be an Atheist-activist band. We want to use our music to promote freethought and a rational world view.

**On your website, [MonsterOnSunday.com](http://MonsterOnSunday.com), is the quote from 1 Timothy 2:12: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.” There are so many horrible passages**

## in the Bible. How did you arrive at the decision to feature this one?

**Steve:** With a female-fronted, Atheist rock band, this quote seemed an obvious choice. It shows how much stock people can put in the Bible and its proscriptions.

**Tally:** It takes a lot of courage to speak out on these topics, especially for a woman. I hope my lyrics become an inspiration to women everywhere to not be afraid to speak their minds.

## Why did you choose “Just Like You” to be your first single?

**Steve:** We wanted to release a song where there would be no confusion as to what side we’re on in the religious debate. “Just Like You” makes it clear that we are firebrand Atheists and anti-theists. We felt that if people had that context, there would be no way to misinterpret the lyrics in the rest of our songs on the album. We want our Atheist message to be loud and clear—with no apologies.

## “Stardust” is another great song. What was the inspiration for it?

**Tally:** Many religions claim that divine inspiration is necessary to feel awe and inspire true art, so we wanted to write a song that reflected something that is *truly* awe-inspiring and real. As Lawrence Krauss, one of the inspirations for this song put it, “Every atom in your body came from a star that exploded, and the atoms in your left hand probably came from a different star than your right hand. It really is the most poetic thing I know about physics. You are all stardust.” In “Stardust,” we pit the view of creationism against the scientific understanding of how the universe, our planet, and our species came to exist.

**Steve:** Science may be the poetry of reality, but with this song we wanted to make poetry out of science.

## What do you want the band to accomplish in the long run?

**Tally:** Our mission is to let people know that they are not alone in their non-belief, and to inspire change through meaningful lyrics. We want to encourage people to not be afraid to speak out against the harms of religion. Basically, we intend to use our rock to kick religion’s ass to make the world a better place! ■

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Steve and Tally have also been interviewed on The Ardent Atheist and The Scathing Atheist podcasts. Links to both are on [MonsterOnSunday.com](http://MonsterOnSunday.com), where you can order the CD, t-shirts, and other merchandise. There you’ll also find the complete lyrics to all of their songs, along with photos, reviews, concert announcements, and more!