

EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS REACH

ADVERTISE IN CHICO, RENO,
AND SACRAMENTO!

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING,
CALL (916) 498-1234

SN&R



Thunderdrone

Muse's circus of killer tech

BY HOWARD HARDEE



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF FORNEY

and tied in with the *Simulation Theory* album.”

Howard admits that there's still “a bit of tech knocking around” on the *Simulation Theory* World Tour. By that, he means Muse has brought to life the enormous cyborg skeleton from its music video for “The Dark Side” to loom over the band onstage, shooting lasers from its mouth.

“It's pretty incredible,” Howard says, sounding giddy. “We didn't really want to give it away, but we just couldn't help it. It's epic, when you see it. It

just looks nuts.”

Frontman and guitar wizard Matt Bellamy recently appeared in a promotional video wearing a 12-foot-tall robot suit, somewhat like Ripley in *Alien*, but it's unclear whether Bellamy would be able to shred guitar properly in the suit, and Howard isn't saying if he's going to wear it onstage.

“Robots do appear at some point in the show, and, you know, they're pretty threatening,” he promises. “I didn't think we could go this far, but we've finally gone too far. At some point, you've got to find the limits of what you can do in a rock show. It feels like no one else is doing that in the world of guitar music. It feels pretty unique at the moment.”

But that does present a problem: The band that once observed that “endless growth is unsustainable” can't keep topping itself forever.

“That's the thing, it's becoming unsustainable,” Howard says. “This is very much about the spectacle, this tour, but the antithesis would be to do something that's purely about the music and nothing else, which is most likely what we'll do in the future. At this stage, I don't know. It's either back down to earth or straight into space.”

By now, we know which direction Muse will steer their starship. They pretty clearly can't quit killer robots. □

Editor's note: This article first appeared on the author's personal blog.

Muse has been blowing the lids off the world's

grandest enorodomes for a good decade. The British rock trio's past four albums—*The Resistance* (2009), *The 2nd Law* (2012), *Drones* (2015) and *Simulation Theory* (2018)—have been accompanied by increasingly ludicrous, arena-sized spectacles, including LED towers for each member of the band, a shape-shifting step pyramid made of video screens, an indoor zeppelin, pyrotechnics, fireworks and lasers. So many lasers.

Muse finally seemed to have topped itself, however, with the terrifyingly high-tech *Drones* World Tour, which featured a squadron of flying robots ominously hovering over the band and the audience. Impressive though they were, the drones themselves frequently malfunctioned on the U.S. leg of the tour, says drummer Dominic Howard. One wayward drone ended up braining bassist Chris Wolstenholme.

“The tech we were using, it felt so new, kind of like beta, you know? It was definitely a bit difficult because there were some shows where they didn't work, and one of them fucking fell out of the sky and landed on Chris' head, at one point. His head went through it,” Howard says, laughing.

“There were a couple of edgy moments and the technology could be a little bit temperamental, so we wanted to bring things slightly more down to earth.”

Muse is supposedly scaling back the tech stuff in favor of choreographed performers on the *Simulation Theory* World Tour, which is rattling Golden 1 Center on Thursday. The band has a history of using non-musicians for elaborate displays, such as aerial acrobats suspended by balloons and an actor playing a Wall Street banker hurling money at the audience.

“It's that kind of stuff,” Howard says, “but there's a bit more of it and it's really kind of styled

Thai Food & gluten free options

THE **coconut** on T

Red Curry with Tofu & Veggies

Best
of Sacramento
SN&R 18

Best Thai

10 BEERS ON TAP
HAPPY HOUR EVERYDAY: 4:30 - 6PM
\$4 BEERS, WINE & APPETIZERS

1110 T St. Sacramento, CA 95811 | 916-822-4665
Check **yelp** for daily \$2 Beer Specials

drunken noodle

~Midtown~
Powered by The Coconut
Thai Food & Gluten Free Options



2502 J St. Sacramento, CA | 916-447-1855