



EXPANDING WONDERLAND

Hatter M spins off into music and gaming after issue #3 hits comics racks tomorrow

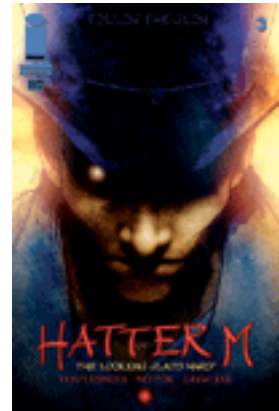
By Brian Warmoth

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Author Frank Beddor is on his seventh year in a journey through Wonderland re-imagining Louis Carroll's classic. Issue 3 of his Image series *The Looking Glass Wars: Hatter M* lands on shelves Wednesday, accompanied by a spin-off game and news of a forthcoming soundtrack due in November.

"For two years I worked on the foundation, the rules of the land, the logic and all of those things," says Beddor, explaining his take on Wonderland. The series posits that its protagonist Alyss was a refugee from the bizarre kingdom who told her story to Carroll, rather than vice versa.

"I've been living with this for so long that it just seems to be part of me now," said the writer of his reworked Wonderland. Beddor, a former world champion member of the U.S. freestyle ski team and producer of the film *There's Something About Mary*, says the comic books followed his novel *The Looking Glass Wars*, spurred on by fan responses asking him to expand on the Hatter character.



"With the comic I could push it, because the novel was published through a young readers publisher, Egmont," Beddor explained. "What's unusual is that the comic book came out first here and has driven the awareness, whereas in the U.K. the novel came out first."

Just as the comic books have allowed him to explore more mature scenes and tones with artist Ben Templesmith, Beddor said the game and soundtrack have also lent new voices and flavors to his world, built around a community he cultivated through the Internet and comic book conventions.

Beddor said the game came together out of an unlikely collaboration he stumbled into.

"I hired someone to come and input some data into my computer," the writer recalled. "They were obsessed with Magic [the collectible card game], and I asked them, 'Have you ever thought of creating your own game?' His face lit up, and he's now a full-time employee as the game designer."

The soundtrack, meanwhile, was thoroughly Beddor's own vision for the world's growth.

"I went to all these indie bands and asked them to write music with themes and ideas that were important to me from the book," he said. "The next thing I knew, I had 12 songs."

The album includes a broad range of tracks, including hip-hop, electronica and ballads.

"It's eclectic, but tonally I feel that it represents my world," Beddor explained.





Grammy-nominated DJ Adam Freeland performs one of Beddor's favorite tracks, "Burn the Clock," which the writer said rips lines straight from the novel.

"[Freeland] took samples from the actor who read the audiobook," he explained. "So the song is a remix, and then we have this actor who says, 'She's trying to find her way home,' and he reverbs 'homehomehome' over and over again."

As far as the future of the comics and a sequel novel, Beddor has plenty planned for his stories as well. "I'm thinking about doing a series following Redd, where she's the hero of the comic," the author pondered.

Aunt Redd, in Beddor's story, is Alyss' aunt who kills her niece's parents amid a civil war.

"There's three years where she re-imagines Wonderland and rebuilds it in her own garish image," said Beddor, setting the stage for a possible follow-up miniseries.

Another character he hopes to expand on is Humpty Dumpty.

"Humpty Dumpty I'm desperate to figure out," Beddor added. "In the second book, Borderland is a big environment. It's built like a boardgame, and the environments are riffs off of all sorts of different games. So I'm thinking of using Humpty Dumpty in a puzzle where you put him back together and he creates this Transformer-like character."

Dedicating what he estimates to be 90 percent of his average workday to Wonderland has not kept Beddor completely out of the movie scene, however.



"The most exciting thing that came out of Alyss is that Hasbro asked me to turn Monopoly the game into the 'Monopoly' the movie," he said. "The lead character lives in Manhattan, and he falls into Monopoly City, and the evil Parker Brothers rule the town where we see the game being played for the first time."