

ARI LEHMAN (born May 2, 1965 in New York, New York) is an American performing artist, composer, and actor. He is best known for having played the first Jason Voorhees as a child in the Paramount horror film Friday the 13th. Lehman currently records and tours the US and Europe with his punk metal band, First Jason.

A native New Yorker, Ari Lehman grew up in Westport, CT, where he trained in Classical Music and Jazz Piano. Lehman was presented with an All-State Award for Excellence in Jazz Piano and a scholarship to Berklee School of Music by the famous jazz educator, Dr. Billy Taylor.

Lehman heard about an audition being held in Westport for the movie, "Manny's Orphans", about a group of inner-city orphans who play soccer, directed by Sean S. Cunningham. Lehman snuck into the audition and landed the 80-line role of "Roger". This role led to Lehman getting the call to play Jason Voorhees in Friday the 13th from Sean S. Cunningham. "For his audition Lehman was asked one key question by the director, 'Can you swim?'"

After the release of Friday the 13th, Lehman returned to New York City where he enrolled at New York University and concentrated on Big Band Orchestration and Jazz Piano, "where he studied with the likes of Vladimir Shafranov". Lehman's career led him to become a prominent touring keyboardist for some of the top names in Reggae and African music of the time, with whom he toured throughout the US, Europe and West Africa, and recorded with at Tuff Gong Records and Interscope Records.

Lehman went on to form his own world rock and reggae band Ari Ben Moses Band, and gained acclaim when, upon moving to Chicago in late 2002, he was contacted by horror fans who invited him to attend an East Coast horror convention. [In response to their enthusiasm, Lehman became a regular on the horror convention circuit, and saw an opportunity to give Jason Voorhees a musical voice on the Punk and Metal scene. Lehman created First Jason, a punk metal band specifically for horror fans, especially the fans of Jason Voorhees and Friday the 13th.] Uber Rock (UK) in their review wrote, "...when you consider that Lehman was barely a teenager when he hopped aboard the horror express to lifelong notoriety, it's some achievement. The more blinkered of horror rock fans may well balk at the sounds summoned up by the outfit (Lehman, on vocals as well as "keychete", joined on the recording by drummers...), the Electric Machete Keytar stabbing out a soundmix of distorted guitar and bass, but few could argue that Lehman is, once again, creating something memorable by borrowing from the past and updating with his own vision...just like Cunningham did in 1980."

"Over thirty years after making his brief-yet-memorable appearance as Jason Voorhees and Lehman continues to promote his part in the franchise, not only paying tribute to his character in his music but also contributing to the likes of Crystal Lake Memories and His Name Was Jason: 30 Years of Friday the 13th."

#### Film Career

Lehman made his film debut in Sean S. Cunningham's film Manny's Orphans. He then played the role of a child Jason Voorhees in Friday the 13th, appearing in Pamela Voorhees's flashback and Alice Hardy's dream - the final scene of the film. "It was Savini who suggested to director-producer Sean S. Cunningham, after Savini had seen Carrie, that they should have a shock ending too and that the boy Jason (Ari Lehman) could jump out of the lake."

Lehman also appears as the child Jason Voorhees (archive footage)(uncredited) in "Friday the 13th Part 2" (1981) and "Friday the 13th Part IV: The Final Chapter" (1984)

Since Friday the 13th, Lehman has appeared in a number of independent films and short films.

#### Music Career

In 2004, Lehman formed his punk metal band whose name, First Jason, is based upon his role as Jason Voorhees. First Jason has independently released two albums: Jason is Watching! (2009), with Chuck Lescewicz "Nefarious" from Chicago death metal band Macabre playing bass, and Amit Shamir "Cleaver" from New York hardcore punk band Cro-Mags on drums] and "Heed My Warning,"(2013), described by Uber Rock (UK) as "a brand of thinking man's horror-themed rock."

Lehman has also composed, performed and recorded a number of soundtracks for independent films, including Alexia Anastasio's critically acclaimed all-female "Salome", and Vamp Films "Vampire the Movie", "which won the 2007 Rondo Award for Best Independent Feature."