

Still searching for Eden

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paradiselost
IN REQUIEM

PARADISE LOST

Miserable northerners

Paradise Lost is probably the most Swedish sounding non-Swedish band in the World. These British gentlemen play a very dark, heavy gothic music and is now about to release a live DVD. We had a little chat with the band when they stopped for a single Swedish show in Stockholm.

The guitarist Greg Mackintosh is a very tall man, dressed entirely in black and most noticeable is probably his corded beard, which follows a very black, curly hair towards the shoulders. With a very dark and respect giving voice he tells me that this is the way he is and always has been.

- Yes, it's what I've always been into. I mean, I've never been any different. From the age of 14 or something, I've been exactly the same. So...

Is it because of all the English TV-shows? You know, people

gets killed and crime... and that our albums are so dark?

- No, no, no, no, no... Greg says laughing. I think how we group in the north of England possibly have an influence on it. But TV? I don't think so. It's a very northern English trademark... I mean the southern English call us the miserable northerners. Because everyone seem miserable up here, but they actually have more of a cynical look on life. Kind of a bit more ironic than, you know. It's not totally serious.

A lesson of Sweden

What strikes the accustomed metal listener is that very few British bands have some or any relation to the sound of Paradise Lost. They sound more like Norwegian or even more like Swedish bands in the fashion of Opeth, Deathstars or whatever. So how does it feel for Greg to be back where he belongs?

- It feels good, I know Stockholm very well anyway. We recorded an album here back in 1998, our second album. Nick, our vocalist and myself, we lived

in Stockholm for two months. I know my way around pretty well and it feels good to be back.

Where in Stockholm did you live?

- Eh, there was a record label called MNW and a studio beneath, and there were apartments in between and we lived in those apartments.

Well, for those who want to travel there and photograph it, this answer doesn't really help since the label is dead since a couple of years ago. But one might at least ask if the place was nice and all that?

- Not really, Greg laughs. But it was interesting; we got to see some things we probably wouldn't have seen unless we had done it.

Whether these memories are

good are bad is not really important. However, they are mostly it's good and Greg is proud to have some Swedish friends as well.

- I have lots of memories from Sweden, maybe not from the last time but I remember Sundsvall ten years ago where I saw a playground made of ice. Like slides and everything and that was pretty amazing. I have lots of memories from this place. I have lots of friends and lots of bands I've played with come from Sweden, so it's nice to come back here.



Greg is painting his self portrait. Check it out 4 spreads away

The ideal way of life

Yes, because the band is coming back after a couple of weeks on a European tour. A tour which Greg means only is getting better and better.

- Yeah, we started up in southern Europe, like Portugal and southern Spain and things and then worked our way up. Going through France and Belgium and Germany. I mean, we got in from the bottom to the top. I prefer it up here because I don't like hot weather so, it was just to hot for me at the start of the tour but now it's just nice. But overall the tour has gone really well.

A note to the statement is that it's now early October and the tour has been going since the shift from August to September. Since this means double temperature drop, one might wonder

how come this Britt likes it up in the Swedish coldness?

- Well, I'm used to it. I'm from northern England so it's similar weather to here.

Greg tells me he lives in a small village in the north east of England, far away from everything.

- Yeah. I got a little farmhouse in a village with about 15 people and one pub. And it's brilliant. Because if you do this for a living, if you want to you can party every night so when I go home it's

nice to just have quiet, you know. It's good for the concentration.

And I guess it's quite different from the big cities you often play in?

- Yeah, yeah. And living on a tour bus! Which is not the nicest way to live, Greg laughs. People often say "it must be nice to live on the tour bus" but you know, it's slightly cramped. If

ten people want to watch a film, only five can because they can't fit In the lounge area, you know. But just having a few guys on a tour bus, same faces every day so, it's not a job that everyone can do I think, you know. You have to kind of be able to laugh about everything So it's a strange life, Greg sighs.

The promised land

After this tour, Paradise Lost is going to America to tour with Nightwish for a couple of weeks. A country which contains as many differences as the entire Europe, gathered in only one country. Almost like a Queen album is for the entire music genre.

- Well I would say around New York, Philadelphia and some of those eastern states it's very similar to England. You know, the people are very similar. Very same kind of sense of humor and

things. But some of the mid-west states... it's completely different. It's completely alien. English people have more in common with Swedish people or German people than they have with some of the states in America. Even if they speak the same language they're millions of miles apart as people.

So how is it to play there?

- The fans varies. It depends on where you go. East coast is really nice. West coast is really nice. Some place in the middle it's strange. So you know, it just depends on where you go. It's like Europe, only all in one country. You know, it depends on where you go. Some places are good, some places are bad.

But one thing is really good, according to Greg.

- You can get into a diner at three in the morning and get anything you want, so in that perspective it's nice, you know. But it depends. It hard work however. It can be hard.

Nightwish as a tour partner, for me the two bands doesn't really match musically, but Greg assures that the musical similarities aren't that important.

- Eh, oh musically it's not my thing. But as people they are very nice and that's more important to me. If you're going to tour with someone, it's better to get along as friends. The music really isn't important at all! But I think the Nightwish fans in America pro-

bably will appreciate us as well, I don't think our fans are that different. But we'll see. I think it's going to be a good tour because we played with Nightwish before and they are nice guys so I think we should get along well.

Merry old England

In their home country England, Paradise Lost have a decent fanbase and often get about 1000 spectators at their shows. Earlier this year (2007), Paradise Lost recorded a show in London that is about to be released as a DVD within the next couple of months (March to be exact).

- It was going to be released at the end of this year (2007), but we're actually still shooting foo-

Paradise Lost



photo by



tage. While we've been on tour in Europe and when we're going on tour with Nightwish we're shooting a lot of backstage stuff and sound checks and when we're traveling around, just to make it more interesting.

And the material also contains the show, of course.

- It was a full show and it will be released on a DVD next year (2008). Probably a live album, maybe a live DVD will be included in the release. It's only the London show that was actually... eh, that was the full 48 track mix, you know. Fully great sound and you know, like multiple camera angels and you know, really great!

Greg actually promise a lot with the live material. In October they put one song from the show online, but only the video. The audio we just have to wait for...

- Yeah... that's the footage from it, the filmed footage. But it's actually the album mix of it, which they've put on it. But I would have preferred if they had used the live. Because the live sound is great, it's awesome! I'm looking forward until the live DVD comes out, early next year, because you can hear how powerful some of this stuff can sound you know.

Sounds great and the fact that the filmed show was in London is perhaps not a surprise since it's the home country of the band, but metal in England is in a low-flow and since very few other British bands sound like Paradise Lost it might be that they are affected even more?

- Yeah I know, Greg tells me when I bring up the subject. Eh, we kind of have like a core fan

base, every time we play and every where we play it's like a thousand people there. We still have a decent amount of fans there. The British metal media doesn't really exist any more though, that's the only problem. Like the Kerrang magazine is no longer a metal magazine, it covers like EMO and that's it, so it's not that many places where you get the media out there for your music. The fans however, are still very much there. There's still a decent metal scene in England and we get received okay. But like you said we're very different from some of the others but that has always been the same. When we first started playing in England we played slow and everyone else played fast and people would be shouting "play faster" but we said no, "we're going to play even slower now".



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Swedish bands

But the fact that they don't have many fellow countrymen that can relate to the music of Paradise Lost might be a problem when they're about to go touring in the land of the Queen.

- It depends... I think the last time we played... eh... hmm... I think we took Deathstars on tour last time we played there. A Swedish band. We play with all kinds of bands! Over the years we've played with Crowbar, Within Temptation, The 69 Eyes...

So it's not that much British bands you play with, you "im-

port" European bands?

- No, occasionally we've had a British band to support us or plays with Cathedral. But it doesn't really matter, we don't really think of country boundaries because it just depends on how the people are in the bands, you know.

Yeah, we remember what you said about the touring. Considering this live gigs, a frequently asked question is whether club shows or festivals is the shit. Greg might start working as a philosopher, that's at least my thought when I hear Gregs answer.

- Ah, they both have good and

bad points. On a festival it's good to play in front of so many people and you might hook up with friends and all that, but you don't get proper sound checks, you don't have that cross contact with you audience whereas club shows you get proper sound checks and good interaction with your audience but obviously on a smaller scale. So, you know, they both have good and bad points.

And the recent tour has been on club shows, something the band has used and made a really powerful set-list.

- It's pretty energetic shows for us. We've picked the songs from each album that we think have the most power, even if they are very slow songs. So it's gonna be a very groovy set, and quite powerful set, and quite energetic, so... And hopefully everyone will enjoy it.

An album

In May 2007 Paradise Lost released their latest album, called 'In Requiem'. Gregs spontaneous reaction on the album is...

- That it sounds quite raw and it sounds... it's way less commercial than anything we've done the last ten years I would say.

The changes they've done? We'll, they've turned to a pop producer.

- Between the album previously and this one (In Requiem), I would say the song writing is less formulated and more guitar driven. And... the production is not chopped up in platoons or anything so it got more of a human feeling to it, I think. It was mixed by Mike Fraser and we really have admired his work for a long time so that made it quite special, to go to Bryan Adams studio in Vancouver and get this guy to mix the album, that was pretty special.

And in the end, the songs work perfectly live.



photo by Chiaki Nozu

- Yeah, I think they do more so than anything we've ever done because, I mean, the production. The album sounds almost like a rehearsal and it's meant to be like that. It's meant to sound exactly the way it does in the rehearsal room so yeah, they work perfectly live. Probably better than a lot of our old material.

So the fans make like extra noise during the new songs?

- Yeah, it seems to be that way. We played... when we play the first song from the album live, it seems like everyone in the audience know every word, which is good. I hope it's the same tonight, you know.

Greg is very proud over the album and wouldn't change a thing. That's universal for their entire discography.

- Yeah, I mean, usually I don't regret anything about our records because it's about how you felt in a certain place and time. I

feel exactly the same about our last album and as I did when we recorded it, you know. It's not different and the same goes for every album we've recorded. I wouldn't change anything, because it's all about just being there at a certain time and it's easy to look back at it in retrospect and change things, but then it wouldn't be the same. You know, it wouldn't have the same feel.

How come they can feel so good about their albums? The secret is that they all are perfectionists.

- Well, we all are always very critical about our material so we all make sure that we write the best that we possibly can. So it's actually the same as all the others. The only difference with this one is the production...

Yeah, yeah... Vancouver and Bryan Adams, we've heard the story.

An Enemy

The album has generated one single, and it was a good song, that's what Greg say at least.

- Well, the record company picked it. We don't really like to pick singles, we like to like write an album that we think is a good, strong album and every song is good enough to be a single. And then let the label decide because they understand like "commercial" things and we're not in it for that - we don't understand that. We just know what we like but what we like might not be what everyone else like, I don't know. But I think it's a good choice for a first single. It's more of an up-tempo than the rest of the album and people tend to like that for a single and it has a catchy hook with the guitar-line/female vocal line that comes in at the start. It's one of those tunes that you find yourself humming, which is

what a singles job is, I guess.

And an enemy means that there is a diversity of opinions between two or more people. In a large scale, this might be considered as a war, which is exactly what the video for the single is about. Was this the plan from the beginning?

- Well, we found the director, or actually the director found us. He contacted us so we checked out his work and liked what he had done. And he wanted to shoot the video in a place called youter (the spelling may be incorrect) by the Black Sea. In Ukraine. A beautiful place... we let him send us the treatments and then we said which one we liked best. And then we went with it, he kept sending us edits and we just picked the final edit. So, I mean, the director had all the creative inputs and we just had the final decision.

So the war theme with the song was not planned so whats the reason to why Greg and the guys

picked it?

- I just like very miserable, grim things. And that was about how miserable we could get, so. We had lots of fun shooting it, but watching the video... it's just a bit blackish, it's never going to get shown anywhere. But I mean, youtube is taking over from where MTV left of, you know. If anyone wants to see a movie these days, they only go to youtube. And I think the video have like, I don't know, 10-20 000 hits or something - so it's done it's job!

A best seller

And not only 10-20 000 views on youtube, the charts reveal a chocking third position as a top in the chart lists. Where? No, not Sweden, actually - Greece!

- Oh yes, Greece. Well, yeah for a metal album it sold pretty well. And... we been along for quite some time and we've seen how the sales have changed over the years because of downloading.

So I'd say that every band in the world sell ten times less than they used to, you know, because of that everyone downloads. The biggest selling album a couple of years ago was Linkin Park and they sold 4 million in the world. And ten years earlier it was Madonna who sold 40 million so this just shows. Comparative it sold very well

Well, nothing last forever and the music industry is not an exception, they have to renew their methods too. So how do we compare sales? Charts may be a good way, but Greg doesn't like it.

- Some places the charts were better, some places worse. I don't take that much noise about the charts, because it depends on what else comes out that week, you know. It doesn't really give a good indication of how well you did it, just how many people that bought the album that particular week, you know.

Yeah, and that only compared



Paradise Lost

photo by Chiaki Nozu



Gregs Self portrait



to other albums. But isn't there anything good about it?

- Not really. Well it's good for press, because if you say you got a top ten selling album - you get more coverage. So from that perspective it's good, but the next

week you can be number hundred, you know.

And coverage they've got here in Hallowed from their third place in Greece charts... or not! I only saw it when I was searching for information about the band

after I've booked it in. And now it's over. So, thank you Greg for your time! Anything you want to say before we go?

- No... Cheers Swedes! I say thanks to IKEA and Volvo and the rest of it.
Caj Källmalm

Do you want to win Gregs signed self portrait?
Draw your favorite Paradise Lost-cover and e-mail it to info@hallowed.se before the 1st april. Subject it "P. Lost"