

STORMWARRIOR

Stormwarrior, known for their blend of so-called true metal anthems with nordic mythology; that is the general view or at least the view by which the band are promoted. And sure enough they do keep true to their established musical direction which may be considered true, or classical heavy metal but adding their own flair of drama to the equation in form of viking stories and nordic mythology. For Hallowed, Lars Ramcke and Yenz Leonhardt took their time to answer a few questions about the new album and some more information not present in the earlier Stormwarrior article on hallowed.se.

BY: DANIEL KÄLLMALM
PHOTOS: MASSACRE PROMO
MONTAGE: D. KÄLLMALM
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Heathen Warrior is the name of the recent and latest of the albums from Stormwarrior, it is the third album they have recorded in own studio Thunderhall Studio. It was mixed and mastered by Tommy Hansen in difference to the predecessor Heading Northe which was only mastered by Hansen. Yenz explains that this was down to a matter of energy.

- We realized that he brought a lot of additional energy into the band's sound. So this time we wanted to have the complete mixing of the album be done by Tommy as well.

And the resulting sound is something Yenz describes as being made in a very good way, praising the mix- and masterer.

- He made us end up with a warm analogue vintage sound which sound-wise gives it a 80's feel, but with a production of the present.

Heathen Warrior is also the first album on Massacre Re-

cords, they had to change the label due to the end of their earlier label Dockyard 1.

According to Lars this album is a natural progression of its predecessor Heading Northe which in turn was the most mature Stormwarrior's album to date at that time.

- The lyrical part of the album got a bit more of the central role receiving more space to allow the songs to "breathe" the content of the lyrics. So where the lyrics have been "placed" onto the written music on the albums before, this time the songs have been written and arranged more with the lyrical messages "deciding" about the direction the songs turned out to have in the end.

Allowing the lyrical stories to take the driver's seat however, has not harmed the musical side of the thing according to Lars, it is still the trademarked Stormwarrior sound albeit





with a little bit more “dynamic range” in the music. A remark I find particularly amusing since that is a widely used expression in the photographic world that describes exactly the same thing in a photograph that Lars describes in their music. For you unfamiliar with the expression “dynamic range” I can point out that it is the distance between extremes in a scale that it refers to, like the range between the darkest and lightest point in a photograph and for Lars it is more about the emotional scale.

- It is definitely the album with the most depth we have done so far, he explains.

Heathen Warrior

For you familiar with Stormwarrior from earlier there should be no surprise that the story of the Heather Warrior album is about the north and rooted in nordic mythology. The origins of this lyrical themes is rooted in the origins of the musicians of the band where they have ties to the Scandinavian nations.

- Since we come either from Denmark or from northern Germany (which actually once belonged to Denmark) and also some of our roots even go back to Sweden, the whole northern pre-Christian history and culture is still part of the area and “folk soul” we belong to as well as it is in the rest of Scandinavia.

Even if the “working location” of Stormwarrior is placed in today’s northern Germany our senses still work the “south-Scandinavian way, Lars explain ending with a short laughter.

He also explains that it is also about keeping out for their origins as well as having a closer view on their culture. They are trying always to see things the pagan way and filter out the Christian aspects in life.

- Christianity or any other “power-mad religion” is based on the necessity of suppressing and converting other people to gain global power and control, Lars explains.

This subject is apparently something that is very dear to Lars

and Stormwarrior as he seems to have lots to say about it. He also explains how the nordic people were more or less oppressed into Christianity by the missionaries which is a matter of some debate amongst writers and knowledgeable. I will not get into that debate as a writer but as a side note I can state that most literature I have read on the subject indicates that it was more a matter of deceiving and scaring people into it rather than going on a crusade. Lars also states that the move to Christianity limited the freedom of the people and forced them to leave their own beliefs and cultures behind and, and this is what the Heathen Warrior refuse to do in the story of their latest album.

- More and more people are re-discovering their own identity in these days trying to cast off the yoke of Christian tyranny and their twist of culture. What is left is a way of Paganism based on the original pre-Christian times. Of course, things like “human sacrifices” etc. may be a bit “outdated” in these days, but getting rid of these Christian chains is the first step to live in unison with the nature that we are all part of.

With Heathen Warrior, the fourth studio album of Stormwarrior, the band has taken their music in the more epic direction while staying true to their roots according to Yenz. Something that he said about Heading Northe as well but it could be said

to be true now as much as then though.

- With every new album this band has taken one or two steps into unknown territory. On the third studio album “Heading Northe” we started adding more epic and atmospheric elements to the mix, spending more time on the vocals and layers of sound and on “Heathen Warrior” we went a couple of steps further in that direction.

Yenz also explain that they are very satisfied with how this new album turned out, explaining how they have created the most emotional Stormwarrior album to date without sacrificing any speed or aggression.

- Since the songs on the album



only unfold their full power if the music & lyrics are beheld as belonging together having the same importance, the whole album needs to be viewed as a whole if one wants to understand the message. So my favorite tracks on this album would be No. 01-11, is how Lars explain why he does not want to single out one track as a favourite on this album.

Stormwarrior have a few festival gigs planned and some US dates along with a longer tour are in the works according to Yenz.

- We are confident that we'll get a good deal of European dates together for this album.

And then of course they always have the yearning to return to Scandinavian soul, much like the heathen warrior or the olde vi-

kings that populated the barren lands long ago.

- We're always eager to return to Scandinavia. Being Danish myself, that always calls for extra celebration.

We will have to wait and see though whether or not we will see a Stormwarrior tour of Scandinavia. Speaking of time, Yenz is meaning that the deal with Masacre means that they can now start planning for the longer term which is something that will help with making touring easier. But they are already hungry to get out there on tour.

Ye olde Language

As anyone who are familiar with Stormwarrior know, they do use a somewhat special language in their lyrics and song titles. Ac-

cording to Lars this is mainly a language called Early Modern English which was used some centuries ago in the 15th to 17th century or thereabouts, but also mixed in are some Swedish and Danish depending on lyrical content.

According to Lars this language is used to set up a historical frame for the lyrics to be presented. This is made in order to present these lyrics like you are reading some long lost forgotten lore.

- We would really love to go even further back and use even older words or even Old Norse, but that would probably make our lyrics undecipherable for most people, Lars explain in a bit of a laugh.

He is probably right in that

assumption, old Norse is not a widely spoken language these days, not even the Norse use that language. For you with no clue to why I ask about the language of Stormwarrior I can just point out that it mainly manifest itself with the use of an E at the end of some words but also an excessive use of the phrasing -eth and some other formulations that would seem peculiar in today's linguistic imagery.

Other than seeming like coming from old lore Yenz thinks this kind of wording, spelling and phrasing adds to the mythologic themes which the band encompass in their music. Speaking of themes, a question that inevitably comes to mind when thinking about Stormwarrior is if they believe they will ever run out of

viking stories to tell, Yenz does not think so.

- Well, there are many bands around writing some lyrics about Odin and Thor or some of the mythology sagas for one or two albums and then they take over to the next theme. By doing so those bands make this whole "northern theme" somewhat like "over-read" to some listeners but that is not our problem. The pagan view of life and the pre-Christian period have been part of Stormwarrior and of our private lives since the very beginning and we won't change that because some other bands are suddenly jumping on the bandwagon because of commercial aspects. It is the way we live, the way we breathe. And Stormwarrior is our voice.

Final Words

It would seem like there are still stories to tell, tales to be making their way to the many fans of the heavy metal music and they will all be told in a fascinating language unfamiliar to most. Stormwarrior are not only into it thematically, they make it very clear that they are also into such way of life. Check out the band on the web to find out more on tours and news.

The final words in this article will be the ones from Lars:

- Thanks a lot for this interview, we hope our followers will like "Heathen Warrior" as much as we do and hopefully we will see you all on tour or somewhere at the festivals. Stay honest!