

CHTHONIC 閻魔



Hallowed did recently review the album *Battlefields of Asura* to much acclaim. That album was created by a band called Chthonic, a band that has been around for quite a while but we had to wait for quite a while for this album as the band had quite a pause since their previous album that was released in 2013. So, why the hold-up? We got to ask Freddy Lim, the frontman about that and the new album.



WRITTEN BY: DANIEL KÄLLMALM
PHOTOS: CHTHONIC PROMO AND PRESS
PHOTOS
PUBLISHED ON: 2018-11-06

- Chthonic is a Taiwanese metal band that combines melodic death metal, black metal, folk metal, and Taiwanese and Asian styles of music.

That is how Freddy describes the band that was formed in Taipei back in 1995 and the debut album was released back in

1999. Since then they have been quite successful in their native Taiwan and Asia and then later they have been relatively successful in the rest of the world as well. They might be described as one of the more influential metal bands from their part of the world. They have also been a bit political during their years and since 2013 not much was heard from the band until the release in October 2018. And according to Freddy this break has some political reasons.

1999. Since then they have been quite successful in their native Taiwan and Asia and then later they have been relatively successful in the rest of the world as well. They might be described as one of the more influential metal bands from their part of the world. They have also been a bit political during their years and since 2013 not much was heard from the band until the release in October 2018. And according to Freddy this break has some political reasons.

- I was involved in organising a new political party in 2015 and was elected to the Parliament in the next year. And each member has also stepped on a new page of their life. So that song-writing was once paused for a few year.

So, many things has changed for the members of this band, things like that usually also impacts the music of the band. So what has this break meant for the music of Chthonic?

- In last few albums, the songs mostly connected to the conceptual stories only. But In the past five years, there have been a lot of changes in my life. On one hand, my political career requires me to improve my abilities in different areas, and learn to face more difficult situation. On the other hand, the birth of my daughter gave me incredible amount of joy and hope, but the sudden death of my father gave me incurable helplessness and feeling of being

lost. So although our new album is still a conceptual story, but I think a lot of my feelings and emotions during this period of time are reflected in the songs.

Battlefields of Asura

The new album by Chthonic is called "Battlefields of Asura" and it is a conceptual story about deities in Taiwanese folk belief. Every song represents one deity and the album itself is a conceptual story through these songs

about the deities or immortals as our reviewer wrote in the review that was published a while ago. And this conceptual work is something the band has been doing for quite a while now.

- A series of stories told in our albums started with "Seediq Bale" in 2005. One of the main characters is a psychic who has the power to travel through hell and change history named Tsing-guan. Our new album is a prelude to this series of stories. It



tells you from which deities did Tsing-guan get his divine power, and his birth.

And stylewise compared with the earlier albums the band has slightly changed their approach compared with how they did it and the past.

- In our early albums, we usually wrote metal structures first, and added some Taiwanese elements at last. But since 2011 album "takasago army", we have tried the opposite way which was to write Taiwanese melodies and materials first, and make them heavier and heavier. This way has been much more natural for us. And this new album is the third one since we tried this way.

- We think it's the most mature one. I think listeners can feel the

big pictures of each song that we have blended Taiwanese melodies with metal smoothly and naturally in a perfect balance.

And according to Freddy the favourite song is *Millenia's Faith Undone* and they are very pleased with an album that turned out as they had envisioned when they started their work on it. It is not only Freddy who thinks that as the press feedback as well as the fan feedback has been very positive as well.

- After 5-year waiting, we have provided a album that meets people's high expectation.

The Stage

Freddy has his political duties but not even politicians work all the time, and the band will of course

be looking to play here and there to promote their new album.

- Now we have to schedule shows during my parliamentary recess, which makes almost impossible to do long tours as we did before. But we would still take part in music festivals, and go for short-time tours.

In the early days the band was using corpse paint and fitting stage clothes much inspired by the Scandinavian black metal outfits that also were an inspiration to them on the musical side. Then since 2011 they have ditched the paint and use more of Asian martial arts and military attire for their shows, and according to Freddy they express themselves really well on the stage, he describes them as a live band in the

following way:

- A band that perfectly expresses their musical characteristics with high energy.

But is it the stage or is it the studio that they like the most? Freddy thinks that it is a hard comparison.

- I like both. Stage is a place to share the energy with the fans. Studio is a place to try to implement all ideas perfectly.

The studio and the stage may be mostly in their native Taiwan, but these guys are bigger than that and are very recognised by people around the world. But what about their native Taiwan, how does the metal scene look in Taiwan?

- The metal scene in Taiwan has been developing since 2000.

Now we have hundreds of metal bands in Taiwan, also the international metal acts come to Taiwan to play quite a lot. As a band from Taiwan with a special Asian flavor, I don't really "take pride" being "Orient Metal", but hopefully with this term, more metalheads in the world will want to know more bands from the Orient, from Asia and Pacific.

With that we say thank you to Freddy and Chthonic, their latest album "Battlefields of Asura" is out now and Freddy hopes that you all like it.

Chthonic are:

Freddy Lim - lead vocals, erhu
Doris Yeh - bass, vocals
Jesse Liu - guitars, vocals
Dani Wang - drums
CJ Kao - keyboards, synthesizer

Links:

Our Hallowed review of Battlefields of Asura
Band website, chthonic.tw
Chthonic on Youtube
Millenia's Faith Undone video