

Armen

Music of Light

Probably one of the best looking bands reviewed in the hallowed pages, but of course rock music is not really a genre of lookers, is it? But of course, in the end it is not about the looks even if it helps them stand out from the crowds of bands being an almost all-girl band says Anastasia Schmidt who plays both guitar and does the primary song writing of the band. It is a busy time for the band, doing interviews is almost a full time job explains Anastasia, still they found time for my questions which were answered by both Anastasia and drummer Till Felden.



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There seem to be a fixation with looks for this band in the promo information of this band and their debut album, this quote I cut from the last paragraph of that information: "Arven have something to deliver for all of them and it is especially this variable sound and their great looks promising the band a great future!" The Hallowed reviewer played on that a little in the review as well and he was also worried about the name to begin with as

it reminds of a name from Lord of the Rings of which he is not a fan, and that is no coincident explains Anastasia.

- Well, like you feared we named our band after a Character from "Lord of the Rings". Though it's not a new thing to do, we thought that the story of a she-elf Arwen, who gives up her immortality for the love of a mortal man represents very well, what our band stands for: passion and emotion. You could say its girls-stuff of course, but we are girls, after all.

The name is one thing but the story of the band begun not too

long ago judging by the band photo, when Anastasia was 14 and started listening to metal music and playing electric guitar. At that time she was playing with many different bands and also different kind of bands stating that one of her first bands was an all-girl rock band but after that she played different kinds of metal.

- Having a female guitar player in a death- or black metal band was always a little special. So it was perfectly logical that when I started to compose songs and decided to found my own band, I was looking for other female mu-

sicians who would like to play metal with me.

Most of the band formed quickly with a keyboardist, a singer and bass player and soon they found Ines a professional classic guitar player which Anastasia describes them as lucky to find. The line-up then changed around a bit until they found the present members which includes the band's only male member Till, the fearless drummer.

- I must say that I was very lucky to be able to find skilled female musicians for my band, it was not an easy thing to do at all and very much work - explains

Anastasia.

The most important feature of the music of Arven is melodies that stick in the mind of the listener explains Anastasia, and these melodies are mostly combined with hard rocking guitars and drums, although there are calmer and dreamier parts to be found in their music.

- You will also find elements of classical music and a little celtic/medieval atmosphere in our songs but in the end I think we managed to merge all these influences together into a homogeneous sound.

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- Most of the times the music is created before we start to write the lyrics. As the main songwriter I compose the songs and write a first arrangement version for the band. When the song is being rehearsed, usually some changes/additions are made by the other band members until the songs get their final shape. In doing so everyone contributes to the process of song-writing and sometimes interesting and unusual ideas come up this way.

Anastasia explains the process that usually lead to a song, I guessed that most was about a



fantasy theme but Anastasia explains to me that my guess was a little bit off in that line of thinking.

- When the song is composed, usually me and/or our singer Carina start to look for a theme for the lyrics that would fit the music. We use different themes, sometimes it would be something philosophical or socio-critical like *On Flaming Wings* or *World Of Hatred*, sometimes we would express our own life experiences through our songs like in *My Dear Friend*, which I wrote

after the death of a close friend or in *Till Death Do Us Part*, that describes the agony of a break-up. But not all our songs are that earnest. *Raise Your Cups* is a cheerful party-song and *Midwinter Nights* tells us a fairy tale with a slightly untraditional role allocation.

Looking into these songs it is easy to move on to the album 'Music of Light' which is the debut album of Arven, their first demo CD was recorded in 2008 and it contained four tracks which was rearranged and then found their way onto the album. But not only

those four tracks from the demo were tried and tested before they found their way onto the album explains Anastasia.

- All the songs were tested in the live-situation before we recorded them, so we made sure the songs do not only work well on the CD but also on stage.

Arven's album was already finished completely before the band even begun looking for a deal with a record company, Anastasia explains that it took some time but it was worth it and that they are very proud of what

they did.

Famous names in metal circles Sasha Paeth and Michael Rodenberg (Miro) are mentioned with this album, drummer Till explains that they were responsible for the mastering of it.

- They added some extra punch to the mix of Kai Bender. Of course we are very proud of the contribution of these famous producers to our album.

Reception

Are the band satisfied with the album? Anastasia says that they are very satisfied.

- It's a great feeling finally holding the CD in your hands after investing so much of your time, energy and hope in the recording and songwriting process.

Still, they are not staying where they are, a creative mind is always looking ahead and not backwards and the same goes for Arven explains Anastasia and points out

that things always change.

- As a band you are always moving on and have new ideas, so if we were to record the same album one more time, we would probably make some minor changes here and there. I think that's only normal. After all, the recordings took place more than a year ago.

The band are satisfied with what they have achieved in 'Music of Light' but what about the press and fans? Anastasia says that the response have been generally positive which seems to

agree with what I have found in research as well, but they seem to polarise in some camps.

- We got lots of very positive responses, a lot of people think that our melodies are catchy and like the emotional vocals of our singer Carina. Of course there are some die-hard metal fans who don't like the music because it's not the pure metal thing, but on the other hand there are many people who don't come from the typical metal-background giving us very positive responses! So in every case, at least the album seems to be interesting.

And they have garnered a lot of interest from media around Europa, many magazines and webzines in Germany, France, Russia, The Netherlands and of course from us Anastasia explains. Till points out that it is hard to find time for all the interview requests at the time.

- At the moment it's quite hard to catch up with answering all the interview requests, but of course we are proud that so many magazines are interested and we are happy to do this.

And of course Hallowed's review gained some positive response from the band which we of course cannot avoid adding here.

- I'd like to thank you for the cool review. I think its very well written and fun to read and I appreciate that you took the time to really listen to the songs and to absorb the atmosphere - says Anastasia.

So to end this reception part of this article I can only say thanks for those kind words, we at Hallowed always tries to write in an entertaining way to make it more interesting to read.

Tour and promotion

Interest from the media that was on the table in the latest section of this article has much to do

with good promotion, one way of promoting an album besides doing interviews is to tour, and that is something they want to do as much as possible explains Anastasia.

- So far only a few shows are confirmed but we are actively searching for possibilities to play live and we are always open to request by club owners.

The band is said to be an active band in the live sector but I asked them if they thought they were a good band live which Anastasia didn't want to answer that but thought that was maybe something for the fans to answer.

- They are the only ones who really know the answer. For our part we can definitely say that we enjoy playing live very much and you can see and sense it for sure. Of course there are many other factors to consider when you play live: how skilled the sound engineer is, how good is the monitor sound on stage, how does the audience respond. All I can say is that we spend of lot of energy and time with band practice in order to perform our music as good as possible and the feedback from the audience has been really great so far.

The eternal question between making new material and playing live seems to be difficult as ever to answer, Anastasia explains that on one hand working on new material is one of the best things you can do as a musician but on the other hand so is playing live on a stage for a crowd so she says that they are both very satisfying but in different ways. For Till rock music is very much about playing live.

- For me, playing live is the first reason why I play in rock bands. That's the moment when all the energy of the music is really present and touchable. That's when the songs awake to life. But it would be boring to play always



the same songs, so it's also great to create some new stuff, which can be presented to the audience. But as we are constantly working on new material, I see no danger of getting bored. We already have about five songs in our live program, which will most likely appear on the next album.

The label does a rather big thing about the band being five beautiful girls a drummer which made me wonder about what the band thinks about such things, are they being sold on their looks or is it just something that just comes with being female in a male dominated world? Anastasia says it helps them to stand out and be noticed and that is a good thing for them.

- But in the end it's not about looks, it's about music. Whether our music is good enough to in-

spire people, to make them feel something when they listen to it... well, we will see if it works after the CD is released.

Another thing that might help a band being noticed is an attractive exterior and now I do not mean the exterior of the musicians but the cover art and the logotype is what I am getting at. Myself not being a fan of band photo covers I figured that I should ask the band if they liked the cover art. Till explains his view of it.

- We use the logo since shortly after we started playing live, which is more than four years ago, now. So that's a trademark, we wanted to keep! The album cover and artwork was created by Jan Yrlund, who already did some covers for bands like Stratosvarious, Sirenia or Korpiklaani.

The Girls in the band and most of our fans like it very much. For me it is a little bit too cheesy as normally, I'm not a big fan of a band photo featured on the cover either, but if it makes sense for any band, then it is definitely Arven.

At least that makes sense in the metal community as most bands there would definitely not make much sense as a band photo on the cover, it looks a bit in the pop musical vein could I think but who am I to judge?

If you are curious about this band now, their album was released a few weeks ago so it is available now at any record store so be sure to check it out. Visit the band's website to find out more about



touring and all of that. With that we thank Anastasia and Till for their time and of course the kind words about my writing and then leave the final words to Till.

- Check out our music if you like interesting melodic stuff, perfect for dreaming and perfect

to rock the place! And of course let us know what you think about it, thank's for reading!

More Arven on the web
Our review of Music of Light (link)
<http://www.arvenmusic.com/>