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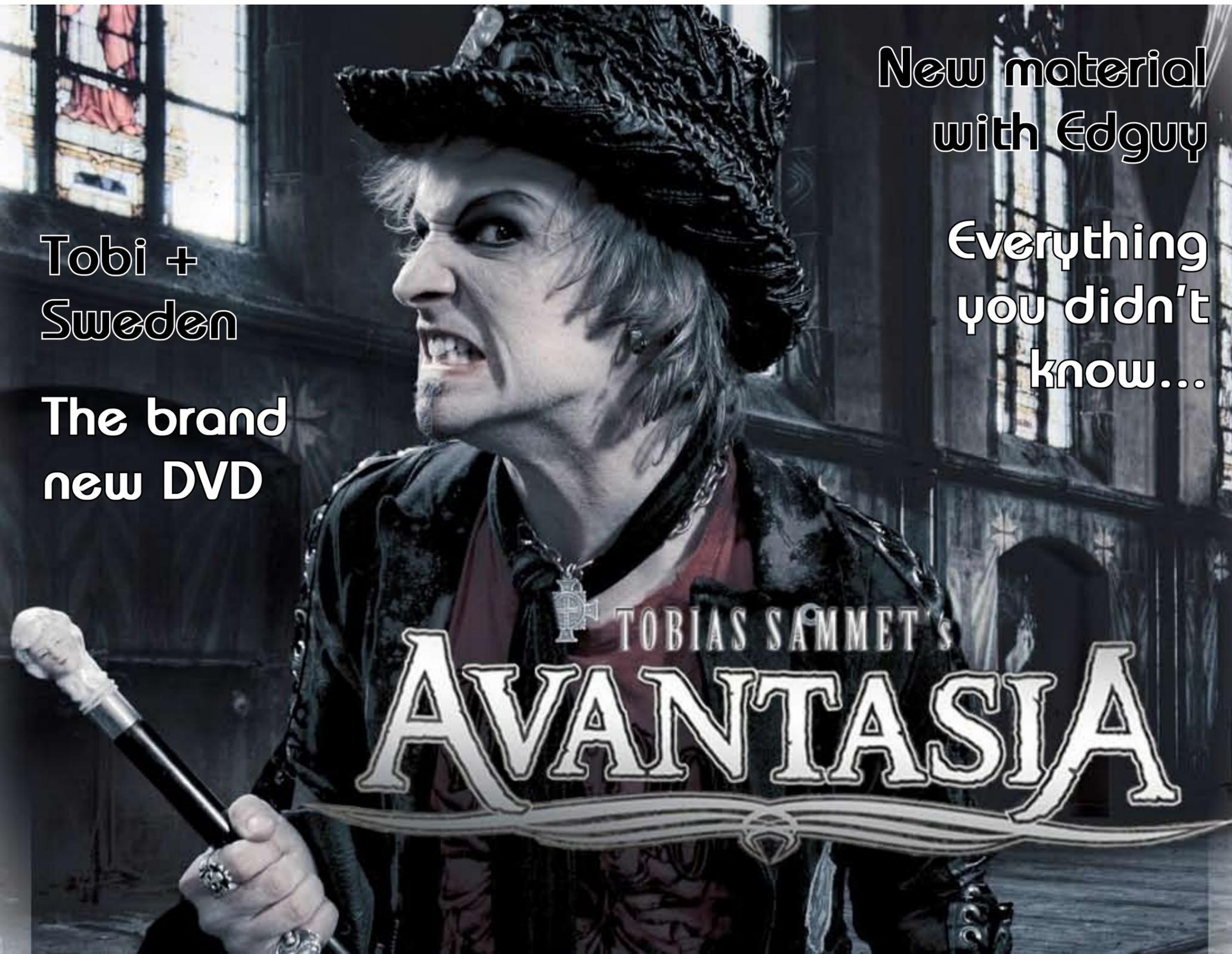
# HALLOWEEN

Tobi +  
Sweden

The brand  
new DVD

New material  
with Edguy

Everything  
you didn't  
know...



TOBIAS SAMMET'S  
**AVANTASIA**

# TOBIAS SAMMET'S AVANTASIA EDGUY



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Photo: Hallowed's archive (Ellinor Slljeström),  
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From: 2011-03-21

# TOBIAS SAMMET

Tobias Sammet is a funny bloke. I actually didn't even need to ask him a question and he had already talked for 15 minutes about him self, Avantasia and Edguy. But then he also said he isn't good at much things, but talking is definitely one.

## Double victory for the sammet smoth German

In 1992 four young Germans in Fulda called Tobias, Jens, Dirk and Dominik started a band called Edguy. After two demos and one self financed CD they got a record deal with German label AFM-records and in 1997 they released their official debut album, called 'Kingdom of Madness'. Now, 'Kingdom of Madness' is probably not the most flattering debut album ever released.

Most magazines said Edguy is a wasted project that never will go anywhere in the world and that was that. But they were wrong! In 1998 the band retaliated by releasing their second album 'Vain Glory Opera', which to date is still one of the most liked albums - if not the most liked - by the

band. The album was a huge success which ended up in Edguy doing an own headliner tour in Sweden. Hallowed country.

Here somewhere Tobias Sammet, the vocalist and main songwriter of the band started to think about something else. But by the time it was still just an idea and what Sammet was focusing on at the moment was still Edguy and in 1999 he and the band released the album 'Theatre of Salvation' which ended up in another tour in Sweden, with Hammerfall this time. A huge tour with 17 stops in various Swedish cities. And here is where my conversation with Sammet this day starts.

**Killed tour manager**  
The weather was excellent this day, both me and Tobias could enjoy a gazing sun and clear blue sky. He in Germany and me in Sweden.

- It's just like Los Angeles, Sammet says enthusiastic! Or maybe Los Angeles has it like us in Europe.

When I tell him that it sure is, except for the snow outside here it suprices Sammet a lot.

- Do you still have snow in Sweden? Where in Sweden do you live?

As I tell him the closest bigger city is Gävle, Sammet knows exactly where I am. He has been here, but his memories could be



Me and Tobias in early 2004. I was 19 years old here and Tobias 25. Today we are 7 years older. On the right Sammet is 33.



better of the place.

- I played there with Edguy in 1999, but the place where we played wasn't the best. It was more like a bigger living room or something. However, I remember it best for the fact that it was there our (and Hammerfalls) tour manager died.

#### He died?!

- Yeah! It's not very funny, actually. But they found his clothes about half a year later but I don't think they ever found him. He was murdered and it was in the middle of our tour.

#### The birth of Avantasia

This tragic event didn't stop the band to re-record their 1995 self released album 'Savage Poetry' and release it as 'The Savage Poetry'. And here is where the ideas Sammet started to have in early 1999, with some sort of concept album where he could work with his heroes and do his own little fantasy thing, was beginning to come alive. He went to the studio to record his ideas and along with him he had some of the greatest musicians on the planet and this resulted in the album 'The Metal Opera' (later aka 'The Me-

tal Opera part 1').

Now to call 'The Metal Opera' a huge success would be to lie blatantly, but it was some sort of success and it did generate some interest. Perhaps mostly because of the nice line of guest musicians? Well, the goal was never to make a best selling album, Sammet means.

- No, it wasn't. Though, I did hope it would sell something. You know, if you could chose between 250 000 or 25 sold albums, what would you chose? But when I started with the project I just needed a label stupid enough to

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pay for the recording and then I wanted to do *my* thing. Play with *my* favorite musicians. *My* heroes. The way that I wanted to do it.

#### The growing of Avantasia

Avantasia was followed by an Edguy album later the same year, which was followed by Tobias Sammet's first world tour with his Edguy, the Mandrake World Tour in 2001 and 2002. And during this time Sammet wrote more for his Avantasia project and this resulted in the second Avantasia album, called 'The Metal Opera part 2' on which even

bigger names figured with the current drummer of Kiss (Eric Singer) and the vocalist of Magnum (Bob Catley) as two of the new recruits. This album gave more response than the first one but still Avantasia got far from the success of recent days. However, Sammet was finished with his project. And he was finished as a person too.

- I was so exhausted from working with the project that I felt like dead, Sammet told Hallowed in late 2007 when he was about to release 'The Scarecrow'. I never wanted to do anything like this

again, but here I am with a new album today.

Yes, it took him just over five years, but a new Avantasia album finally hit the stores in January 2008 and was called 'The Scarecrow'. During five years the Avantasia albums had slowly grown and grown and grown as the main band Edguy had become bigger and more and more people heard about the band by others and by checking where their favorite musicians had guest appeared.

The interest for something new had grown huge during >>



Tobias with his main band Edguy



these five years and when the album was released with the most impressive assemble so far (with such names as Alice Cooper, Jörn Lande and Sacha Paeth added except for most of the people that had already sung and played on the predecessors). The album peaked at the top 10 charts in five countries and top 50 on charts in 13 countries, which is something very few metal bands achieve.

- People said I was stupid not to do another Avantasia album, Sammet says on the new DVD, because of the interest and success it had got during the years.

But for a long time I just said I shouldn't do another album. Until I realized that it would be done with a bigger budget and be so much better so then I thought "why not?" and just went ahead and did it.

### Lost in Space

Before the release of 'The Scarescrow', Sammet and the new Avantasia label Nuclear Blast released two singles, called 'Lost in Space pt 1' and 'Lost in Space pt 2'. As an appetizer or what ever you want to call it.

What no one could have expected

was how big the interest had grown during this five year hiatus because the sales was above anything imaginable. In Sweden Sammet had both singles on the charts top ten at the same time and during Hallowed's conversation with Sammet back then, he got a message from his label with the latest figures in Germany. Which said one of the *Lost in Space* singles had reached ninth - the best position a Nuclear Blast band ever had reached on the German charts by then.

- Even better than Nightwish! Well, yeah! Nightwish are puny

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compared to Avantasia. Well you can say so, because ninth was far from where it peaked. Before slowly falling downwards the single reached the number two position in Germany, which is the best chart position for Sammet with any release to date, in any country.

- Now, the peaks in Sweden was great. I'd had a couple with Edguy before 'Lost in Space' so I know there's a big interest there. But there's quite few people living in Sweden (just above nine million, about the same as Berlin alone, the capital of Germany.

## The vocalists in Avantasia

### Vocalist (most known from) - songs/albums sung in

Michael Kiske (Helloween) - 15/alla	
David DeFeis (Virgin Steele) - 4/2	
Sharon den Adel (Within Temptation) 2/2	
Rob Rock (ex-Axel Rudi Pell) 3/2	Ralf Zdiarstek - 4/3
Oliver Hartmann (At Vance) 6/4	Andre Matos (ex-Angra) 7/3
Kai Hansen (Gamma Ray) 4/2	Timo Tolkki (Stratovarius) 2/2
Bob Catley (Magnum) 7/5	Jörn Lande (Masterplan) 16/4
Amanda Somerville (Aina) 6/2	Roy Khan (Kamelot) 1/1
Alice Cooper 1/1	Eric Singer (Kiss,) 1/1
Russell Allen (Symphony X) 4/2	Jon Oliva (Savatage) 1/1
Klaus Meine (Scorpions) 1/1	Cloudy Yang 1/1
Tim "Ripper" Owens (ex-Judas Priest) 1/1	
Tobias Sammet (Edguy) All but one/all	

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On the left: Tobias today.  
On the right Tobias 2004



Editors note) and in Germany there are very many (almost 82 million, which is about nine times more than the total number of inhabitants in Sweden. Editors note) so it really needs to be a lot of people buying the single or album to get a really high chart position.

However, the Sweden double was also something special.

- Yeah, I've never had two releases on the top ten at the same time before and this was the first top ten single positions I've had, Sammet stated back in 2007 when

the singles was released.

### The Scarecrow

The album was released two months after the huge success with 'Lost in Space' and had quite a big success too, as mentioned earlier. With the new producer on the project, this album came with lots of new ideas. The album was more varied than the first two and came with a bigger number of vocalists which sung more parts of the album than what the predecessors had. The greater number of vocalists me-

ant more different kinds of voices and this resulted in an album much more profound and with a spectra stretching from plain and simple rock to really heavy hard rock.

- To me, all hard rock is just hard rock. And good music is good music. I don't distinguish between genres and dislike something because it's this and that. It could be heavy metal, death metal, thrash metal or just plain and simple rock. If it's good and I like it then it inspires me and if I get influenced by it in my songs

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then I don't throw it away because of that. On 'The Scarecrow' I really let all my inspiration and influences roam free which resulted in many songs sounding very different from each other.

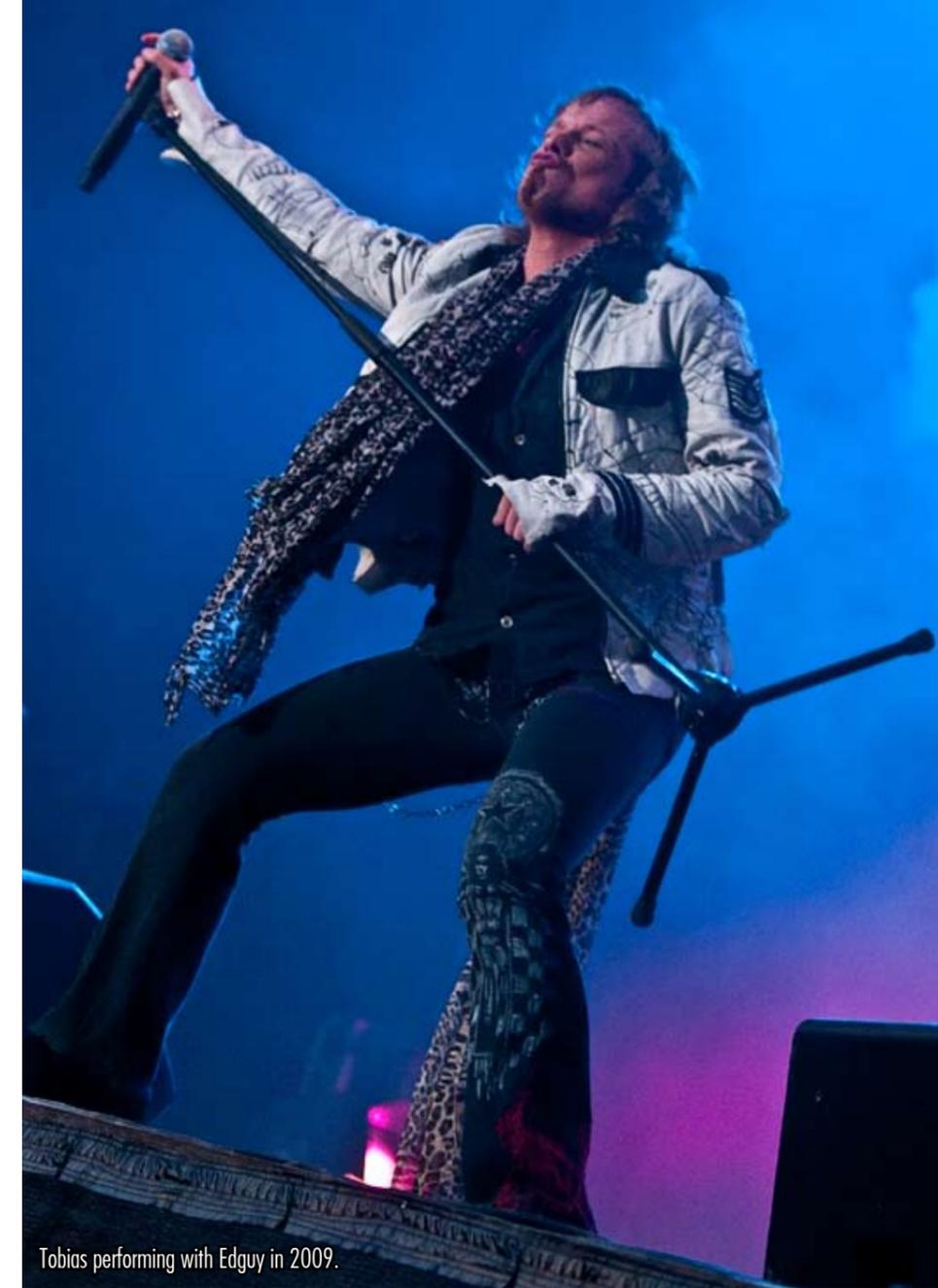
And this annoyed some people...

- Some people said when they heard 'The Scarecrow' and 'Lost in Space' that this wasn't me. This wasn't something I should do or could do or what ever. But I wanted to do these songs. I didn't want to do the same albums I had already done. These

## Musicians appearing in Avantasia

- Musican (most known from) - credited for**
- Henjo Richter (Gamma Ray) - Guitars & Lead guitars
  - Alex Holzwarth (Rhapsody of Fire) - Drums
  - Norman Meiritz - Acoustic guitar & Rhythm guitar
  - Michael "Miro" Rodenberg (Aina) - Keyboards
  - Rudolph Schenker (Scorpions) - Lead guitar
  - Jens Ludwig (Edguy) - Lead guitar
  - Frank Tischer - Piano
  - Tobias Sammet - Keyboards & Bass
  - Timo Tolkki - Lead guitar
  - Eric Singer - Drums
  - Sascha Paeth (Heaven's Gate) - Guitars
  - Markus Grosskopf (Helloween) - Bass
  - Kai Hansen - Lead guitar
  - Bruce Kulick (Kiss) - Lead guitar
  - Oliver Hartmann - Lead guitar
  - Felix Bohnke (Edguy) - Drums
  - Simon Oberender - Organ
  - Jens Johansson (Stratovarius) - Keyboards

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Tobias performing with Edguy in 2009.

songs are the way I wanted to do them and if someone could judge if they sound like I have done them or if they are me - then it ought to be me. And these songs are me. Read the cover art, it says my name. Just because I don't try to repeat things I've already done it doesn't make it something different.

#### The Scorecrow tour

Sacha Paeth helped Tobias bring this wide range of music come to life with his production and the Kiss drummer Eric Singer did the drums. Together they brainstormed a lot of ideas and one of the ideas that came to life was *Lost in Space*. It was something Tobias wanted to do but didn't really feel he could pull off. Or dared to because of all the stereotypes in the genre. But Eric Singer convinced him to do so and up until today it's the most successful release he's done. So much for fears.

And after the release and success, Sacha told Tobias it would be something special to do a live show with the project since there were so many asking for it. Sammet claims it was Sacha that convinced him to go for it, which they decided to do. From the beginning Wacken was the only booked show but suddenly the question came from many more and this resulted in one of the most spectacular tours in recent days was put together. In Europe the focus was to appear at the biggest festivals and in the rest of the world the big arenas.

- We never intended on making Avantasia a live project and to go on stage because I knew it would be impossible to bring all those people together and have everyone's schedule to match well enough to make something

live out of it, Sammet explains on the DVD. But the demands were so big and it was just a spontaneous moment in which I said 'OK - let's do it!' and so we did! The live project was a huge success and on the tour, Tobias realized something about his project that he hadn't realized before.

- Me, I realized that this project had become bigger than myself. Bigger than any of us individually. The Avantasia unit was bigger than all the people behind it and it really feels good to have it on DVD now.

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Edguy on myspace:  
<http://www.myspace.com/edguy>

## Tobias Sammet's discography

### With Edguy:

- Savage Poetry (CD 1995)\*
- Kingdom of Madness (CD 1997)
- Vain Glory Opera (CD 1998)
- Theatre of Salvation (CD 1999)
- The Savage Poetry (CD 2000)
- Painting on the Wall (Single 2001)
- Mandrake (CD 2001)
- Burning Down the Opera (Live CD 2003)
- Hall of Flames (Best of CD 2004)

- King of Fools (EP 2004)
- Hellfire Club (CD 2004)
- Lavatory Love Machine (Single 2004)
- Superheroes (EP 2005)
- Superheroes (DVD 2005)
- Rocket Ride (CD 2006)
- Tinnitus Sanctus (CD 2008)
- Fucking With F\*\*\* (Live CD 2009)
- Fucking With F\*\*\* (DVD 2009)

\*= Self financed

Continues on next spread...



One of Tobias crazy jumps on stage with Edguy in 2006. On the right Tobias in Stockholm 2004



### The Avantasia DVD

Live CDs and DVDs is something that have a bad habit to pop out like mushrooms. It seems like every and any artist or band in the world think that their live shows are so great they need to make a live release from it and in general this is fine by me.

It's the recordings that I often dislike because very few bands and artists realize that their live release will probably be the only live release they do. Very few bands release more than one and even fewer release three or more. Still, most artists and bands don't

care, they just record any show on a grand tour and release it without it being something extra or special. Like Tobias main band, Edguy.

Edguy have released two live albums ('Burning Down the Opera' and 'Fucking with F\*\*\*') and none of those really makes any sense in the fashion that they are really important. They are just Edguy live, something we can see on any of their world tours, which they do after their releases.

Well, the Avantasia DVD is not just any other Avantasia live

show. This was a once in a lifetime tour and with only 13 shows and very few people actually got the opportunity to see the band (even though they appeared on places were up to 80 000 spectators saw them and in theory they had almost half a million people watching them that summer). Therefore this DVD feels like a really nice thing to do for all the people that didn't get that chance.

- The DVD is somewhat of an era. It's bigger than anything I've released. It's like two or three years of my life was put into making 'The Scarecrow' and the tour and

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this DVD. And basically what's on this DVD is the year 2008 in my life. And I'm thankful for this project because I've learned so much and seen so many things because of it. I've played with Iron Maiden, Aerosmith, headlining big festivals and sung side by side with vocalists like Klaus Meine (from Scorpions) and Alice Cooper. I had not expected any of this and I don't think anyone had. For an all star project like Avantasia to go on a world tour like this - as far as I know it's the first time ever done.

### Tobias Sammets discography (part 2)

#### With Avantasia:

Avantasia (single 2000)  
The Metal Opera (CD 2001)  
The Metal Opera part 2 (CD 2002)  
Lost in Space part 1 (Single 2007)  
Lost in Space part 2 (single 2007)  
The Scarecrow (CD 2008)  
The Wicked Symphony (CD 2010)  
Angel of Babylon (CD 2010)  
The Flying Opera... (DVD & CD 2011)

#### Other appearances:

Rhapsody 'Rain of a Thousand Flames' (2001)  
Dionysus 'Sign of Truth' (2002)  
Shaaman 'Ritual' (2002)  
Aina 'Days of Rising Doom' (2003)  
Final Chapter 'The Wizard Queen' (2004)  
Rob Rock 'Holy Hell' (2005)  
Dezperadoz 'The Legend and the Truth' (2006)

Continues on next spread



Tobias with Edguy, on the right live at Rockweekend in Sweden 2009



### More albums

The tour was followed by a new album from Edguy (called 'Tinnitus Sanctus') and between the tours that followed this album, Tobias went in to the studio to finish his Scarecrow series, which ended up as two full length albums - called 'The Wicked Symphony' and 'Angel of Babylon'.

Comparing these two with the first two makes you realize how much Tobias has grown as a musician. And realizing this I ask Tobias how he writes his music now compared to ten years back when the first two album was written.

- Well, basically I just write. You know - I start with an idea and it could be any sort of idea and I just write down all this. Riffs, solos, verses, choruses or fragments of it. And most of these, like at least 85-90%, end up in the trash. They could be too similar to something else, or not interesting enough or don't fit with the rest or anything. And when they aren't good enough they end up not being worked on. I think compared to before I've become much more open on what I can use in the songs and I think you develop with time. You get

better at what you do and I think both Avantasia and Eguy has become bigger in the sound and as we've had more success I've become more comfortable in my songwriting. I don't need to ask for anyones opinion or aproval. If I want to do it I do it.

Because 'Tinnitus Sanctus' sounded slower and grander than Edguy had ever sounded before there were people, as always within hard rock, that claimed Edguy had sold out and failed. Tobias however thinks it's the best Edguy album so far.

- I think it's a groundy sound

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and if it was a failure, I'm not saying it was either, then it was the best kind of failure because then I had the best feeling you can have failing.

### And more albums

'Tinnitus Sanctus' was followed by a live Edguy album and DVD (called 'Fucking With F\*\*\*') and this is to date the last Edguy album released. But Edguy fans, don't be fearful. During my conversation with Sammet he's also in the studio working with Edguy making the ninth album which will be released in August.

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## Tobias Sammets discography (part 3)

- Nuclear Blast Allstars 'Into the Ligh' (2007)
- Ayreon - Ayreon vs. Avantasia (2008)
- Revolution Renaissance 'New Era' (2008)
- Oliver Hartmann '3' (2009)
- Bruce Kulick 'BK3' (2010)
- H.E.A.T 'Freedom Rock' (2010)

To be extended...





Sammet today (left) and 2009 (right)



- Yes, it feels very good to be working with Edguy again! And I really think the material sounds very cool! It's up tempo, it has good melodies and it's not as "bluesy" as 'Tinnitus Sanctus'. Now I'm not saying "Tinnitus" was particularly bluesy, but you know what I mean. It's more bombastic this time and melodic and heavy and all that stuff Edguy usually are.

In total today, not counting the original version of 'Savage Poetry', Tobias Sammet have released 13 studio albums as head front figure (8 with Edguy and 5 with Avantasia), 13 albums as guest musician, three live album (2 with Edguy and 1 with Avantasia), seven singles or EPs (4 with Edguy and 3 with Avantasia) and a couple of albums as producer or something else. It's safe to say

that his experience in making music has grown and fortunately for Sammet his bands have so far more or less headed straight forward without real set-backs.

- Edguy haven't had a big down yet, Sammet explains, and I hope they never will have one. But regardless of what people think about it you gather experience through the years and the longer we last the more interesting we

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get, in my opinion. I want to be excited by my own work and with the last Avantasia albums my goal was to maintain the spirit yet to make an own creature of it - like a movie for the ears. And with this new Edguy album it's something different.

It certainly is. Sammet said three years ago that if you compared his bands with movies...

- Then Avantasia is more of a

## Tobias Sammet - creator of Hallowed

When Hallowed was started back in 2002 I was looking for a name on the publication. I wanted a short, striking name that had a (good) sense and as Edguy was my favorite band back then that was where I turned at first and when I saw Hallowed it was perfect! A word with a great significance and the lyrics for the song is just perfect! Listen: "Sacred - standing full of pride". That's the first line. The chorus goes: "Hallowed be my name (...) God of creation you beg for damnation". Sammet's own words - responsible for this magazine.

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Sammet in studio with Sacha Paeth and Eric Singer to record Avantasia (left). Live with Edguy in Sweden 2009 (right)



grand fantasy film while Edguy is more of a road movie with cheap jokes and no story.

But while Edguy is a road movie, it's a constantly developing such. Edguy has always moved towards the more bombastic sound and tried something new while maintaining somewhat of an Edguy sound.

- Yeah, you have to move forward and as you grow as a person by the ups and downs in life you take this with you and make something more interesting of it. You can't just keep doing what you've always done, because then

we would all still live in trees or something. Repeating don't take you anywhere. Now, I'm not saying I've lived in trees, or any of us living today, but mankind perhaps.

#### Everything comes to an end

There are so much more we can say about Avantasia, Edguy and Tobias Sammet but let's save some for when Edguy release the new album in August. For now, Avantasia has finished their second tour around the world in December and January 2010-2011 and in March this year the dou-

ble live DVD 'The Flying Opera - Around the World in 20 Days' was released which gives everyone a chance to see the first tour they did back in 2008 after the release of 'The Scarecrow'. This is something you really should check out, it's not every day I recommend a live album, but this is one of those occasions.

But before we end, Tobias want to say something to you.

- I want to say thank you for supporting us! And I want to say the Avantasia DVD is outstanding and I hope you watch it a lot! And then I hope you check

out the new Edguy album which will be released in August 26th. And I hope we meet on tour then and go crazy together!

Shortly after our interview, the first chart positions on the Avantasia DVD came and in Germany the DVD went straight to number one position. The CD-version went to 18th position. This is Sammet's best chart-positioned release so far.

Hallowed will of course return with a new article about Sammet and Edguy later this year. See you then!

Fixxxer

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## The Flying Opera DVD in short...

This is a live album with plenty of meaning. It was the first time the Avantasia gang made something live and it isn't a live package that plays live much. This was and is something unique and must be documented! And what a tour this was to record! Such songs! Such singers! What a fantastic package!

This might just be the most logical live release ever made. This is a DVD with really good live material and to argue with the purpose of it is useless. It's like argue about why a car needs safety belt, airbags and rubber on the wheels. You must be an idiot to question it. It's a DVD that everyone who saw the live shows can enjoy and that makes all who wasn't there a chance to be and enjoy the band live too. This is the definition of why you should make live albums/films - to document something worthy to see that very few was given the chance to see in the first place but more wanted to see.