

Darżamat

Hailing from the ancient forests of the Polish nation is the band that is called Darżamat. A band that combine atmosphere with darkish metal where there is also room for a female singer and some classical undertones. We had the fortunes to exchange a few questions with one of the bands' singers Rafa "Flauros" Góral who gave some information about the band and their upcoming plans and some other stuff of course.

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Photo & Graphics: Massacre Records press material

Poland, and Polish metal

As I have already concluded this band hails from the nation of Poland and when I think of music and Poland it is more or less a blank sheet for me. I can't really think of many bands from that nation, Vader is probably the only band I can think of and they are deep and dark so naturally the thought occur to me that the metal scene in Poland is dark and extreme.

- The Polish music scene is primarily known from great black/death metal bands, says Flauros as I decide to refer to him in this text. - So it's only logical that young bands which appear take it as their ambition to follow in Vader's or Behemoth's footsteps.

Relieved that I am right about that thing I am referring my attention to the style of Darżamat which actually is a tad dark and extreme but it is still more melodic and atmospheric than said bands. I would actually describe it more as atmospheric dark metal than something extreme, that is something they are not that big on in Poland if we are to believe Fauros.

- A lot of bands became dishear-

tened and simply stopped playing their music, he states when he points out that Poland is not the best place for atmospheric music albeit there are some spectacular exceptions to this: - like Riverside, the prog-rock act already known all over the world, but they still count as an exception. As they say, no rule without exception and if one band can stand out and be known, why not more?

Metal music have over the years according to Flauros had a hard time finding attention in the media as well as being socially accepted. Flauros believes this has to do with the fact that Poland is a catholic nation and the devilish nature that is often attributed to the metal music by the Christian purists.

- The devilish character of metal is unacceptable for most of the Christians. Anyway, a great job done by Polish metal scene bear fruit. Also Darżamat have many fans in Poland and the whole promotion stuff depends on your label work mainly, Flauros explains.

Musical direction and style

Darżamat is as I said not that extreme and more of a band with much atmosphere with their female singer along with said

Flauros who sings harsh extreme metal style vocals. But it is not really that simple to put a label on the music of Darżamat, they can be many things and be attributed many stylistic labels when it comes to their music. Flauros himself have a hard time coming up with a stylistic description and offers another way to look at things.

- I can say dark metal, I can say death/black metal with elements of gothic. Then again, I can say symphonic dark/black metal. But still it won't say or mean much. I often wonder why people want to put labels on music, especially these days when bands take many styles and successfully blend them together. Isn't it better to draw the line between the music we like and the music that just doesn't speak to us?

Well of course it is that but it is often not really that easy, most people have preferences as to what kind of music they like and most would like to have some sort of description of what kind of music they can expect from a band rather than just having someone say that the band is good or it is doesn't speak to him/her. Still, he makes an interesting point now that the styles in music blend together more and more.

As for Darżamat: - What I love



Darżamat a band who likes their cars old
Photo by Sebastian Cviq

about this band is that we constantly search for different inspirations and styles, that we constantly try to evolve. We don't stand in the same spot and record albums which sound alike. But and we are conscious of that when our fans reach for the new album, they never feel disappointed or misled it's still Darżamat, all the way through. But I think our musical search and the creative whirls will continue in this band.

When considering the style of this band it would be a tad strange just to forget about the mythologic side that the atmosphere they create would seem to suggest to. The name has a mythologic meaning for example.

- Well, it goes all the way back to the moment when we were gathering the band together, of

course. The word comes from Slavic mythology Latvian, to be exact, Flauros explains.

In my opinion as a writer of music and of course an enjoyer of music, this name suits the band rather well with its enigmatic name which goes along well with the kind of music the band is playing. But how about this Darżamat name, what is it referring to?

- Darżamat was a deity which took care of forests and gardens. We chose this as our name since its mysteriousness and enigmatic character ideally fitted the music we composed.

Solfernus Path

Darżamat did recently release their latest album called Solfernus Path which is said to be a concept album. I had a hard time really noticing this before I read that it was, but thinking about it, it comes out through the symmetric nature of the music throughout the album. Still, I could not find any information as for the concept of the album, being a concept album and all I figured it would be interesting to know what the concept is about. Flauros here gives us a short description to the record's theme.

- The story told on the album takes place in a mystic scenery as provided by Countess Josephine von Kuchmeister's manor, the inspiration for which we derived from two truly fantastic places in Silesia, namely the Willa Caro in



Darzamat and their car again
Photo by Sebastian Cviq

Gliwice and the palace in Pawnowice. The tale itself is set in the beginning of the 20th century. Our main hero is a young medical student who undergoes a spiritual transformation? he experiences the existence of the incorporeal world and perceives the other side. The whole story is permeated by a fairytale-like atmosphere, full of occult key concepts. Nothing is obvious, nothing is predictable.

Concept albums can be either quite dull and feel rather forced or they can be excellent when all the elements of the songwriting falls into place. But there is a dif-

ficult task to write music with a story and make it work, some people succeed other just makes a group of songs and write lyrics with a similar theme but there is something special to real good concept albums. Usually it is something of a collaboration between music and lyrics also in the writing process, but some write music first and other write the lyrics first.

- This time everything began with creating the concept and writing the lyrics. Only when I was done with that did we begin writing the actual music. This burden was mainly to be carried

by Chris, our guitar player, and Spectre, the keyboard man, but I kept a vigilant eye and ear on what was going on at the moment, Flauros explains their approach with this record.

Of course it did not end with only that, there is a lot more work when writing for a concept compared to writing a "regular" album. Here's the rest of what he said on this theme.

- I worked with them to make sure they would reflect the story of the Solfernus Path in the best way they could. Later, together with Nera, we began arranging the pieces, then we introduced

corrections to what we'd done so far, and finally we worked with Spectre to come up with atmospheric intros to round off the whole project.

- We started working on everything much earlier. Before entering the studio we prepared a very good demo. That allowed us to work out all the small details well before the real thing started. I admit we worked like this for the first time and we are really satisfied with such tactics. When you listen to the practically ready piece which sounds as good as it can at the preproduction stage, you can analyze the arrang-

ements one more time and have less of a trouble imagining its final shape. Entering the studio(s) we knew exactly what we wanted and how the songs were supposed to sound. Also, there were no songs left somewhere in the drawer, no album outtakes. From the very beginning we knew precisely what we wanted and we went straight for that. That is why every song which was composed for the record is really well thought-out and exactly the way we wanted it to be.

And of course he points out that this kind of record is harder to put together than your usual

album.

- A coherent story to be told by lyrics and music alike is much more of a challenge than fashioning ten new songs in the same stylistic vein. As the story unfolds, so does the music and both elements have to go hand in hand. It is, in a way, like a movie script, created to pull the audience in.

I leave this section particularly pleased with the answers I have received as they really do provide a good insight to what it required to make a concept album work and how much work lies behind such album.



Some cool metalheads by an old and very nice looking car
Photo by Simon Cviq

The Path and labels

As Solfernus Path is different from what the band have done earlier I wanted to investigate as to how it differs from the bands earlier record. This was to be a problem for me to find out for

myself as I have not heard anything the band has done before Solfernus Path and I was not going to go buy myself those earlier records either and as I don't condone illegal downloading of music for any reason that was also

out of the question so it was all down to Flauros to give me the description of the difference between these albums. The main thing I can read out of the replies is that there is a completely new quality to Solfernus Path, it lies much higher and it is the best album of the band he states with a laughter in there as he explains he doesn't really like such pompous statements about records, which is a good quality of character I would say. They figured this record was a very important record for them.

- this album was supposed to create interest in the record label circles, he explains. - That's why we took extra care not only to write and record great music, but also to achieve the best possible sound. Plus, we paid a lot of attention to the visual side of the whole endeavour, working on the photos and the cover. All details of music, arrangements and the artwork were taken into consideration. I'm positive that after getting acquainted with the album, the fans are going to say that it was really worth the wait.

I think they probably will approve of this record, we gave it a nice rating, not the highest one as you can read in our review but nevertheless it was a positive review. But as expectations go everything is great but Solfernus Path is only the first step Flauros explains:

- As far as our expectations are concerned, we'd really appreciate much better promotion of our band than we experienced before. The previous companies we worked with had much, much smaller possibilities. That is why I'm positive that thanks to Massacre Records we will take a leap forward.

As a writer I am much in contact with record labels and such and from what I have seen Massacre is quite good at promoting

their bands with offering lots of interview possibilities and also giving loads of news about the bands they have under their wings so judging from that I am sure Darzamat will have better promotion, I never would have heard about them had it not been for Massacre.

- I firmly believe that the experience which the MR staff has gained over the years will result in the chance for many more to even get a hold of Darzamat's albums, Flauros states. - We put a lot of hope in the promotion and distribution prospects of the Solfernus Path album and also we are really looking forward with great curiosity to seeing the fruit of our cooperation with Massacre Records over our future albums.

Some words on inspirations

Keeping the album a bit more in the focus, looking at both some more musical aspects as well as the promotional side for the same album. It is actually rather easy to know that this album will have a different character to it when you start it. There is a spoken word part with a creepy sounding voice that says some things and this really opens up questions and interest for you as a listener. I actually find this part so interesting that I decided to try and find out the inspiration for this particular part. However, this proved to be harder than I thought and I only got a list of inspirations for the music as a whole which proved to be literature and film like so many other bands but at least he added something interesting:

- I believe one should not confine oneself to one or two usual places but rather search for a possible creative impulse anywhere one can.

As an aspiring author and a photographer as well as writer I can relate to this sentence as it is important for us not to limit our-

self to few sources of inspiration. The best creative work is always done by those with their minds open to any kind of inspiration which of course leads me to believe that there is a bright future for Darzamat and their music.

Still there is one more thing, of course this is somewhat leading back to prior paragraph as it relates to promotion of the record. It has to do with touring and playing to promote their album. After all it is a powerful way to be noticed, to be on the roads playing the songs of their albums. Flauros explains that they have recently signed with a German booking company and are curious as to what that will lead to but they have also been looking themselves for some opportunities and found some.

- this year we are playing festivals in Belgium and Mexico. Also, in February 2010 we are scheduled to do a 10 gig tour of Poland. We're looking forward to some serious touring around Europe in a good company, he explains to the more immediate plans.

Ending and bombshell

And as endings go, here is one:

- I also must add that next year we plan to release our side project albums. On winter, we will be involved in making new music. Our singer, with a little help from our axeman Chris, is preparing a debut album for something called NeraNature. Nera lends her name to this project, which will be closer to alternative rock, as it evokes the spirit of The Gathering or Katatonia rather than the true metal roar. There will be loads of great harmonies and melodies, so watch out for that.

- As for me, I'm in for a little exhumation session as I'm planning to reload my forgotten old band, Mastiphal. We already got together with the guys for a couple of rehearsals and we fil-

led them with dirty black'n'roll, so you can expect tough and non-compromising music coming your way.

And on that bombshell we end this article.

All the best
Dir K

Change of scenery from the other images in this article, photo by Simon Cviq



<http://hallowed.se/music/readwrite/rencensioner/dorzamat.html>

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