

HAMMERFALL

With their eighth studio album just out in the record shelves here in Sweden (if they are any left), Hammerfall are once again ready to take on the world on their crusade for heavy metal. This time though, there are some differences, some things are not recognisable while others are as they have always been. Hallowed had a chat with with the bass player of the band Fredrik Larsson who explains that it has been a tough morning since they have been visiting a TV morning show's studio in the morning and now he was awaiting the night's show, the first one with the new songs.



WRITTEN BY DANIEL KÄLLMALM
LIVE PHOTOS BY DANIEL KÄLLMALM
OTHER PHOTO: PRESS PHOTOS
PUBLISHED ON 26/5-2011

-- We have snuck something like three or four songs into the shows in Germany so we have done a little of an advanced start but tonight it is premier for real, Fredrik explains.

Infected is destined to raise some debate amongst Hammerfall fans, but also most likely in some metal circuits. It is something of a new sound for the band, maybe not completely in line with what most expect.

- It is a little more back to basics, explains Fredrik. The production helps us to move a little away from the layer upon layer with a more direct sound.

The initiated one should probably also point out that the band

has gotten a slightly more raw and heavy sound than before which according to Fredrik has to do with it being more air in the songs and that they have moved away from the layer upon layer on which they built their songs upon earlier.

- If there is no air, the songs will be bland and flat. With this production we will get many heavy, almost dark songs, which is something I like.

Much is new with this Infected, one of these things is that the band have changed producer for this album. Charlie Bauerfield had to leave since the band needed a change; to, as they write on their website, keep it fresh. The one who filled the role as co-producer to the band for Infected was James Michael who is a well-known metal producer. According to Fredrik his biggest

contribution to Infected was his role as vocal coach.

- He has done it well, he has produced the album and been a fantastic vocal coach for Joacim (Cans) who really had to earn up to it and he has done really well.

Fredrik says that the work on Infected was a bit more relaxed since he got to work with Oskar (Dronjak) and Pontus (Norgren), something he says he would like doing again.

- We had the resources ourselves and the knowledge as well in Pontus who has done a lot with sounds and stuff, amongst others producing. To have those resources and not use them would be idiotic. To work with Oskar and Pontus was a little more relaxed when one can rest ideas and come up with suggestions which one can later test and play out.

That thing was obviously dif-

ferent from the work on earlier album, Fredrik explain.

- On the former album it was more like working with the producer who came up with some ideas so it was different and more relaxed for this album and it was fantastically fun to work with Pontus and Oskar and I hope we can do it more in the future.

Hector

The watchful person quickly notice by a quick glance at Infected's cover that something is missing, maybe I should have said that someone is missing. Maybe you know of a gentleman that usually go by the name of Hector who have been present on all Hammerfall album covers until now when it was time for him to take refuge inside the booklet.

- We felt that Hammerfall has evolved all the time and taken small steps, now we have taken a bigger step and thought it should be noticed, explains

Fredrik.

However, Hector is not retired, Fredrik continues and points out that he is still the face of the band.

- We also wanted it to be something showing something new so that it would not be 'another Hammerfall album' as we have all the time been subject of preconceptions that we sound the same all the time.

Fredrik does not think that Hector's absence from the cover will effect the fans of the band or the album buyers noticeably as it is first and foremost the music it is all about.

- It is still Hammerfall, with Joacim's characteristic voice and the dual guitar attack and solos with everything it entails.

If this new direction is something lasting or if the knights will return is nothing Fredrik want to predict at present as it is a long span of time and possibly impossible to know

what might inspire so far into the future.

Favourite songs & Touring

For some reason I have a need to ask all the band I interview about which the favourite song on the album is, a question that is often ducked by those questioned. Fredrik however, says he has a number of favourite songs on Infected.

- Let's Get it On is very good and I believe it will work really well live. Then it is Bang Your Head, or B.Y.H. as it is called, it has lots of energy and is a bit more Hammerfall. That was two favourites and then we will have to see what is fun to play live. Songs that are fun to play give more feel as to how good one think the songs are.

The writer fittingly sneaks in that he likes the opening track Patient Zero, mainly for the great opening riff that open the song but also because it is a good song. According to Fredrik it is built on an older riff that Oskas has had lying around for a while.

- We are to play it live to night so we will see how it works, he explains.

Speaking of playing live, at the band website we can read about a number of festival shows that the band will play during the summer months, but nothing yet of tours or similar but according to Fredrik the band will make a real tour come fall.

- Hell yes, to begin with it will be festivals in Europe but in fall we will

have a regular tour, a club tour. Nothing is set yet but it will definitely be something.

Because nothing is set yet he does not want to give any information since it can be misinterpreted and similar, but the band hope to play at different places and continents around the world. They want to play live as much as possible, the rehearsal aspect they do not care much for though.

- It is on stage we like it the best, the rehearsal ahead is a necessary evil but we try to do it as little as possible as we are lazy, explains Fredrik.

Hammerfall

Fredrik was part of the recording of the band's debut Glory to the Brave but he left the band before they were picked up by Nuclear Blast, he then returned ten years later. At that time a lot had happened with the band. Or rather, not with the band but with everything around it he explains.

- We were really nothing when I left the band then, we had a contract with

Vic Records and that was about it. It was a dream come true but we didn't have much, we played at smaller venues and rock contests. I left the band before it was picked up by Nuclear Blast so it is a big difference now. Now it is a complete apparatus and a lot of business and that is maybe a bit sad as I most of all want to play and have fun but it is a necessary evil. It is still the same band and the same feel and I can feel that 'this was fun' when I'm playing.

Just like before it is Oskar and Joacim who has written most of the material on Infected. Not alone though, they had a little bit of help.

- Pontus wrote The Outlaw in collaboration with Joacim and I got in a pair of riffs on Dia De Los Muertos, explains Fredrik.

The history of Fredrik's riffs on Dia De Los Muertos was a funny such, it was all about Oskar putting together a song with riffs he had lying in a folder, some of those riffs had ended up in the wrong fol-





der and was Fredrik's riffs.

-He was sure that it was his, but it wasn't and I got two riffs on the album.

Zombies, video and ending

For the single One More Time the band has of course recorded a video, a video where we get to know of a zombie invasion. Zombies has nothing to do with the contents of the song as far as I could find out and that led to me asking about it.

- It was one of those things, we talked about doing something funny and since we are all fans of horror movies and such, I like Zombie films a lot so I thought it was funny. We had not done anything with Patrik Ullaeus who is from Gothenburg before and therefore talked to him and came with some ideas and in the end it was zombies. It has nothing to do with the song itself, it is not

of zombies but there are other tracks on the albums that do so it becomes something of a common denominator for the album.

Fredrik also points out that it is a video you cannot take too seriously, and that it was not made as something serious. It is just a video and one must be allowed to do something for fun and offer some humour even if the music is serious.

- If it is too serious it will be like **Manowar**, we take music seriously but one cannot be too serious.

Infected offers a new sound for **Hammerfall** which is something that seem to have divided the reviewers I have read but on the other hand they are quite few so I wondered if Fredrik had some insights from the reviewers.

- Haven't seen that much actually but I have gotten some insight and the ones I have spoken with seem to like it so it is a good

sign. Many are somewhat surprised by the sound but it is a little hard to say really. The reviewers have not really been on our side earlier, it feels a little as though we work with the wind against us in shape of preconceptions that we always sound the same.

Hammerfall is probably overall a band that raise certain emotions amongst the metal fans, it seems to be a group that think it is not cool to like **Hammerfall**. Something that might be seen as something quite odd since many buy their music, many see them when they play live, still it is not cool to like them.

- It is a bit sad that people are like that and that they do not stand up for what they like, but it is often easier just to go along. It is not particularly cool to like **Hammerfall** and on festivals many say that 'I will not see **Hammerfall**, or maybe just for fun' and still it is a

sea in front of the stage. It seems hard to admit that you like **Hammerfall** even though that is what metal is all about, to stand up for what you like.

Metal is something the band love to preach about on their live shows and also stand for and for Fredrik metal is all about daring to stand for who you are.

- Take the time to listen to the album yourselves and make up your own opinion and we would love it if you came to see us live since it is where it happens, was the answer to the question if he had something to add to what I had asked. And with that we leave **Hammerfall** and wish them the best of luck with their upcoming endeavours in music. **Infected** is out now and it is reviewed here in **Hallowed**.

