

Hello there

First of all I must say that I'm glad to have an opportunity to present Pagan's Mind to croatian metal fans for the first time.

Thank you so very much☺

You are unknown band so far in my country, so please tell few main data about the band.

Well, I'll try to give you a brief "bio" on what happened through the last years: Silverspoon was the band me, Stian and Thorstein played in before we started up Pagan's Mind. We actually played in that band for almost 7 years together - never being especially professional about it before the "Sink Or Swim" release, we did gigs now and then, had a KISS-cover band doing Kiss songs with the same members from time to time, did some jobs here in Norway without the great success. The music style was inspired by 80' s "LA"-rock and metal. Some thought it sounded like a crossover between Dokken, Lillian Axe and likewise. It wasn't before the release of the album (Sink Or Swim) we got an offer from a small label here in Norway.

The last year we played together in Silverspoon, we had in mind to change the musical style to more heavy and progressive stuff (you can sense the changing musical style already on the first song on the album - this later on became "Entrance : Stargate" from Celestial Entrance actually!) We thought that one was a really good song by the way. The album was self-financed and was intended to be a sort of "professional demo", as we were being tired of being put down by all the metal labels all the time and wanted to get some attention. It certainly did, and something really good came out of it; the contract with the Norwegian label and the release of the first Pagan's Mind album resulted directly in the collaboration with Limb Music. After that is really history and the success of the band has been tremendous and things have been such fun to be a part of!

Let's continue with most important thing at the moment and that is, of course your new album or let's say re-release of your first album «Infinity Divine». Can you please tell me most interesting things about?

It's a re-release, indeed. The original recording was done late summer of 2000 and originally mixed by Ronni Le Tekro of TNT, then released on the Facefront label in November the same year. Due to poor distribution, mostly Scandinavia, it never reached the rest of Europe. After we were signed on Limb Schnoor's label LMP, our first release was Celestial Entrance, which also became our first international album release. Due to the success of CE Limb Music also wanted to give ID a new beginning, wanting a worldwide release because of the potential they saw in our debut album, and the audience demanded it as well. We then set out to do some minor changes, as to re-record all the vocals and finally editing the entire album with heavy scissors, pliers and hacksaws! He he.. Finally we did a brand new version of the track "Embracing Fear" and covered King Diamond's excellent epic song "At The Graves" which seems to have caused quite a furore at every musical "know-it-all" site. We are quite satisfied with all the attention the track has received so far since it is

not the typical coveroption in our genre, nor any genre, really, but Nils, our singer is remarkably good at imitating other vocals and spoken words. With him being the biggest Kingfan in the universe, the choice for a coversong was quite apparent. We found it a real challenge to do such a complex tune but it seems we did something right. This time around we took the finished recording to Denmark to remix it. Legendary producer Tommy Hansen set up the mix, and the result was, as expected from a man of his caliber, top notch; excellent working conditions assured by the very strong husband-and-wife-team of Tommy and his spouse. This was conceived in the cold wintermonth of January(beer is cheap in denmark) another reason to stay those extra couple of days) He he!! The ID re-release just took place and we are caught up with several interviews every day, but that's just the way things ought to be. We are extremely gratified and awed by all this attention, really.

You don't have large number of releases but you re-release your first album. Why do you do that and what was main idea about that?

Some of that is answered above but let me add our press release thing, pasted here:

““The first album suffered from problems in the mixing and recording process”, says guitarist Jorn Viggo Lofstad. “At the time there were too little time to be picky about details because we had a deadline to keep”. The fact that the band really got together just three weeks before the recording didn't help out either. Most songs, except for the more epic “A New Beginning” which were written only two weeks before the recording were already written by Nils K. Rue, Stian Kristoffersen and Thorstein Aaby (ex-second guitarist) before Jorn Viggo Lofstad, Steinar Krokmo and Ronny Tegner joined in as full band members. The time-pressure and also the technical problems we suffered made this release in the band's opinion not a full worthy image of what Pagan's Mind stand for today.

The interest for the first album however, increased enormously after the 2002 success release “Celestial Entrance”, and Limb Music wanted to reissue this first album. Doing a compromise, the band agreed with their label that the original recordings had to be edited, re-mixed and freshened up in order to represent the quality for which Pagan's Mind stand for today. All vocal lines were re-recorded, the original songs were clipped and edited so some extent and two newly recorded bonus tracks were added.

The two bonus tracks which were added is a 2004-version of the song “Embracing Fear” which also appears on the record in its original form, with an different arrangement similar to how the band performs the song live today. A cover version of the King Diamond song “At The Graves” taken from the classic album “Conspiracy” from 1989 were recorded and contains solo guest appearances by Glen Drover (ex-King Diamond, Eidolon) and Gus G. (Firewind, Dream Evil, Mystic Prophecy). Having heard this version, King Diamond manager Ole Bang stated this: “Impressive work, it's almost as hearing the King himself!”

Can we expect your new album in the close future?

In time of writing we are very busy recording the brand new album in Mediamaker studios right here in Skien. So far we put down all the drums, nearly all guitars and bass with keys and vocals still remaining. Were expected to mix the recording in Sweden before the end of January. The album is due out in April '05.. We were quite pleased with the allover mix on CE and therefore were doing the mix at Studio Fredman with Fredrik Nordstrom who is a wizard behind the controllers. The writing for this album started over two years ago and all the music has been developed through practice and seminars. This we found to be the best method of working together, because this way we get a good sense of how new material will sound before we record, and we have a chance to play and perfect the songs before going on the road. I know a lot of bands which create their new material in the studio while recording. That does not work for us. There are too many other parameters and things to focus on during recording, and we have to make sure the structures of the songs are satisfactory. That is why we always have finished the writing period before entering studio. Concerning the approach, it will be along the lines of CE, just taken a step further.

Can you tell me few technical things about this release? For example, whee did you record new tracks, who was the producer etc.?

As it is not finished at the time of this writing I reffer to the question answered above!
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Are you expecting any promotional tour around Europe with someone?

Of course we would like that, but to be honest I don't think our label would agree to put us on a headline tour yet. It would be great though. A sensible thought is to be put out on tour with a bigger headline act. I would maybe see a headline tour after our fourth album.

Are you satisfied with number of gigs you played so far?

Yeah, we have done a lot of gigs the last couple of years and the response has been tremendous. We really put our hearts and minds into being a really good livenband and the rumours walk that we really kick ass live. We rehearse a lot to deliver even more than the records do live. We have done a lot of festival gigs and will be doing that this coming summer also. All in all two very hectic years for Pagan's Mind doing gigs and recordings, so yes, we are very pleased. Nevertheless, these days we are working towards getting ourselves under the wings of some serious big bookingagency here in Europe. So anyone interested, please contact us☺

How do you like response of fans and media about this release? Are you satisfied with that?

So far it has been very good. Of course the quality of the songwriting was not that good back in 2000 compared to what we are capable of doing now, the newly recorded stuff on the re-release such as "Embracing Fear 2004" and the coversong "At The Graves" has gotten the greatest response so far. That should be a token of that we are in the right direction, getting better as time goes by. I also believe

reporters and reviewers has understood just that, and usually comment that. The response has been better than we expected for this "fill in" of a record anyways!!

What is your opinion about metal scene nowadays? Do you think that there is place for everyone or maybe it is too much bands on the scene at the moment?

Hm, ill try to talk a little about our opinions and feelings about the scene nowadays, hope it answers your question:

Whatever we do, we will always sound like ourselves. The only thing we know, is how we work together, and as long as we stay together, we will always sound PM. Heavy metal is on the rise, no matter what genre. Of course the progressive metal scene as well. Who could have imagined a few years ago that a band from Norway went to the USA to do just a couple of gigs? That says it all, I think. Primus motors like Glenn at Progpower USA, and Rene at Progpower Europe, are the most dedicated people Ive ever met, and they truly influence and bring the prog stage to it's highly regarded standing that it holds today. There is also the ever demanding fan who craves new music in his ears. i.e. new sounds, new approaches.

In the last couple of years a plethora of Norwegian Metal bands have been making their name known in Metal, whereas in the 80's and 90`s most people knew the band TNT and maybe Conception, if they were lucky and that's about it. Do you feel that the quality of music has improved or have things like the Internet allowed Norwegian bands make a name for themselves all over the world?

Let me make it clear, I`m not talking about black metal stuff, hehe) Of course the BM scene has shifted focus to other genres, but the net has made it possible for Joe Average to obtain his 15 minutes of fame no matter whether you're a juggler or a pizza chef. Today any, and I mean, any band can be heard and published on the internet. All you have to do yourself is advertising. At the same time, as consumers become more aware, I find that the progmetal scene is getting more and more refined as well as undefined. Strange. As long as everybody is happy, it's a win win situation.

What are you doing in your life when your not occupied with your band?

Watch a porn movie and eat cheese doodles....moah ha ha.

Really, just being home, having some beers with friends and having a good laugh is for me the idea of relaxing. Walking in the woods or by the ocean maybe, listening to the sound sof the waves. Gigs is usually stressful and being able just to relax and don` t be considered for anything is really rewarding...

For the end of this interview tell me is there any question which you like to answer but nobody never ask you that in interviews? If there is, please be totally free to answer that question?

That`s really a difficult one. But I must say that I always have felt a strong presence of something unexplainable following me. Too many things in my life has been of a "non-coincidental" matter, it`s like things have been lined up for me. Of course I have

been working hard for things and all, but it's like the one thing is released by the other, all coming like pearls on a line, presented to me in my life. I've seen "enemies" fade by and get sick, friends and lovers flourish, and are sometimes worried about if there's someone watching over me a little to revengeful or "too serious". My dreams has been of such a intense and "mad" matter since small age, things revealed which I did not knew about then but discovered the meaning or structure of later in life. Being sick in fever as a little boy brought me visions I couldn't explain then, but can now, and it's weird. I guess I shall use the rest of my life wondering about all those unexplainable things in life, the meaning of it all, and probably never ending up with an answer. But life is a journey and a hell of a exciting one also 😊

So now you can go figure out what the question would have been.... 😊 Have a nice day everyone, be nice to each other!

Thank you very much for your answers and your time and I wish you and rest of the band everything best in future.

Thanks a lot for the interest in the band, the interview and everything – keep the good work up 😊

The questions are answered by Steinar Krokmo (bass) and Nils K. Rue (vocals)

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United Forces magazine
Croatia