

Interview: Ensiferum

Made for www.metal.de

Questions: Proserpine

Answers: Meiju / Keyboard

01.) Congrats to your new album! It's without doubt one of the highlights this year! How is it for you to see your new album in stores now and how is the feedback so far?

- I must say it feels great to have the album out now. It had been enormously delayed already for several reasons, mixing being one of them. But now the work is done and we've got very good feedback.

02.) I think your new album is not that power metal influenced anymore but there are much more folk elements. Of course there is traditional metal here and there (especially for example "Sword Chant"). Do you agree there or where are the main differences in your opinion?

- Yes, the most common opinion has been that we've moved more towards folk music, and that we've added some new characteristics to the music too, for example expanded the vocal styles in certain songs and of course used traditional folk instruments. It's true that power metal has been pushed aside a bit... I think that we've achieved more power to the music itself but the added folk influences form an important contrast to it.

03.) A few months ago Jari left the band because of his soloproject. Have you already a new candidate in sight or is this not such an easy step?

- Well, we have several choices how to fill his place, but we're still looking for talented candidates. Singer's part is very demanding in Ensiferum and we don't want to make hesitated moves...we'll see what happens.

04.) How were the recordings of "Iron"? Have there been any problems?

- Actually there were some problems. Jari got sick of course in the middle of the recordings and after all some vocals had to be done in Finland after the studio when Jari got his voice working. Drums and guitars were done so carefully that in the end we got really busy doing everything well so we took some extra studio time. This also prolonged the whole project...I only had five days to record all the keyboards and so I sat there playing from 9 am to 2 am...

05.) You recorded the album in Denmark with Flemming Rasmussen, which is rather unusual for Finnish bands. What for expectations did you have to record with THE Flemming Rasmussen and are you satisfied with the result and all the things around the recordings?

- We were quite enthusiastic to see his ways of working. Still we were a little bit worried in forehand how we'd get through some of our opinions if he would see the whole thing differently. But it showed that we got very well along and we enjoyed working with him. The result was quite interesting because the sound is very different comparing to the first album. But when ears get used to it, it kicks ass.

06.) I have seen your show in Essen and although it was a bit strange to see Petri behind the microphone and guitar I think he made a very good job. How was it for you to be on tour in Europe and then with a "session-singer"? Are you happy with the tour all in all?

- The tour was fantastic! We had a great time and the shows just got better all the time...The last gig was of course the most entertaining one as we threw off almost all our clothes. Petri did a very great work at the tour and we're very satisfied with him. He's a true performer!

07.) Can you tell me any funny, interesting or special moments that happened on tour? :)

- Well, it was always a special moment when somebody passed out at the downstairs of the bus. His face got painted with a marker and he woke up next morning looking like Paul Stanley or whatever you can imagine.. Also I remember especially the boy in Austria, who took his pants off in the middle of the bar full of crowd just to get my autograph on his ass. Lovely! But the last night was unforgettable; the staff kept dropping ice cubes to our pants during the gig and somebody had put a penis dummy on my keyboards. I didn't know I could play so drunk!

08.) In the song "LAI LAI HEI" you used a very short passage of Finnish lyrics. Could you imagine to sing more in your mother tongue for example like Moonsorrow do?

- I think it's great to bring some Finnish culture to the music, but maybe in the future we will rather do it by the melodies and instruments like kantele. The Finnish lyrics in Lai Lai Hei just felt they fit in and belong to the song. I still cannot see the day we'd be singing in Finnish.

09.) In the song "Tears" there is a very nice female voice...it's not Meiju or is it?

- Not me! She's Kaisa Saari from the band 'Tarujen Saari' which played also the folk instruments to the album.

10.) Why have you decided to cover "Battery" of Metallica? Is that one of your favourite Metallica-Songs? Who came up with this idea?

- We've been playing it a lot in gigs and people have loved it. Now we thought we could also record it and also because The 'Metallica' Flemming were the producer... I think Oliver and Jukkis are the biggest Metallica fans in our band!

11.) I think the cover picture of "Iron" is very great and has this special charme that fits your music very well. What is that for a scene you show there? Has it anything to do with a historical background or is that your own creation? Who was responsible for the cover at all?

- Actually we only had ideas of a rider on the top of a mountain with his horse and a battle going on below. After making some drafts about this scene we gave free hands to the artist. After all he had done the cover of the first album also. His name is Necrolord and he has also done covers to Emperor and Dissection, among others.

12.) What does a sword signify to you? Your name, lyrics and covers always deal with this piece of metal... what's so special?

- Our name means 'Sword carrier' so it's kind of a symbol to our band. It brings Middle Age in mind and Markus felt it represents well the atmosphere of our music, 'heroic folk metal'. After all, we have songs about battles and killing so we need weapons...and we couldn't use machine guns, could we?

13.) Your 3 demos are not available anymore if I am not mistaken, but I am sure there are many people that are interested in that old material. Could you imagine to re-release those demos again?

- Probably yes... but after one or two years.

14.) For Spinefarm your debut-album didn't have such a high priority concerning promotion. But nonetheless that album addressed many listeners in the scene. How is the situation now with your new album? I haven't seen many ads in German press, I guess. How is it in Finland?

- We feel that the record company promised much more promotion than what came to be. They claim that the studio took too much time and costs to promote us more. This sounds quite stupid to me... There have been some advertising in Finnish metal magazines, but for example they waited surprisingly long to put the album's picture and advertisement to Spinefarm's homepage. So in this matter we are not satisfied at all.

15.) What's up in the Ensiferum-camp these days? Do you have any ideas for new songs already or do you just prepare for the festivals? Are there any other shows apart from the festivals this year?

- Yes, we have some new ideas already for the music, but the festivals are now our main project. It seems we're in a sensational condition for live plays after the European tour, so I have the feeling that the summer shows are going to be absolutely wild!

16.) Do you have any last words or a message to our readers?

- See you at SummerBreeze and Party San, we're going to kick your ass!!!

Thanx for your answers and I wish you and your band all the best! Greetings Rebecca / metal.de

- Thanx!!

- Meiju