

Interview: Usipian
Made for www.metal.de
Questions: Proserpine
Answers: Nis, Toke

01) Please tell me more about the name Usipian. I think that's not a really usual name for a metal band but the word sounds interesting. So what is Usipian?

Nis: Usipian - or actually Usipii - is the name of an ancient Germanic tribe that was situated at the Rhine between Lippe and Ruhr. Not exactly the territory that now constitutes our homeland but we did however want to find a moniker that signifies pride of heritage. Although not very much is known about this particular Germanic tribe, I believe you know what I mean when I use the sentence 'pride of heritage'. Besides it's also my opinion that Usipian is not a typical band name, and I guess it's characteristic that we have been asked this question quite some times before. Usipian is easy to remember and the pronunciation of the word sounds good - at least to my ears.

02) The previous name of the band was Gothic Domain. Why did you change that one?

Nis: Because it was utter rubbish. The word *gothic* sounds gay and does not refer to any lyrical or musical significance of the band whatsoever! It was used in the sense of a dark or sinister domain, but no one seemed to understand that (and I don't blame them). Also it happened way too often that some people - quite naturally - misunderstood what our musical expression was all about.

Toke: It should also be said that the word "Gothic" were chosen by us, before Cradle of Filth became big, and the word wasn't as used (and molested) then as it is now. Gothic suddenly became the same as being very fund of painted nails etc, something none of us can connect with.

03) Why did Martin Rosendahl leave the band?

Nis: Martin was getting very busy with his main band (Corpus Mortale) at the time. They had their debut-album coming out ("With Lewd Demeanor") and were facing a European tour with Konkhra. Also he felt that our musical direction brought us a bit too close to the style of Corpus Mortale, thereby not implying that the two bands actually sounded very similar, but that we crossed paths on the fields of musical exploration. Martin's decision to leave came quite natural and in Kent Værens (ex-Ad Noctum) we now have a great replacement. By the way Kent and I have a project band (Phantom) along with Martin and one other person.

04) I got to know you through the internet, downloaded some songs and well you know the rest ;) . I think the internet is very good for smaller bands to get more attention. Do you agree there? Do you also use the internet to check out new bands and to download MP3s etc.?

Nis: Well definitely. It is very hard nowadays to promote your band if you do not have a homepage. The whole 'scene' for underground-fanzines is only a shadow of itself compared to earlier on. Even though the Internet is very practical and I wouldn't do without it, I do miss correspondence through snail-mail and reading about obscure bands and releases in cheap-printed fanzines. To answer your question, I do check out bands on the Internet, but it's almost impossible to keep up with everything going on.

05) Originally you planned that the EP is released by Ancient Darkness Prod. But now Metal Fortress Entertainment does this job. What happened there?

Nis: That's a rather long and ridiculous story really. Well, to keep it short: One of the guys behind ADP demanded that our new bass-player should be removed from the layout when he learned that Kent had recently joined Usipian. They used to play in the same band (Ad Noctum), but now pretty much hate each other. There is certainly a reason for this feud and I can understand both 'sides', but we chose to cancel the

release anyway since the demand was outrageous. Besides the personal problems between the two of them, there are no hard feelings between Usipian and ADP. The deal with Metal Fortress Entertainment (MFE) is better for us by the way, although it has caused a delay of the release since MFE had already planned a line of releases to take care of first.

06) Can you give me more information about your soon-to-come first full-length album? Do you already have a name for the baby and when will it be released? Will there be any changes of your musical style in comparison with your current EP?

Nis: Well, the album will contain nine or ten tracks of intense and complex death metal. The music will have an overall fast flow with mainly fast parts, but also mid-paced riffing and in addition a few slow and atmospheric ones as well. The lyrical writings of Toke will be intriguing as always. Regarding musical changes I can only say that we progress all the time and that some of the new material has been a bit of a surprise to myself, but I wouldn't really say that the musical style as such is very different compared to the "Clouded Restraint" 7-inch EP. It will be better and perhaps more aggressive though, but I'll let you be the judge of that when time comes.

Toke: The title will first be found when we have an agreement on what the cover should be like, and there should be a matching between album title, cover and song titles. So none yet.

07) Will that new CD be released by Metal Fortress Entertainment or was the contract only for the EP? If so, do you already have another record deal?

Nis: It is not decided yet if the album will be released by MFE or if it will be out on another label. We do have an offer from MFE and we are discussing matters together on a regular basis. We have also talked about the possibilities of letting MFE release a vinyl version by license, if the album will eventually be out on another label. I have only positive things to say about the collaboration with MFE so far. It is a small label no doubt (as well as Usipian is a small band), so a possible deal with them will depend on what we can do for each other. The delay of the EP has nothing to do with MFE by the way but with the printing-lab.

08) It always seems to me that Denmark is not really a country for music. Not for pop music, neither for metal, although I think there are a few metal bands popping up the last few months. Do you notice a change in the scene these days or have there always been many bands before which were simply not known that much abroad?

Nis: I'm not sure why Denmark is regarded as a second rate country when it comes to music, since we have always had some great bands in my opinion. Anyway it is obviously not very likely that a country with a population of only five million people will spawn as many great bands as for instance the United States have done. But take acts such as Merciful Fate, King Diamond and Artillery - not to forget a Danish drummer, as founding member of the once mighty Metallica - into consideration, and it should be clear that Denmark has indeed secured it's place in the history of metal. Certainly a change is taking place, but it works in two ways. Danish bands for instance tend to consist of better musicians than earlier on, but at the same time a lot of 'nice', boring and over-polished music sees the light of day unfortunately. I don't want to mention any crappy bands by name (although there sure are a lot), but a few of the recommendable acts are Exmortem, Corpus Mortale, Iniquity and Nortt (for very different reasons). Visit www.danishmetalpages.dk if you are interested in knowing more about the Danish 'metal-scene'.

09) You already had a lot of live shows with more or less known bands. Would you consider yourself as routined when it comes to gigs or are you rather nervous when you play live? Do you like to present your music in front of many people or do you prefer to be in the rehearsal room or the studio?

Nis: Hmm...if it's a local gig along with some unknown band in front of a smaller crowd, then personally I'm not nervous. If we are playing in support of a touring band that has an established name behind them and who draws a lot of people - as in the case of the concert in support of Vader - then I have adrenalin pumping through my veins and is thereby more anxious to give my best possible performance. I'm convinced this

goes for the band as a whole. You have to be a bit nervous to perform well. Regarding live routine Usipian/Gothic Domain has played live many times, but we haven't performed a single time since Kent joined us recently, and we have only had one concert with Jeppe. This is simply because we are mainly focusing on writing material for the coming album. Toke and Tais are without a doubt the most experienced in the band regarding live shows, and I'm sure that this particular line-up will be experienced after the release of our debut.

10) Are there any live shows planned in near future?

Nis: We are planning some gigs all over Denmark along with Corpus Mortale. The shows will take place sometime after August this year. The dates will of course be announced on our homepage, so keep your eyes open. There have also been talk of a few dates in Sweden in the beginning of next year, but I can't confirm anything yet. It's simply too far out in the future. Sorry, nothing has been planned for the German death metal fanatics, but don't hesitate to invite us!

11) You are often compared with Dissection or Morbid Angel...do you like that comparisons or is that more a pressure for you?

Nis: People can say and think just what the hell they want, but that doesn't mean you have to agree does it? I guess you could draw some parallels between Dissection and older material of ours, but we can hardly be compared to them any longer. The comparisons to Morbid Angel are somewhat more understandable, and I don't really mind as long as we are not considered rip-offs (which we are definitely not). If a reviewer ends off by mentioning Morbid Angel for practical referential reasons in a description of our music, I guess it's more of an honor really. After all they are (or should I say were?) a great band. Anyway, I don't quite see how such comparisons could become a pressure for us.

12) Many bands that originally played black metal switch (back) to play death metal now. I wonder why that is so. It's a bit the same with you although you always included strong death metal parts. Do you think that death metal is YOUR music and suits you better than black metal?

Nis: No offence, but I think it is to simplify matters a bit. I once read a review of an Aeternus album, in which the reviewer wrote something like "...but what the hell is a death-metal vocal doing in a black-metal band", which I find is a very narrow minded and somewhat not understandable statement. Of course it makes sense to also let the music itself constitute a genre, but you definitely have to consider other factors as well. We have never been - or claimed to be - a satanic band, and none of our material can therefore hardly be considered as black-metal. That does however not mean that some bands that can be labeled as black-metal haven't inspired us earlier on, but does that really justify a labeling of us as a former black-metal band? Personally I don't think so. I must admit that most people uses sharp and practical genre-definitions constituted only by the music, which is why you will see that we earlier on have used the phrase Death/Black/Thrash to describe our music, but essentially we are not - and have never been - a black metal band. Death-metal is the common denominator for the five of us and the kind of music we believe Usipian is best regarded as.

13) Please tell me more about that documentary program "Extrem"? What was that documentary about and what was your part there?

Toke: Well the channel TV-DANMARK called me up and asked me if I would consider participate in a program about a guy playing death/black metal. They wanted a guy who wasn't satanic, a guy with other normal interests, a 'normal' guy that simply happened to be involved with extreme music. I found the approach interesting as I thought it could be fun to show Denmark that you could play this kind of music without being a complete unintelligent loser. What then happened was that they changed the order of the program and placed me as a bit of a side character in a program about an extreme metal guy (Martin Leth of Strychnos, and a very good friend of mine). He painted himself, got pictures taken in a cemetery etc. basically the opposite of what I was going to show. The people

behind the program didn't think that I was 'extreme' enough to give the program credit for its title, which is probably true, but very different from the deal they gave to me. What is very silly is that Martin Leth (the other guy in the program) and I aren't as different as we appear in the program. I definitely learned the true power of editing. Anyway the program was made in 1999, and both Martin and I have changed quite a bit since the program.

14) With Usipian you only recorded in SoundZone Studio. Is that studio especially for metal bands or do others record there as well? Why did you quit working with Flemming Rasmussen after you re-named the band?

Toke: Flemming Rasmussen is an old friend as his son is a childhood friend of mine. It was actually through Flemming that I got interested in metal. He had copies of "... And Justice for all". I was hooked very early on. So when I started to play music myself, I naturally wanted to get a chance to work with him. He then called me up and said that he had a weekend free, that we could get really cheap. So we entered and recorded "An Everborn". I hadn't even written the lyrics to the song, so I had to write it while the other guys recorded it. Real professionalism!!! If we ever get the chance to work with him again we will do it in a second. But even though we are friends, he isn't exactly for free you know. So lets see if that happens again, could be exiting.

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

Nis: Support your local Gothcrush Division!