

Interview: Vehemence

Made for www.metal.de

Questions: Proserpine

Answers: John Chavez (guitars)

01.) Can you explain the title "Helping The World To See"? What is the world not able to see? For me it sounds a bit like an economical or political statement, but what have you intended with this album title?

Vehemence are helping the world to see the realistic problematic issues the world today basically. The issues include songs about the terminally ill and their death process, terrorism, a one sided Christian extremist television network, drugs, a true crime story, an ode to all soldiers, depression, family dysfunction, political issues, and the catholic pedophile church issues. After seeing all that has happened in the past decade we made lyrics in relation to the news and the changes in this world. We have had our cryptic messages in our lyrics in the past and this time we are taking the content a bit further that will make everyone understand.

02.) Is there no use for a keyboard player anymore or why has Jason left the band? For "You Don't Have To Be Afraid Anymore" you used a nice keyboard-passage. Will that be all the keyboard is good for or do you plan to use more of that on your next releases?

Jason Keesecker created some great keyboard passages, but he realized he had 3 songs out of 30 that he was a part of. We couldn't play the same 3 songs all the time on our tours, so he took himself out of the band. The band should have realized this before we made him sign as a full member, but he signed out of the band and we haven't heard much from him since. Vehemence used the keyboard element only as atmosphere, and we were originally a 5 piece band from the start. We weren't going to compromise our sound to be like Dark Tranquility. The song You Don't Have To Be Afraid Anymore had a lot more keyboards by Jason, but Bjorn decided to just keep the first part of the piano parts Jason had written and do them himself. With music we will never know, but we are open to all ideas. For live appearances in the future whenever we get a roadie crew, we will probably use a sequencer for the keyboards.

03.) Vehemence is still a rather new band (at least in Europe) although you already founded in 1995 but you definitely became more known here as well the last 2-3 years. What has changed for you as musician but also personally as you signed with Metal Blade?

We are only 2 years in the business, so to us that's when everything started. The years before that don't really count because those years were not in front of the world's metal media. Since we signed to Metal Blade Records our album was released in ever country thanks to the labels vast distribution. Our band name and music is known throughout the world and we were welcomed to the metal communities quickly. Our band became more popular by the day and we now have thousands of fans and Vehemence fanatics. It felt good to have this occur; we can only hope to get bigger to the point where we do not have to work anymore which in death metal is difficult but very possible.

04.) I think the cover of HTWTS looks very good and fits the name of the album perfectly! How did that cover picture evolve and what was important for you as band? Did you have exact ideas how the cover should look like?

We just gave the artist Wes Bencoter the title of our album and he came up with the gruesome rest. All in Vehemence agree this is Wes's best piece of artwork out to date. We had no idea that the album cover was going to be this magnificent.

05.) In the past you had more that gore-style for your cover artworks and cause of that you had some troubles with shops etc. (and especially here in Germany with SPV). Now the cover looks more "sophisticated" if you like, so do you think that such a kind of pictures suit better to your music?

(Laughs) Yeah it does look sophisticated due to that evil demon holding up an old version globe, about to eat it. We thought SPV was going to ban this album to because the spine is coming out of the demons head all in gore fashion. I think it was Wes Bencoter's name that saved this album from getting banned. The CD layout can be very important for a band's message or conceptual ideas. Our layout this time was more basic compared to the God Was Created album since this new album is a realistic album without the twists and turns.

06.) As bonus track you used "Her Beautiful Eyes". Why have you chosen this rather old track?

It is a song that we have been playing live for a long time, it is a crowd pleaser and we just needed to get it out. The lyrics of Her Beautiful Eyes kind of tie in with what is going on in the world today with the catholic priests and their molestations along with child abduction.

07.) I think the Vehemence timeline you made for the CD-Rom part is very interesting since it contains great live-moments, rehearsals and also stuff others probably don't see that often. hehe funny recordings in the studio you had! ;) Have you recorded that much in the past to make such a timeline or was it more a spontaneous idea?

Well we knew that if we didn't release something it would probably be forgotten so we decided to show all the past history we had so far all the way back to the start of it all. We didn't show full songs but just clips of songs since we had so many songs to favor our fans to. The time line was also made to show that were weren't a band that came out of the woodwork, and that we had history before getting signed to a major label.

08.) You recorded a video for the song "By Your Bedside". Was this video recorded with the intention to be broadcasted on MTV etc. or was it only for your website and maybe as bonus for another release? Do you think it is important for metal bands nowadays to use the TV as promotion?

We will be submitting the By Your Bedside video to MTV and other television publications soon. We also have another video in the works for We Are All Dying. It is important to get on these television shows because they are seen by millions of people. MTV2 is now free on all cable here in America. In other countries it is important to that all of the stations should play the same thing in every country to give viewers more diverse watching.

09.) Do you notice that the Death Metal scene is more active again? Now as Black Metal isn't that popular any longer the wave of Death Metal comes back, or is that only the case for Europe and not the USA?

I am glad to hear it is like that for Europe, and in America unfortunately death metal and black metal are suffering. They are no longer popular here in the states, what is popular is hardcore/metal core music. More money is being spend on the metal core phenomenon which once was dead years ago. Fashion and trends tend to cling on to their styles which make it easy for anyone to follow. We can only hope the music styles equal out for death metal to be come popularized again in this country.

10.) A few of you already have kids and family etc. and of course you probably still have your jobs. Is it difficult for you to tour and that especially in Europe regarding this matter? You told me that you will come to Europe next year. so will there be any problems?

It is not a problem, we all have jobs but we are allowed to take time off for the long tours and shows we need to do. Our managers have an understating due to working at the same jobs for so long. We are planning on coming to Europe in April 2004 and I can only hope there will be no problems. Further information on that will be released on Metal Blade's website.

11.) You were on tour with Prong (and others). Do you think that that is a very good package? Or is it usual in America to put together bands of rather different styles? How was the tour for you?

Touring with Prong was very interesting because we were playing for totally different crowds than we were used to. This was a much happier crowd that enjoyed any type of metal. Most of the crowd never heard death metal before and we basically crushed every city every night. The guys in Prong are very cool guys and we hope to play shows with them again whenever possible. It is usually to have diverse tours in America, and most of them to extremely well especially the ones with hardcore band headliners. If you have a death metal band headliner with hardcore bands underneath it, the turn out will disperse before the death metal band hits the stage.

12.) As far as I know you are responsible for all the website stuff of Vehemence, aren't you? Do you think that a good-looking website is important nowadays and does it help your band very much? Are you more into web design-stuff?

Thank you for enjoying my web designing skills, and it is very important to me and the fans who are interested in our band. I am into many things like web design, audio recording, and video editing. I hope to start my own small business soon.

13.) I heard that you want to make a DVD that contains a horror movie if I am not mistaken. What happened to this idea? Are there more details you can tell me about?

This idea still thrives, I have many people wanting to work with it, wiling to dedicate there free time and expertise worldwide. I just want to make sure we tour the world before releasing a DVD, with that special idea on it. I see a lot of bands release DVDs and they don't really have anything on there but low quality bootlegs. I want to release quality in everything we do. We are on that Metal Blade 20th Anniversary DVD but it is bad they didn't have great cameras or a lighting guy for each band to make the performances lively.

14.) In your last mail you wrote that the internet "is responsible for many positive things that have happened to Vehemence". Do you think that webzines will be more

important than printed issues soon? How is the situation in the USA? Here in Germany the print zines are still more important or have a better reputation. I think.

Well metal magazines are still important because every grocery store or convenient store in America carry them. It is the same as it is in Germany, magazines will always be the dominate source of media. A website only makes it easier to read interviews, get more photos, download music samples, or video from a band you want to know more about.

15.) Are there other activities in the Vehemence-camp apart from answering many interviews these days? ;) Do you already have any ideas or plans for a future release?

Not really, we are all about our band and we are focusing on writing music for our fourth album and we are aiming to spend a lot more on our next studio production with a big name producer. We will tour a lot more for this record than we did for God Was Created and hope to go over seas more frequently. Festivals like Wacken, Summer Breeze, and With Full Force we are aiming to get on for 2005. There are talks about re-recording, remixing the first album, and releasing an EP with unreleased songs from our past pre-Thoughts From Which I Hide era.

16.) Do you have any last comments or things you like to add?

Thanks for the interview Metal.de and anyone can visit our website at <http://www.vehemence.com> for merchandise, mp3s, tour dates or email the band at vehemence@vehemence.com