



Lyrical Spell Magazine

LSM 2#
March, 2016



THE
HARDKISS

„It's all about our fans“

PERSONA • JUODVARNIS • THE CHARM THE FURY • FENRIR SCAR
and many more...

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The Lyrical Spell magazine is: Tamar van der List, Vita Kolosovaite, Yasmin Wijtvlet, Maayke Feenstra,
Drake Chridensen.

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HI, DARLINGS.

WHEN YOU DECIDE TO RELEASE THIS MAGAZINE A LITTLE BIT OVER THE DEADLINE THE MOST INSANE THINGS START TO HAPPEN: BANDS LATE, INTERVIEWS LATE, PHOTOS LATE, REVIEWS LATE, DESIGN LATE...

LAST NIGHT BEFORE THE RELEASE WE TRYING TO FINISH EVERYTHING: CHOOSE THAT ONE AND THE BEST COVER, FINISH THE DESIGNS, ADD THE LAST DOTS AND FIX ALL THE MISTAKES.

OKAY, I CAN'T DO THAT WITHOUT A GOOD FILM IN THE BACKGROUND AND LET'S BE HONEST- I AM NOT A HUGE FAN OF HORROR MOVIES, BECAUSE AFTER THAT MY MINDS STARTING TO CREATE THEIR OWN SCRIPT THAT IN MY CLOSET OR BATHROOM LIVING A ZOMBIE, BUT AFTER A NIGHT WHEN YOU TRYING TO FINISH THE NUMBER OF A NEW MAGAZINE YOU CAN JUST WISH FOR YOURSELF TO DREAM ABOUT THAT SWEET, INNOCENT, BLOODY ZOMBIE WHICH STANDING NEAR YOUR BED WITH A BIG SMILE AND WORKING AS SEDATIVE.

NOW I CAN'T SLEEP AT ALL MY BRAINS BROADCASTING SO MUCH MINDS TO ME: „WHAT I FORGET TO ADD IN THE MAGAZINE?“, „DID I LEAVE ANY MISTAKES THERE?“ „MAYBE IN THE PLACE OF A BEAUTIFUL TITLE I LEFT „TITLE“ OR „AGVHTX%:C“?“ THIS NONSENSE HAPPENS EVERY TIME TO ME. BUT THE MORNING OF THE RELEASE DAY IS COMING.

YOUR BEAUTIFUL COMMENTS, OPINIONS AND LETTERS HITTING OUR FACEBOOK, MAILBOX, TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM. ISN'T THAT THE BEST COMPLIMENT? ALL YOUR SWEET LITTLE WORDS KILLING THAT ZOMBIES OVER THE CLOSET AND THERE STARTING TO LIVE THE PUREST HAPPINESS. THANK YOU, SWEETHEARTS.

The Lyrical Spell magazine team <3

The HardKiss „Kiss from The HardKiss“



They're modern, unexpected and super original they're our headliners in 2nd The Lyrical Spell magazine. They're- The HardKiss! Ukrainian progressive-pop band which just won 2nd place at the national Eurovision's selection at Ukraine. We had a possibility to have a nice chat with their leader and vocalist Julia Sanina and now you can enjoy this this very honest interview!



Hey! How are you? Thanks, fine=)

Today you released video for the song „Helpless“. The lyrics and video are fascinating! What inspired you to write this song? I wrote this song two years ago. At that time I was dreaming about having a baby. That's why I was thinking about the birth and rebirth, that it's always connected with the

pain. But it's the most wonderful thing in the world.

Your songs always have a very deep meaning. What inspire you to write songs like this? The world, people, weather. It can be anything, even something trivial.

You released „Stones and Honey” album in 2014 and „Cold Altair” EP in 2015. Any plans about the new album? We decided to release a singles now, it’s more effective.

In Ukraine The HardKiss is comparing with Within Temptation and some people found some Nightwish elements. What are your favourite bands? How they affect your music? I love jazz - Rachelle Ferrell, Regina Belle, Patty Austin, but my boys loves rock, metal and alternative music Tool, NIN, Massive Attack, Radiohead, The Prodigy. That’s why our music is a mix of sentimental and drive.



How appeared the band The HardKiss? Why did you choose this name? I developed as a jazz singer, participating in various festivals and competitions before The Hardkiss. Val tried himself in directing in London and was a producer on the MTV Ukraine. Then we met and devised to combine our skills in one band The Hardkiss. Then mysterious drummer Kreechy, guitarist Roman and keabord player Vitaliy joined us.

Your drummer Kreechy always wears a mask. What does it mean? Where he caught this idea? It’s his alter ego. He feels more comfortable wearing his mask, he can do anything he wants! It’s is original, Val has made the design.



You have many international fans. Any plans for the European tour in the near future. For example I am from Lithuania and I really would love to hear your songs live! Thank you! Yes, it's our dream to have a world tour, but it's not as simple as it seems. This year we are planning to take part in some festivals in Poland and Georgia.



Now you're on the national Ukrainian selections for the Eurovision 2016 at Sweden. What was the general kick to you that you went there? Are you happy about this decision? It's all about our fans, our "The Hardkiss family" were asking if we are planning to take part in Eurovision Song Contest each year. But we were not ready, also the financial part to prepare for the contest was huge. This year STB channel covers all the cash expenditure and we have a good song. So we decided to try luck.

21th of February will be the final of Ukrainian national selection for the Eurovision. „The Lyrical Spell” magazine wishing the biggest and strongest luck to you there! And the final question. Is there anything you would like to tell for this interview readers? Thank you for the support! And kiss from The HARDKISS! (The HardKiss received 2nd place there with their song „Helpless“)



JUODVARNIS „Listen and support metal music“



Juodvarnis (Common Raven)- pagan heavy /black metal band from Lithuania began to play in 2010 and soon became one of the strongest heavy music band in here. In 2014 Juodvarnis had released the first CD “Šauksmai iš praeities” (Cries from the Past), and in February 2016 – the second one “Mirusio žmogaus kelionė” (Journey of a Dead Man). You might not understand the lyrics in Lithuanian, but you will feel all the feelings which are broadcasting from this band and their music. Here’s a great possibility to all of you get to know Juodvarnis and maybe fall in love with their songs



.Hey! How are you? Hi, great, how are you?

We’re great, thank you. 19th of February you released your 2nd album „Mirusio žmogaus kelionė” („Journey of a dead man”). What are your feelings about it? The whole writing, recording, producing and mixing process of this album took almost two years, so it is an indescribable feeling, that we actually finished it. A lot of changes happened in our lives and in the band's line-up, so with this album we closed one chapter of our band and now we

can start a new one, it feels great!



Which song from this new album and why is your favorite? It is hard to pick one, because we put an equal amount of work and commitment into all the songs, so I love (and hate) them all, but I am most proud of "Išpažintis". This is the only ballad-ish song in our repertoire and it was a big challenge vocally, I had to push

myself to the limits performance and emotionwise and I am very proud of the result. In my opinion this one is the strongest song in terms of vocals that I did 'till this day.

What is hard about writing a good album? The search of perfection must be the hardest part of the whole process. When you wish, that every note, every melody and the whole arrangement must have it's perfect place, it gives you an incredible amount of pressure and a headache. And the hardest part is to know then to stop.

What stories are hidden between the lines of the lyrics? This album is a concept one, telling one story throughout all the songs, so musically and lyrically the story flows from one song to the other. So the story itself is not hidden in between the lines, but you can find heavy statements covered there, you just need to dig a little bit.

Where do you find the inspiration for the songs? Everywhere, actually. From the calmness and peace of nature, to the noise of the city, from books, movies and conversations with interesting people. In my opinion it's all there, everywhere, you just have to open you eyes and uncover your ears.

Tell me a story of this band. How did Juodvarnis appear? Why did you choose this name? It all began in 2011, when I was in a heavy metal band called Rotary Pump. When Gediminas Tumėnas joined the band to play drums, on that moment Juodvarnis was born. I was able to express my new ideas and the sound shifted to a more pagan metal direction. After some songs have been written it was clear, that this is now a new band and it needed a new name. We picked the name Juodvarnis (lithuanian, Raven), because it represents our music perfectly. Raven has been portraited in many mythologies as a bearer of one's soul from this world to the afterlife, it is a symbol of something, that is greater then this life, it guards the gates to the unknown.

Any plans not just for the concerts around Lithuania, but and abroad?
We have some shows already



booked, some are now announced and some will be announced in the near future. We are planning shows abroad too, we have some contacts there, so we will see how everything goes. Right now we are concentrating on the album presentation shows here in Lithuania and also preparing for summer festivals.

Any funny situations during the concerts or recording sessions which you would like to share with us? There is not a lot of fun going on in the studio. When we are there it is all about the hard work, so no time for fun there. All the fun begins before and after shows and on the road. We love touring, it is one of the greatest things for playing in a band! The true meaning of rock 'n roll is on the road. Unexpected fun and sometimes not such fun things happen there, but every experience rewards you with unforgettable memories. I remember finding our bass player in the morning sleeping while sitting in a drivers seat of our van and pushing a brake pedal. He and our guitarist have been drinking quite heavily the night before, and our guitarist had brought two girls in a back of that van, so there was no space for our bassist and instead of going to sleep in a tent, he decided to sit in a chair. It is just one of the stories, many had happened and if I had to write them all it would be quite a long story.

The last question. Is there anything you would like to tell for „The Lyrical Spell” magazine readers? Explore yourselves, your environment, breathe, hear, see. Do not be a part of consumption powered society, try to create something and try to find something inspirational in the creations of others. Be inspired and inspire others. And listen and support METAL MUSIC!



THE CHARM THE FURY

The Charm The Fury is a metal band born in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In January I saw this band for the first time, and I was sold. I messaged them right away on Facebook if they were available for an online interview, and Caroline replied really quick with the good news! So let's dive right in!



I asked about that particular show, with Delain. "It was really awesome. Sold out show and a lot of great reactions from the audience. I feel very honored to be sharing the stage with Delain, since they are huge, and loved the duet I sang with Charlotte Wessels!" Delain also asked them to support their Lunar Prelude club tour. "We're really looking forward to this, because they have a very dedicated fan base with a lot of enthusiastic metal heads. Also, we're playing a lot of cool venues and Delain are a nice bunch to hang out with."

It took a bit longer for Caroline to reply my answers. It is because The Charm The Fury was really busy recording their next album! "We've actually just finished recording our second album! Finished recordings last week, and it will be send off to the mixer next month! We're beyond excited! The new album is way different from anything we've ever done before. We've really looked at our heroes, the bands we grew up with and formed us as musicians. You'll be hearing a lot of influences from



Slipknot and Pantera, so it's going to be less 'core' and more 'metal'!"

The band changed her life completely, "Before, I was just a regular girl, I studied in Amsterdam, lived the 'normal' life and had a big passion for music (and of course a dream, but yeah.. like

THAT is ever going to happen ;-)). Since TCTF have grown into something bigger than we've ever hoped for, I feel way more 'free'. I actually don't want a 'normal' life anymore, a 9-5 job and two days off on the weekends to be starting the same routine on monday again. TCTF has made me see that there's way more to life, to experience, to travel and to take a risk. It will give a much bigger fulfillment at the end of the day." Music has always been her passion. "When i was three years old they sent me to a music lesson where I would learn the basics, such as notes, keys etc."

Turns out, Caroline is nervous to perform! "At big festivals with big audiences I'm often like: OH GOD WE REALLY HAVE TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN! but as soon as i step on stage the nerves disappear and show mode goes on." There is something she always does on stage, "An awkward dance-move on the bridge of Virtue Of Leadership. Where I would walk backwards and do an awkward dance with my hand!" Her best memory of TCTF is the Graspop, Groezrock and the Vans Warped Tour. "Those are just three festivals I'd love to go myself and that was really a dream come true playing them. Also the audience at those festivals were massive, the response really blew us away."



Do you have anything left to say to our readers?

"If you have a passion for something and you work really hard for it, you'll make it. There's no doubt, but only if you put anything aside for it. Thanks for this

interview, keep an eye out for our Facebook because we will be announcing some awesome shows and festivals for this Summer and... Our next album will drop Autumn 2016!"

There will be more in Lyrical Spell Magazine about The Charm The Fury soon, so stay tuned!

ALYSSA ARTSLOVER

Alyssa was the first mentioned artist on the Visual Arts page on our old website. Unfortunately the interview got lost in the remodeling. I decided to give her a bigger and better interview in the magazine, so here it is!



Alyssa is both a digital and traditional artist. "As far as the traditional art concerned my favourite tools are pen, watercolor and colored pencils. As far as the digital art concerned I use stock photos mixed with digital painting and vector elements." "My works are gothic and emotional themed in general, I love gothic because I can express myself with lively, dark and strong colors, but I love surrealism too. I'm so inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite style nowadays this is what I mix with surrealism. It is something new for me, but I still spread my wings in art. Besides that I love fine art, pointillism, horror-macabre art and many more. "

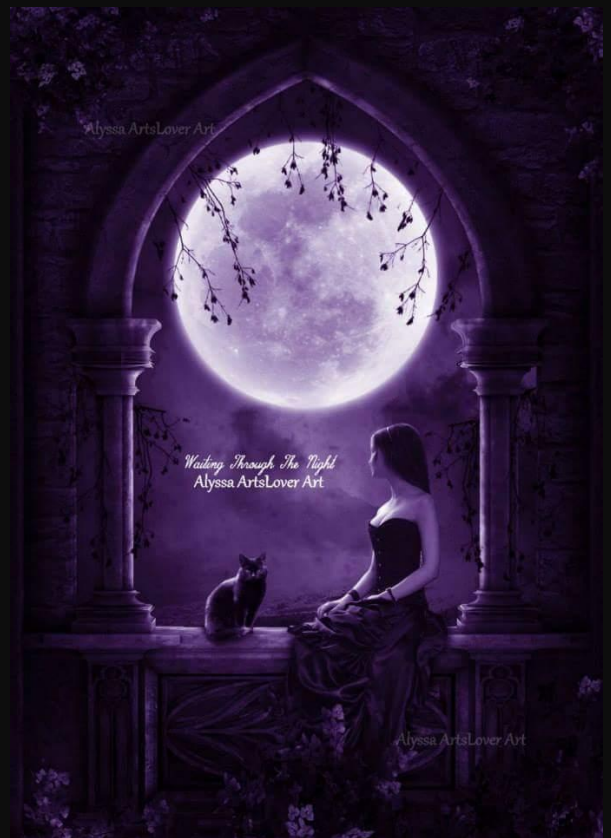
I asked Alyssa what her least favorite art style is. "I just do not like anime and manga, artists in this style are so talented though, but it's not my style." She uses a lot of techniques, "I use techniques I actually learnt. I read a lot of tutorials and I mix it with my imagination, I try to create my own rules. So, I do not really have only one technique what I always use in digital art." She would also like to use oil based paint in the future. Her own favorite pieces of her are Lonely Rose, Waiting Through The Night and Catharsis.





Alyssa has one talent in particular that is hitting the shelves, literally. She makes album covers for bands! "My first cover design was for Godsbane's EP called Year Of Wolves. Their singer Clare asked me to create a nice design for it and for the merch.

It was a challenge because their songs are mainly viking themed, but it was so much fun to experience myself in a quite different style. It was awesome to work with them. I would say I reached my goal, according to the band too. I used stock photos for the model, wolf..etc, mixed with digital painting. The logo was premade to put on the work. This is the general creating process." Alyssa says it is a dream come true. "In November Kristell Lowagie looked for someone who would edit her pictures for her first EP of Sin.Sin called Fairytronics. I asked her if I can help her with it and she said yes, let's give it a try. She sent me the cover of the EP which is made by Noemi Aurora (Helalyn Flowers) to see the needed style. I used my imagination and my feelings mainly. I made 3 photos for it. I felt honored and it was amazing to work with Kristell. The EP was released in 26 of January. In December she asked me to make some promo photos for the re-releasing of their debut EP "An Intense Feeling Of Affection". They celebrate its 5th anniversary. I made 2 promo photos for this project, the creating process is still the same. The EP is available on Alfa Matrix.



Until we were waiting for the releasings, my musician friend Dóri who live in the same country as me finished her first albums audio under the name She Can't Speak

- First Time I Met Myself and she asked me to make its CD cover and booklet. This was the first printable booklet ai ever made.The album was released in 16 of February,only the downloadable stuff, but the physical album release is still in process. For her band I already made some promo photos in 2014 while the band had 4 members. I also worked for her project called Dory DayDreamer and the releasing of its debut album is also in the plan,and of course I will ,make the cover and booklet for this too.

Alyssa's latests project is called Catharsis. "This is the first artwork where i was inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite's stylewhat i mixed with surrealism and oil painting effects.It was so much fun to work on. The title speaks for itself,I think.I went through hard time in the previous weeks,so i did put those feelings into it. Important to mention that the idea of the tiltle came from a nice chat with the singer of Lyria.She told me that she likes this work the most because its reminds her of the cover of their debut album,so i thought that will be the best choice. So big thanks to Aline!"

Do you have any kind of advice for our readers?

"First of all thank you for your support.Do not forget,believe in yourself,do what you love and you will reach your goals. Let your talent shine!"



But, there is still a surprise. Alyssa will be in every magazine from now on with her own blog! Stay tuned!

PERSONA



-Hey, Jelena! How are you?

Jelena: Hi Vita, I'm great! 😊 Thank you so much for taking the time to interview me for "The Lyrical Spell" magazine!

- Can you introduce your band „Persona“? When and where this band was formed?

What kind of metal music are you playing?

Jelena: Persona started in 2012, soon after I moved to Tunisia. At first it was just a project between Melik (lead guitar) and me

(vocals) and we were first experimenting and composing for fun, but eventually decided to form an actual band. Yosri (guitar) joined soon afterwards, followed by our drummer Youssef, then Walid (keyboard) and Nesrine (bass), who is the newest band member. We describe our genre as alternative metal, because there are many different elements in it: you can hear some symphonic, power, progressive, heavy and thrash metal influences, as well as some elements from classical music. The truth is that we just let our musical influences and personal expression mix while composing, without deciding beforehand how we wanted our music to sound.

- Why have you chosen this title? What does it mean?

Jelena: "Persona" in this case refers to the psychological concept of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, and it stands for personality that one displays in public, as opposed to inner self. According to Jung, Persona is kind of „mask“ that one wears in everyday life, which helps in interaction with other people and conceals one's true thoughts and feelings. We chose it because it's what we experience when we compose and perform on stage: each song must be given its





particular identity and therefore we must go through different emotions and states of mind that sometimes don't really represent how we feel in that particular moment.

- You're from the really exotic country- Tunisia, North Africa. As I know it's not the friendliest country for the metal music. How are you working there? How does metal industry in Tunisia look like?

Jelena: It's true that Tunisia is not the most convenient country in which you'd start and manage a metal band. There are numerous obstacles: lack of media support, no festivals, no labels, no recording studios nor music producers that specialize in rock/metal (same goes for music videos), no venues... Concerts are only organized by bands themselves or some metal music enthusiasts. So there is no actual metal

music industry at all, but we're trying to do what we can and manage with what's available. Most bands just give up before they achieved anything significant. On the other hand, there is audience for this kind of music and I hope the conditions will improve in the future, for the sake of bands and also people who support them.

- Are there any other bands from North Africa that you would recommend to our readers?

Jelena: I'm mostly following Tunisian metal scene, and what's interesting here at the moment is two new promising bands that are currently working on their debut albums: Hemlyn (progressive/fusion metal band, where Melik is also a member) and Cartagena (symphonic rock with oriental influences). There's also Nawather (oriental metal), who just released their first album. But Myrath is the most known metal band from Tunisia, and you definitely must check them out.



They've just released their fourth album and they're on tour with Symphony X.
- **As I know your latest release is „Elusive Reflections”. Where did you catch the idea for this album? What inspired you to write it? What is the story of the whole release?**

Jelena: The composing process was really free and intuitive, and there was no concept from the beginning. Then, mostly inspired by different situations, circumstances, people and a lot of contemplating about it, we created these 10 songs, all describing different moods, emotions and states of mind. We realized that the story that connects them all is essentially about human nature, and how conflict and duality within us sometimes distort how we perceive the world and ourselves.



- **Any funny situations you would like to share with us while you recorded an album at the studio or during live?**



Jelena: Hahahah the funniest things about it was actually the circumstances under which I recorded vocals for the entire album ☺. We had to record everything at home, so I ended up singing the entire album in my bedroom, under an improvised “tent” made out of beach umbrella and lots of different drapes and sheets, in order to eliminate most of the room reverb.

- **Do you have your favorite song from this album and why?**

Jelena: That changes from time to time, because I'm very fond of them all. At the moment I really like “Forgotten” and “Monsters”, but “Persona” is the song that was my absolute favorite when we've just composed it. The lyrics are personal and describe an emotional state I was going through during certain period of my life, and the music somehow perfectly complements them. I also love both guitar and keyboard solo in this song.

- You've also released a video for the song „Blinded”. What meaning is hiding inside of the video?

Jelena: “Blinded” was actually the first song that Melik and I composed together. The lyrics describe state of mind of a person who just got out of an abusive relationship, and is just realizing and questioning everything she went through.

- Is there any possibility to see Persona live here, in Europe?

Jelena: We certainly hope so! ☺ We applied for Metal Female Voices Fest XIII in at Wieze in Belgium, and we continue to look for other festivals and more opportunities to play in Europe.

- What are your favorite bands and how they changing your music?

Jelena: What I like to listen to is quite diverse. I love instrumental music, especially classical and jazz, but in the domain of bands, my current favorite is still prog metal band “Leprous”. Besides that, I love Queen, Kate Bush, Dream Theater, Pain of Salvation, Anneke van Giersbergen, Opeth, Lacuna Coil, Delain...

- Thanks for your time! Is there anything you would like to tell for „The Lyrical Spell” magazine readers?Jelena: Thank you for taking the time to read this interview! Stay in touch with us, because we’re preparing new music videos, merch, meet&greet with the band and many other things. And to all our fans: thank you all for the amazing support, none of this would be possible without you. Thank you too, Vita!
☺ Until next time!



READ MORE ABOUT PERSONA IN THE NEXT „The Lyrical Spell” magazine

FENRIR SCAR



-Hey, Deze how are you?

Deze: Hello! I'm good and you? Thanks for this opportunity and interview!

- Are you enjoying the art of music?

Deze: Yes, I am. I'm very

new to this process, I've been singing on bands for a while, but this it's the first time that I'm actually writing songs and I'm enjoying it very much.

-Describe your band's music.

Deze: I usually say that we are a Gothic/Modern Metal band. We have influences from several genres in metal, but I think the most evident one is Gothic and Heavy Metal. Although we we are quite different than the classic bands from these styles. So that's why I use the modern also. One of our biggest influences are Lacuna Coil, and that is another band that I can't define in one style only. We have the elements from gothic metal, such as both female/male vocals, beautiful synths and keyboards. And outstanding guitars, a powerful bass line and a modern beat.

-Where do you draw inspiration from when you write songs?

Deze: Sometimes it comes from personal experiences and feelings. And sometimes it comes from other forms of arts. I love pop culture, books, movies, tv shows and get inspired by them.

-What's your favorite part about the songs writing process?

Deze: I usually write the lyrics and the vocal lines, the songs are usually written by André (male vocalist). And I enjoy the whole process. I like hearing what he had created and putting the lyrics into the songs.

-How did this band was created?

Deze: It started with me and André. André was bass player of power metal band named CounterParts, from 1994 until 2008, they released a CD "A Dreamer Betrayed" in 2007.

When André left the band in 2008, he had already composed some songs for their upcoming album and these songs remained "asleep" for some time. On 2014, I started writing some lyrics and showed to him and he started composing again and also presented to me the songs that he had already composed and we decided to record them and start the band. First, we talked to our producer and my vocal coach Fabiano Negri and we decided to record the songs with him. The band was really created on 2015, when we invited Vinicius Prado (guitar) and Ildécio Santos (drums) to join us. Then we invited Grazielly Maria (keys), Khronny (guitars), and Gabriel Rezende (bass).



- What stories you hiding between the lyrics lines?

Deze: We have only two songs released for now. Both of the lyrics are very personal. "Downfall" is about how I handled depression and "Dark Eyes" it's a love song. We are going to start

recording our next song "Caliban" and this one is inspired on a monologue by the character Caliban/John Clare, from the TV show Penny Dreadful. For those who are not familiar with the show, this character is also inspired by the Mary Shelley's Frankenstein creature.

- What is the best advice which you've ever received?

Deze: Never give up

-What are the 5 things you can't live without?

Deze: My husband, my dogs, music, food and internet

-What is your motto or the advise you live by?

Deze: It's never too late to chase your dreams

-If I was to turn your MP3 player right now, what five artists/songs would I see in your recently played list.

Deze: Lacuna Coil, Amaranthe, Nightwish, Moonspell, Delain

-If you could go open up for any artist on tour right now who would it be?

Deze: Lacuna Coil, Moonspell, Xandria, Stream of Passion

- Thanks for your time! Is there anything you would like to tell for "The Lyrical Spell" magazine readers?

Deze: Keep metal alive! Support your local and independent bands, only with your support these bands can continue!

If you want to know more about us please visit

www.reverbnation.com/fenrirsscar

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fenriscar/>

Twitter: @fenrirsscar

Instagram: @fenrirsscar

www.fenrirsscar.com



PAPER DOLL DECAY

Crazy, ambitious & stubborn



the band's own label. The mastering was in the hands of Tue Madsen (known for his work the likes of Gorefest, The Haunted and Sick Of It All). Paper Doll Decay is currently working on new material for their sophomore release. I invited vocalist Janneke de Rooy for a last minute interview with Lyrical Spell Magazine. Luckily, she said yes.

"It's all going really well with Paper Doll Decay!" Janneke tells me. "We are working hard and getting more gigs, so we can't complain. We always look forward to do shows, there is nothing better than playing our music live." She tells me that things have changed, "since the release of the EP we managed to put our name out there, and are able to back it up with some brutal

Paper Doll Decay introduced themselves live on stage in the course of 2013. Their immediate reward was a rapidly growing, ultra-loyal fan base. In between their performances the band worked on material for their debut release. In the run-up to this, the band released the track Burst Into Enemies as a free download in 2014. On 15 May 2015 the EP "Desolation" was released through Hidden Records;



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tunes. We are also writing new material and we will continue to do so throughout this year.”

I asked Janneke if death metal has always been her passion. “Actually, I started out with rock. But once i heard death metal, there was no turning back for me.” Arch Enemy and Lamb of God inspired her the most. “Arch Enemy because I saw a blonde woman on stage who did those brutal vocals and I figured I could do that as well. Lamb of God because I am amazed with what Randy can do with his voice and only hope to be able to get as big of a range in vocals as he has. If I’d had to choose someone for a collaboration it would be Randy Blythe from Lamb of God and Sakis from Rotting Christ.”

“I wish for the future that my band Paper Doll Decay gets to tour the world and play the stages at festivals the likes of Graspop, Wacken or 70000 tons of metal. Oh and of course find ourselves a booker and maybe a label.”

Do you have anything left to say to our readers?

If you have a dream, go chase it and try everything you can to achieve it. Quitting is never an option.



THE DRAG ART

Politics, beauty, fight for rights, empowerment and art. Few things join all this together in one passion as the Drag art, perhaps one of the most democratic forms of artistic expression, since its very essence invites everyone to be part of the dance of freedom that embodies every performance. Be the man who embodies the concept of female, the woman who embodies the concept of male, the woman who embodies the concept of female or the man who embodies the concept of male, all takes place to give life to their art.

The first thing that probably comes to mind when we think of Drag is the image of



the complete artist. Besides the flawless makeup, body painting and decorated clothes that adorn the outside of the Dragperformancer, other forms of artistic expression are a complement to reveal many different talents. An exceptional dancer as LaganjaEstranja, a Broadway actress and singer as Jinkx Monsoon, Runway models

like Raja Gemini and the legendary RuPaul, all those talents are consolidated in what is doing Drag and, perhaps, our sexist society that insists on chaining us with its dogmas wouldn't allow expression otherwise. This is one of the reasons why we say that Drag is freedom to be who you want, but not only that.

Drag is political. One thing does not live without the other. Drag is a way of saying in so many words, gestures, images and with one's own body that everything that was imposed on us throughout life is wrong. No child is born liking blue and soccer. No girl is born liking pink or dresses. We must remember that high heels and makeup, things said "for woman", were born as a prop for noble men of the Middle-Ages who wanted to look taller and war paint, respectively. The "being man" and "being a woman" would be linked to arbitrary notions and externally imposed what is or is

not the "male" and "female"? These are some examples of prejudice that we learn to repeat to ourselves and bring as bondages throughout life. There is no thing as "women's clothes", "men's clothing", there is no "perfect amount of makeup for a woman to be respected," there is no "ideal cloth length of clothing women's safety".



There is perhaps no bigger slap in the face of racist, homophobic, oppressive male-dominated society than seeing a Drag Queen, on the top of her high heels and colorful dress, saying in so many words and images that "I will be whoever I want, wear whatever I want, the way I want to, because you do not define who I am!" Same with the women Drag Queens, which clearly expresses: "I will use the

amount of makeup I want, the clothe size I want and you owe me respect independent of that." This kind of empowerment brings not only the splendor of beauty in any form for art, in any expression, but also to the social nature which demands questioning towards individual freedoms.

I'm sure the nine muses of Apollo, in Greek mythology, were Drags. What better way to represent the art without any strings attached, just for the love for the forms of self-expression? And not only that! As Clio, the muse of history, Drags were and are instrumental in building the history of our movement to break paradigms and achieve equal rights, just remember the Stonewall uprising, for example. As Thalia, the "patron" of comedy, artists like Bob the Drag Queen and Bianca Del Rio use laughter as a way to bring light and happiness to those whose lives have been so hurt by prejudice. Well, then, good to remember the famous Drag Queen BenDeLaCreme, which after suffering years with deep depression, managed to beat the disease with the help of the optimistic and funny personality of his Drag persona. Benjamin learned from BenDeLa and in the process, both were empowered. The muse of rhetoric, Melpomene, was there in Stonewall and the militant speeches of our trans brothers and sisters who also found in the Drag art the first way of empowerment. And as, after all, everything is directed to the love of art, freedom, to the people who inspire us and for the love to ourselves, it is safe to say that Erato, the muse of the novels, was a phenomenal Drag.

LA VERO

HEAVENQUEEN

Honest, motivated & social

La Vero is everywhere. Behind merch stands of all kinds of bands, in Finland, at concerts partying, EVERYWHERE! Here is an interview about herself, a bit more personal than we are used to in Lyrical Spell Magazine.



La Vero went in and out hospitals, so of course my first question was, "How are you?" "I am doing okay, my health is finally stable and my marriage is on its way. I had to made a lot of serious decisions, about music, my health and everything else around it. The last few years were quite hectic and a struggle to make it out alive. But I made it and I want to thank my fans for their patience." Vero is a very open person, "Not everyone understands this. But what is the point of being popular, if you can't

inspire and help others. To be open about my health condition and the abuse I went through, I want to help others see that nothing can stand in the way of your dreams".

"Since February I am singing again, and my first performance will be at the Kitee International Music and Art Festival in Finland." The Kitee International Music and Art Week is a festival where people from all over the world come together and make music. "The main ingredient is Nightwish, but there are also concerts where we perform our own music. In the concert group you learn from each other, and we make the most beautiful covers. It is wonderful to work with "Father Nightwish" Plamen Dimov, since he has been Nightwish' music teacher, we all have so much respect for this man.



La Vero also makes covers and placed them on YouTube, "My favorite has to be Turn Loose The Mermaids by Nightwish. With that song I convinced myself to get back out there and sing, after I gave up my professional music career eight years ago, due to my health." There are two songs Vero is very attached to, "Turn Loose The Mermaids by Nightwish, because my son was born while I was singing and The Ace of Spades by Mötörhead, my fiancé asked me to marry him during this song."

If Vero could choose only one thing of these following three: acting, singing or modeling, it would be

singing. "I've always been doing either one of those three. As a young girl I wanted to be a princess, with a cow farm. After that I wanted to become an egyptologist or an volcanologist. I was also interested to be in the army and underwater welder. But all while singing of course!" She studied a whole lot of things as well. "Studying wasn't easy with dyslexia", Vero tells me, "But I studied for socio-cultural assistant, nursery teacher, theater academy and was accepted at the conservatory, unfortunately I never have finished one of them because of my bad health."



But, if Vero moves to Finland to live with her fiancé, what does this mean for Heavenqueen? "The band will keep existing, it is my baby. The songs are based on my life, so they are very intense." Vero describes the daily life in Finland much more relaxing as in The Netherlands, "It almost seems slow in comparison. People are very closed if they don't know you, chitchatting in the train will never happen. Until they get to know you, then they are the most warm people you can imagine."

"I learned a lot from Floor Jansen, Dianne van Giersbergen, Helena Haaparanta, Başak Ylva and Marcela Bovio, they are both my vocal teachers, and of course I learned a lot from my mom. But I would love to do a collaboration with Beth Hart. She is such a power woman! Beth also has a very difficult past and she got through, she is my biggest inspiration."

As mentioned in the intro, Vero also does merchandising for other bands. "Doctors had told me that I would never sing again, due to all stomach operations. I had a very hard time accepting this, but I was like, if I can't make music myself, I still want to be a part of the music industry."

Do you have any advice for our readers?

Don't ever let anybody tell you you can't do something. Keep improving yourself and fight to make your dreams come true.



Xenoblade Chronicles X



This generation of consoles has seen a recurring pattern for Nintendo: few games are reaching their WiiU, but those who do, generally exclusive games for the console, tend to be some of the greatest masterpieces on the game world nowadays. That happened with Bayonetta 2, acclaimed as the best action game ever made, and Super Smash Bros on 2014 and is happening again with 2015 epic Xenoblade Chronicles X, a game so superb that it would take much more written pages here to do it justice, but as it would make the review boring, let's try to stick to the facts as much as possible.

Being the follow-up to the Wii RPG masterpiece Xenoblade Chronicles, expectations were naturally high for Xenoblade Chronicles X, especially because it's long time of development, and we can safely say that Monolithsoft used it's time very well to create the most fabulous game world ever made, hands down. First things first, It is big: 400 km² of fully explorable terrain is a landmark on the open-world games scenario and a record because of its size, but size alone wouldn't matter to the spectacle that is the most important character on Xenoblade Chronicles X: planet Mira. The story takes place when humanity, attacked by a powerful alien civilization, has to leave behind planet Earth in search of a new home and arrive at this new and mysterious land.

When I say Mira is like a character on the game is to give the proper emphasis on how alive the whole world feels. You have a vast variety of wildlife blooming everywhere, each species with their specific traits, being found on specific places meticulously thought when considering their physiology and likely animal behavior. You could make a study on Mira's wildlife just by the way the creatures there exist, behave and interact with the other elements of nature, humans included. Some species are territorial, others are savage only when put against bigger threats, other only when around their cubs. Knowing those traits is a must if you want to survive on this foreign planet. Not only that, the architecture of the five continents is a wonder of itself. The tall mountains of Primordia, the vast plains of Sylvalum, the dense forests of Noctilum, the threatening valley of Oblivia, the scorching fortress of Caudros....all of them are designed with so many details and options in mind that 200 hours won't be enough to explore it all.

Actually, 200 hours won't be even close to what you really need to get to know Mira on its fullest. Xenoblade Chronicles X is a game made for the ones who REALLY like to explore, to have options on knowing the environment where one is inserted and find new discoveries at the top of a faraway mountain or a hidden cavern. Because yes, if a place exists on this game, you can get there. And don't worry if you catch yourself stopping the game just to sightsee the world built with some of the most wonderful graphics on this generation, we all do that. It is impressive how the WiiU handles such a task with no transitions between areas or slowdowns. One of the vastest worlds ever created, with high quality textures and graphics and everything is dealt smoothly, excluding two or three lifeforms

popping out of nowhere. It brings us to the question: how powerful the WiiU really is? Almost 4 years after its release, have we truly seen the true power of Nintendo's machine?

Nothing on the landscape is purely decorative, you can get anywhere and that is achieved through the use of giant robots called Skills. They can turn into cars, they can fly, they bring a whole new dimension on the already complex and interesting battle systems. Although complex, the battle options are intuitive and its mix of real-time battle with RPG elements works absolutely flawlessly, but don't expect any "hand-holding" from XenobladeX. You will be told the basics, but that's it. Learn how to battle, how to farm, how to mine, how to survive on your own and that, while being a source of complaints to some, sounds like the right thing to do. You are not living the old cliché of just going on some adventure with your friends, you are trying to survive on an alien planet where you don't know anything about anything and pretty much anything can kill you. Expecting that this task would be easy would be a disparity with the game's main objective, so the complexity and little in-game help towards it is very much welcomed as all the mechanics become intuitive with little time. Also, you have a number of customization options for your gaming experience, be it on camera, user interface, characters, skills, so just stop being lazy and use all the content Monolithsoft provided for you instead of complaining around.

But as XenobladeX achieves glory on some sides, it fails on others. The online mode is really limited and, if you consider how many MMO elements the development team tried to add on the game to give it a more "eastern RPG" feel, you would see that this flaw is harsh. No exploring Mira together with your friends, no doing story missions together, no voice chat support...yeah, it gets disappointing and boring fast. You have some "kill x number of enemies" missions and you can escort other players to do a limited number of missions, but that is all. Other point that won't please a vast number of players is the story, as it is far from being XCOM main focus. Narrative-wise, Wii's Xenoblade was a deep tale full of plot twists and character development, opposite to XenobladeX, which focuses much more on the exploration (remember, planet Mira is the main character here) and side-missions as one main story line. It exists, but don't expect much. Anyway, it wasn't a problem on games like Skyrim and won't be such a big problem here too if you don't go expecting a Xenoblade style plot.



It took me 225 hours to beat Xenoblade Chronicles X, hours full of opportunities, freedom, options, different enemies and a little (ok, A LOT OF) contemplation over the wonderful world I was having the pleasure to explore. One of the biggest works of art on the game spectrum, fruit of years of hard work from Nintendo and Monolithsoft, resulting on maybe the most lively and gratifying experiences I had in those decades of gaming. The flaws on this masterpiece are nothing compared to its grandeur and we keep hoping that those problems will be fixed on the sequel. Until there, have fun adventuring through planet Mira, there is a lot to see there!

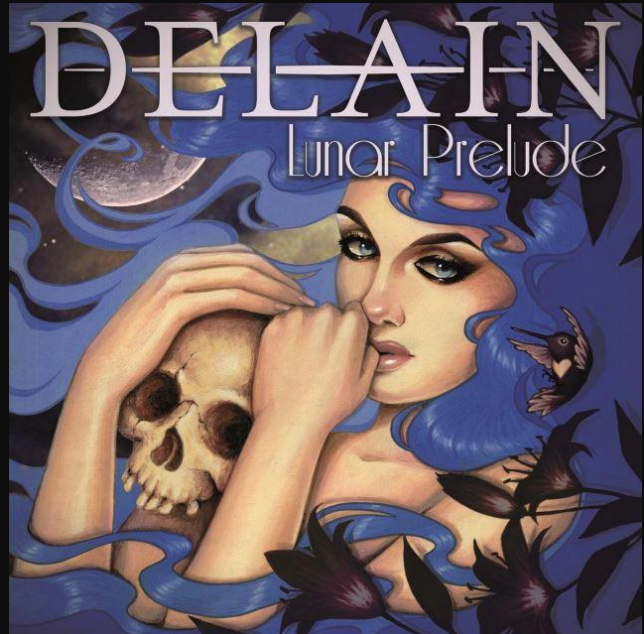
REVIEWS

Delain

Lunar Prelude

Napalm Records

Delain was formed in by ex-Within Temptation keyboardist Martijn Westerholt. In 2-15 they added Merel Bechtold to their lineup and became a piece band: Martijn Westerholt, Charlotte Wessels, Otto Schimmelpenninck van der Oije, Timo Somers, Ruben Israel and Merel Bechtold. Since 2002 they have released three EP's and four full length albums. Delains latest release is called Lunar Prelude, it's an EP with two new



six

songs (Suckerpunch and Turn The Lights Out), a re-release (Don't Let Go), four live recorded songs of The Human Contradiction (Lullaby, Stardust, Here Come The Vultures and Army of Dolls), and a orchestral version of Suckerpunch. The EP starts with Suckerpunch, this is what I call a song with the special Delain touch. It's metal, it's symphonic, and has the electronic parts in it. The first time I heard the song was at their special Suckerpunch show, to close the Human Contradiction club tour. They opened with it there as well, with the new music video on the background. The thing that surprised me most was that Timo does the backing vocals! This proves really is an all round musician. The first time i heard Turn The Lights Out was at that same concert. I like both new songs very much and I look forward to a new album. The live songs are also really good, I wouldn't expect any less. I have seen Delain live about four times, and they never disappoint. It's just the quality that sounds a little less on cd. But maybe that's because you can't see the show before you. The last song on Lunar Prelude is the orchestral version of Suckerpunch, which is truly beautiful. The intro sounds like you're in a fairytale! I love it when bands also make orchestral versions of their metal songs. All in all Lunar Prelude is a great EP. The only so called faults I can find is the recording quality of the live songs, and that they could've easily waited with these songs to release a whole new album instead.

Serenity

Codex Atlanticus

Napalm Records

Serenity has released yet another awesome album called Codex Atlanticus. This is the first album without (live performer) Clementine Delauney and Thomas Buchberger. They were replaced by Natascha Koch (Tasha) and Christian Hermsdörfer. Christian has been with Serenity for a long time, but was now officially taken on board. They are now a four piece



band: Georg Neuhauser on vocals, Christian Hermsdörfer on guitar, Fabio D'Amore on bass and Andreas Schipflinger on drums. They all do each others backing vocals.

The album counts eleven tracks, and it takes 50 minutes to listen all. The album starts with title song Codex Atlanticus, an instrumental piece. Halfway it is starting to get really epic, but when it ends, the next song does not fade in. They missed an opportunity there. Follow Me sounds good anyway, but it's that intro that is bothering me. Sprouts of Terror sounds very heavy for Serenity, instead of symphonic I would rather call this song heavy metal. Iniquity is a very catchy and good song, so is the next song Reason. My Final Chapter is a ballad with an excellent guitar solo. The lyrics are very beautiful. Caught in A Myth is in my opinion the best song on the album. It's like Nightwish has with Ghost Love Score. There are good instrumental pieces in it. Definitely a keeper on their setlist! Fate of Light and Spirit in the Flesh are both really good songs and have that Serenity touch in them. The Perfect Woman on the other hand seems to fall out of place in between the rest of the songs, it's a ballad, but it sounds still very much like pop. Maybe that's not the right description, it sounds like it's made for a musical. The lyrics are very nice though, but not what I would expect from Serenity. The Order is the last song on Codex Atlanticus. This song is again epic and bombastic.

I have seen Serenity live on their last tour, before I had heard the album. Of course there they played the songs in a different order, so that is why the album order may sound a bit weird for me. Serenity is one of the few bands that sound better live than recorded. Live they also make a lot of (eye)contact with the audience (Georg was literally standing over us and was singing in our faces). This makes it into a very nice show to watch, they make you feel part of it.

SIN.SIN

Fairytronics

Alfa Matrix

Fairytronics is a new EP by Kristell Lowagie a.k.a. SIN.SIN. You might know her as the singer of Valkyre or Lovelorn Dolls. This on the side is something very different! Instead of rock/metal, gothic influenced music, Fairytronics is electro pop. For Fairytronics, Kristell worked together with Italian producer Maxx from the electro-rock band Helalyn Flowers. This review is going to be really interesting, because I usually only review rock and metal albums!



Fairytronics is described as dreamy, romantic music, full of rainbows and unicorns. Now, when you say that I expected more child-like music, but it was not. I can see what she means with dreamy, it's music that carries you away, very relaxing but still electronic. Like trance without the dance part (do I explain this right? Correct me if I'm wrong!). Kristell really shows a different side of her, which shows the true talent.

On the EP are two new songs, and four remixes. I decided to review only the original songs. One thing that bothers me right away is the announcer (maybe Kristell herself), says "You're listening to SIN.SIN, Fairytronics", it's like you're listening to a podcast. It's just unnecessary. The first song is These Pretty Things, where you are just waiting for the dance part. Moving Sands is my favorite song on this album, even for a metalhead. There is a nice melody and the higher part sounds really beautiful, with that kind of violin mixed in.



Lyrical Spell *Concert photography*

Our photographer
Maayke was invited
to take pictures at
La-Ventura's show at
the P3 in Purmerend,
The Netherlands.





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