

Izegrim Interview - Lords Of Metal (Netherlands)

Met het nieuwe album 'Tribute To Totalitarianism' op zak komt het Nederlandse Izegrim bijzonder goed voor de dag. Het album is een sterk en donker thrash werkje geworden en ook de teksten zijn goed doordacht. Daarnaast zal Izegrim de komende tijd regelmatig op de planken staan en dus was het tijd om eens bij te kletsen met gitarist Jeroen en bassiste en backing vocaliste Marloes.

Text: Tormentor Erich

Hello there. You guys have just returned from a small European tour with Flotsam And Jetsam. How was it, how do you look back at the trip?

Jeroen: The whole tour was a blast! Much booze, good food, almost no sleep and a lot of new fans. Exactly as I had expected, ha ha ha! It was also a nice experience for us to play in Poland and Hungary. We recommend every metal band to play in these often forgotten places. We had to play at 11:15 at the prestigious Metal Mania Festival in Poland with Megadeth, Overkill, and Satyricon a.o.

Despite the early time, there were more than one thousand people going berserk at our gig. It was an experience we will never forget. Unfortunately we had too little time to see some of the cities we've played.

Marloes: It was awesome and way too short! We've had a great time with Flotsam and Jetsam and Non-Divine. I never thought that eighteen people in one bus could work out so very well. The tour started in Zwolle in The Netherlands. In Zwolle we've met Non-Divine and Flotsam and Jetsam for the first time and it worked out very well immediately. F&J didn't have a good start of the tour. Their guitars were not delivered with their flight. After some phone calls we could arrange some guitars. During the show the guitars did arrive by special delivery, thankfully! Next day we went to Dynamo, Eindhoven. The show was good but during the F&J show the bass-amp died and we had to change it for the backup amp. Monday F&J flew to Barcelona and Non-Divine and Izegrim had a day off. Tuesday morning we stepped into the night liner and the tour started "for real". Up to Flensburg (D), Frankfurt (D), Erstfeld (CH), Wenen (A), Katowice (P) and last but not least Budapest (H). It was a great experience to play abroad and Poland was the best experience ever!! Also living in a bus for a week was a big experience. With a T.V., a DVD player, and a play station 2 and lots of cool people in it, you never get bored.

And what juicy 'Spinal Tap Moment' can you share with us?

Marloes: Where do I have to start, ha ha. The Stage in Vienna was not very stable and during the Non-Divine show Ivor fell of the stage. Luckily I was standing in front of the stage so I could break his fall a little bit. Fortunately there wasn't too much damage. During our last show in Budapest Non-Divine and F&J had arranged a "last-day-of-the-tour-joke". When we played our third song we were surprised by a mummy (Ivor, N-D) and after that we've had a lot of foam/snow on stage. It was really a blast! About other juicy things, you know what they say: "what happens on the road stays on the road".

You're new album 'Tribute To Totalitarianism' has been out for a couple of weeks now. How are the reactions so far?

Jeroen: At this moment its way too early to get a good impression of all the reviews. Like you said, our album is out for almost two weeks, so not every magazine has given us a review at the moment of this interview. But the reviews we've gotten so far are pretty good. We're confident about our new album, it is one hundred percent Izegrim. It's the ultimate cliché, but we're more than pleased with the final result. Actually, that's very obvious. I can't imagine a band that's writing crappy material on purpose (hmm... however, listening to some bands... he he). What others think about the album is something we cannot control. A review is just an opinion from one person. In that perspective, it isn't even that interesting what (just) one person thinks about our music, although it may be important because it triggers people to check us out (or not, of course). We write the music we like, for us, and for our fans. The reactions we've gotten so far from the fans, both old and new ones, are really positive.

And how do you look back at the developing process of the album? Was it a difficult album to make?

Jeroen: It took a while before we released the album. First of all, 'Tribute to Totalitarianism' should be something special. Our musical preferences have changed through the years and we've broadened our horizons concerning (musical) taste and preferences. This was the basis for our new album. We did not want to restrict ourselves to just one influence or style. Nowadays I can't manage to listen to one album straight in a row. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with a good death metal CD, but after five songs I just have to hear something different. We had to spend a lot of time arranging these different styles into a decent, coherent album. However we did have a damn tight time-schedule. We had to release the album before we went on tour. Everything was planned to (almost) the minute. Mixing and mastering by Jochem Jacobs went like crazy (and he did a hell of a job!), the artwork had to be finished in time. And, most important, we had to find ourselves a record company that we believed in, and they had to believe in us.

Marloes: During the writing process we also had a line-up change, so in that manner it was difficult to make the album. We started writing with two guitarists. Unfortunately Carsten left the band during the writing process. We decided to go on with one guitarist. However, with one guitarist you don't have as many possibilities as we wanted. After a while we've found in Bart the new guitarist so we could re-arrange the songs again for two guitar players.

How would you describe your music? As brutal thrash metal with Arch Enemy sounding vocals perhaps?

Jeroen: It's funny how every interview or review always turns out to Arch Enemy. I personally think the voice of Kristien reminds more of Mille from Kreator, just to name one... Ah well, I think we're cursed forever to be compared to Arch Enemy or Holy Moses, just because our singer is female, ha ha ha ! The funny thing is, Kristien doesn't even like Arch Enemy at all! If you mean by brutal: stoner-like, death, groovy thrash with a Gothenburg-flavor, yes, I can confirm your description. I can live with brutal thrash with a pronounced Izegrim-flavor. But please, don't ever mention Arch Enemy again, ha ha ha!!

With two ladies in the band your line up is different compared to the many more available 'all men' bands. Do you get some special treatment because of this? Or is even the male dominated world of metal getting to the point of equalisation from men and women?

Marloes: We do have a distinguished line up, but we don't get a special treatment because of the two ladies in the band. I don't think it's always an advantage. Not all men are taking us seriously instantly. For example, when we arrive at a venue, people always think we're just the girlfriends. We are often judged on our looks and not on the things we're doing on stage. A very cool thing is to see the amazing faces of the crowd when "we ladies" open our mouth during the show. They don't expect grunting ladies. But... metal in general is still a men's world. And I think we are doing a hell of a job in a men's world!

A big aspect of the Izegrim concept are the lyrics. But before we talk about them, can you give us a short explanation about the whole Izegrim ideology?

Jeroen: First of all, Izegrim isn't about ideology. We don't want to bring a certain message across.

As you read through our lyrics, you can feel the sarcasm in it. Lyrics without sarcasm or a certain amount of humor, will get a preachy and serious vibe. We don't want our lyrics to be taken that seriously.

And what can be said about the lyrics from the news songs?

Jeroen: The whole concept has been written out by Joep, our drummer. The concept is about how the world today has been shaped by events in the past and will influence events in the future.

It's influenced by an existing theory about a worldwide secret conspiracy (freemasonry, Bilderberg group a.o.) of powerful and mighty people whom have been working through the years, on a New World Order. We've turned this theory into a fictional yet realistic story. The concept is a narration of a young, traumatized nation. This nation is not mentioned by name once in the lyrics, but it is obvious that it's about the USA. Not a single nation on this planet has fought so many wars in such a short period of time. Also in only a few countries militarism equals patriotism as much as in the States. That, of course, is an excellent basis for a Totalitarian state, as George Orwell described in '1984'.

I also noticed that some historical years are mentioned in the songs 'Regime of Redemption' (1776 and 1861) and 'New World Order' (1492). What happened back then that is still worth talking about nowadays? What should we learn from these years in the past?

Jeroen: These dates are significant events in the history of the USA, and thus of the concept. Columbus discovered America in 1492. America declared its independence from the British Empire in 1776. The American Civil war started in 1861 (remember the concept is about a nation that has fought many wars in a short period of time). All in all, it's a history lesson that explains how the current state of world affairs have become. So in that respect, yes, it's still relevant today.

To me you're logo looks a lot like the old DDR logo. Aren't you afraid that people will look at this logo and then put you in a German / Communistic corner?

Marloes: No. We choose it because it looks awesome and strong. We wanted something else than a logo no one can read. Many people are wondering if there is more to know than only a logo. We also choose it because the original idea/concept was to make The Netherlands the New World Order. Therefore are the colors not „Black-Red-Yellow" in the full-color version like the DDR logo, but „Red-White-Blue". Although the DDR hasn't been for twenty years, it still gives people positive and/or negative feelings.

'Tribute To Totalitarianism' is released by the new Dutch label Rusty Cage Records. I thought that this label would only release old stuff again. Is Izegrim an exception here, or can we expect more new stuff via them?

Marloes: Rusty Cage Records started operations during the summer of 2006 and within a year it has evolved from nothing into a record label known for his special re-releases and support of talented young metal bands. So Izegrim is not an exception here and you can expect more new stuff! So check them out at www.rustycagerecords.com and subscribe to their newsletter.

Jeroen: For instance: Non-Divine, Obsidian and Magnacult are very new bands. Rusty Cage is looking for bands that stand out from the masses. Up to now, they only sign remarkable and outstanding bands. Furthermore, the people from RCR are musicians themselves (LWS, Defender), so they know what's going on in a band. Co-operation for that matter is superb!

Sceptic people will probably say that everything is already done in music, so why bother. What would you response?

Marloes: They are right about "everything has already been done in music". It's very hard to be original these days. But I think you don't have to be trying your best to be original, as long as you're having fun and stand behind your own songs. The main goal is having fun in making music, being satisfied by the result and develop your skills. And if someone doesn't like it, no problem, there will be someone else.

What are the plans for Izegrim's future? Did you plan a lot of gigs?

Marloes: Well, our album has been released for two weeks now and we've already planned a lot of gigs. We've started on our release date with the European tour (nine gigs). In April we'll have two gigs in Germany and a three day tour with Hollenthon and Officium Triste. We also have confirmed some festivals in Holland and Belgium (Dokkem Open Air in Holland and Metal Mean in Belgium). We're working on some other major festivals, but we can't reveal anything more (yet).

Okay, that's it for me. Thanks, good luck and do you maybe have a final message for us?

Thanks for the interest you've shown in Izegrim. Hope you all like the new album and check our site for all the gigs we've planned (campaign-section).

Cheers !!