

On the board! Captain Rolf is leading his warship again! And it's really strong now! "Rapid Foray" is one of the best albums, that Running Wild have released in a really long time. That's why we decided to meet ol' pirate captain in one of the Port Royal taverns and ask him couple of questions about his crew! Ladies and gentleman, prepare for the abordage!

Hello Captain! At first I want to congratulate you "Rapid Foray", it's a great material! For sure one of the best Running Wild albums to see daylight in last years! I think that it's coming back to roots, from "Blaze Of Glory" album! Isn't it something you feel the best in? Last albums, especially "Shadowmaker" were a bit experimental. Do you think, that it's over of experimenting?

I can't tell you hahaha! The future will show that. With "Rapid Foray" I didn't knew untill it was written! I was writing this songs and a lot of them reminded me of our stuff from late 80's and 90's. I didn't do this intentionnally, I didn't want to copy the style that we had back in that times. But when I was collecting idea for new material I've noticed, that a lot of things needs different details and different arrangements. Same with production. I was into creating more various album, combining a lot of different styles. The last two albums we've done really quickly- both with production process and writing the material. Now we had more time to work on it.

I've also noticed that The Rapid Foray got the great cover art. It could be easily used as a cover art for a historical book about pirates. Can you tell me who designed it for you?

It's a photo, everything there. I just did it myself. I jammed around with that for couple of days, I've changed some things untill I achieved what did I want to see. It's a great cover for me, and it suits everything well. I wanted it to look like the old painting, from the XVIII century. It was the period of time, when piracy took place, especially on the Carrabeans, so it was the great idea. It was really great- in one thing it was unique, and from the other it was really matching well with all our classical stuff, reminding of Running Wild pirate themes.

My next question is about Barthomelew Rogers, or as he was known, "Black Bart", who was the famous pirate captain. And I wondered- why did he had to wait such a long time to became a title character of one of your songs?

I don't know, it's something I can't tell you (laugh). I just figured out, that this melody sounded pirate, like our stuff from the old days. I've looked through all the books I've got and founded- "Ok, this is a guy, that we never had a song about". Although Rogers was mentioned in one of our songs- in "Treasure Island", because he was part of the story, but we need to remember that he was the real person. So I decided to do a song about him. It turned out very well, as Black Bart was really interesting character in the history of piracy! So I've did my best to introduce his person.

I need to say that I love this composition! Another song, that I'd like to ask you about is "The Depth Of The Sea (Nautilus)". It's instrumental song, with title clearly inspired by Jules Verne's book. In general, by looking at your lyrics I can easily say, that you love reading. So I just want to ask you about your favourite books and what book are you reading right now?

Today I'm just reading biography of Billy Idol, which got nothing to do with songwriting. I'm finding this book interesting. There's a lot of great books, I love example "The Last Of The Mohicans". I was rereading this book to write the lyrics. I like adventure stuff and also I read a lot of books about history. It was always part of my interest, when it comes to books.

I actually wanted to ask you as well about song "The Last Of The Mohicans", that you've mentioned. It's long and epic conclusion to whole album. I just wanted to ask what caused you to write such a majesticy, epic and long track?

Well, the idea to write this song is very, very old. I had this in my head for the first time, when I was writing "Victory" album, that was in the late 90's. But it didn't went into the album, as others weren't into writing the stuff, that won't go to the album. It came back, when I was doing "Shadowmaker", but it was tranquilized. When I was doing "The Last of Mohicans" I just had better ideas. It's a bit similar with history of "Bloody Island" from the album "Resilent". I just figured out, when I was writing this song, as I've noticed that it's the one, that I have a lot of different ideas to put inside. It was clear for me, that it need to be a long track, as the story is

really long and you can't put it into five verses. You need to make story, not a normal track. I also needed to support it musicaly, with putting maching lines etc. That's the story you need to get into. When you're writing lyrics, you need to go into your imagination, which is totally different. It was a challange to do that, but I think it went out pretty well. There were a lot of ideas, that I needed to put into the song. The song got certain flow, that I couldn't be interrupting. I couldn't cut it into pieces. If you ever look at the whole story of the book, you'll know why.

Do you think, that one day we'll be able to hear this song live?

No, because when I was writing it I figured out, that it's too complex to play it live. There's so much of guitar work, so I when I was somewhere in the middle of writing process I decided- "ok, I won't be able to play it live". So there are sometimes five different guitars or things like that. It's impossible to play it live, so I could do with track whatever I wanted, so I've felt myself free. Sometimes there are 6-8 guitars playing- the same parts in different versions. It's something impossible to play with only two guitars, that's why I decided, that it's going to be only a track to record.

That's what I was wondering about. We'll stick for a minute into your lyrics. On the "Gates Of Purgatory" or "Branded And Exiled" they were into, well, classic heavy metal stuff. Than after the "Port Royal" you decided to took more historical way. What caused you to go into this direction, which gave Running Wild such a characteristic image?

It was just one song, that I was writing for an album. I was writing a song, jamming around with my riffs and I had a TV turned on. At this time, I've seen an advertisement of movie "Pirates", directed by Roman Polanski, which was coming to cinemas at that time. I was watching that, while I was jamming around with this riff and I figured a great title- "Under Jolly Roger". And this riff [at this moment Rolf singed melody from "Under Jolly Roger" main riff] sounded like a pirate song. So it was clear to me, that I'll call this song "Under Jolly Roger". Everything came after it. We were excited, that we have a song about pirates and it was really different. It became a title track, we entitled record after it, and made a cover art. We never planned it, it just came out. And when we did "Port Royal" I started to read a lot of books about it, I was interested how the stuff and reality looked back then. I've read a lot of biography, I wanted to know what this guys were at in the times, when they were living. We never made it as a masterplan, dedicated to be something unique and special. It just hitted us.

I also wondered- if you'll be given a possibility to use a time machine once and drink a

beer with one of the pirate captains- which captain would you choose and why?

It would be definitely impossible to do that with Black Bart, as he didn't drink alcohol, haahaha! I don't know, maybe hmm, William Kid. He was THE REAL pirate at every case. He was intriguing, and a lot of people used his name as a typical pirate to speak about. That'd be interesting to hear, what he'll have to say about that. He was hanged as a pirate, so it would be interesting to see his way of looking at things

I agree! Also, there were a lot of pirates on Baltic Sea as well. Do you think, that one day you'll record the album about pirates, which were much closer to your homeland?

We did this! We have a song about bay, which was occupied by famous German pirates. It was near Hamburg. They were really interesting people and there are a lot of different stories going about them. In museum you can see skull nailed to the piece of wood, it shows what kind of men they were. And it's a part of Hamburg's history. So we wanted to write about it. I've never write a full album about that, as it will be musically too limiting. If you write about one thing, you need to stick to them. And for example when you look at song "Black Bart" it's something a way different from songs like "Hellectrified" or "Stick To Your Guns". You need to have different ideas, when you're writing about different things.

I've hear also, that you're collecting military uniforms, mostly from Napoleon's period. Do you maybe have some Polish uniforms in your collection?

No, I had couple from Russia and Prussia, which was based on the period before WWI, they were made somewhere around 2003-2004. I'm more interested into XVIII century and stuff like that. One of my collections have been used on cover to "Last Of Mohicans", and it's a British officer from around 1860-1870. I was always interested into that. You really can't collect stuff from war periods, as it costs around 20,000-30,000 euros, so it's too much. You can't even get it, because it's too rare- stuff like this belongs mostly to museums, that's why I'm more interested into doing this stuff by myself, it's one of my hobbies.

It's a sentimental question for me- when I was 16 years old, I've traveled from Poland to Wacken 2009 to see your "The Final Jolly Roger" concert. After this gig band was disbanded for two years. I wondered what caused you to split up and what made you to

come back so quickly?

It all started after 2005 tour. I decided to put down Running Wild, as I was no longer happy with that. Songwriting process was really hard and painful for me. I needed to escape from it, so I could come back. I can tell it after time. I put it down and it was around 2006 when people from Wacken came to me and asked if I want to do official show for fans and public. It was in 2009, when everything was clear. In 2011 one of the record companies asked me to re-record songs from early years. This stuff wasn't anymore in modern market, they weren't released back in the days. We changed it nowadays, as there's a label called Noise-2, which will put all classic Running Wild stuff on cd and on vinyl. Label wanted to make our music closer to fans, especially new ones, but they needed some bonus tracks. I've just tried out to write some bonus tracks, as I didn't have any bonus material prepared. I came around with some song ideas. Some were strong, some not- but part of them was too good to be bonus tracks, they were good for full albums. When I was writing more and more, it became easy and quick to compose new songs, so we decided to talk about new album. It won't make a sense to waste that tracks as bonus tracks for the old stuff. Instead of recording bonus tracks, we've made a new album called "Shadowmaker". So the band was back! We had it again, the power and passion to do that again! I really lost that, when I stopped Running Wild. Two years earlier I've said "goodbye" to fans, I know that. But it will be unfair to do that, as the fans wanted to have new material. That's why we decided to do "Shadowmaker" I was able to do what I wanted to do, not to do what I was supposed to do with Running Wild. With "Resilient" it was just a next step. Today we have "Rapid Foray". I'm glad, that I've found my back to what Running Wild is about and to enjoy it.

You mentioned recording bonus tracks for reeditions of albums. Nowadays your first albums are really hard to get. Didn't you think about releasing it?

It will be released by Noise-2 next year! They're putting out all Cds recorded in Noise during 80's and 90's into modern music market. They'll bring all records from "Gates To Purgatory" to "Masquarade" on CD and on vinyl.

This is probably the best news this year! Your official merch really often contains classic design. There was even a t-shirt with first logo, or a shirt with "Gates To Purgatory" motive. Is there a chance, that on the concerts you'll also play songs from first two albums? Or from "Victims Of State Power"? Right now the only song from this period the only song we can hear is "Genghis Khan".

All the times, when I'm thinking about doing setlist for tour or festivals (which we'll do next year by the way!), it's really hard work to put setlist with 15 or 16 songs. We got so many albums, so many classic songs, that always everyone asks me "Why didn't you play this"? To satisfy everyone we'll have to play like five hours, it's impossible. I have to always think about which song the most of the people will rely on. I have some surprises into setlists, that a lot of people didn't expect me to play. I really can't say now, which songs we'll play next year. But there will be definitely some classical surprises.

One of the most remarkable events in Polish metal history was 1987 festival Metalmania, where you played as well. This event is legendary for us. What are your memories that day? Is the rumour that all your stuff have been stolen there is true?

Well, it was great day! We had a lot of fans and fantastic bands, like Helloween. It was great festival and it was first time, when we was "behind iron curtain". It was really amazing to see how enthusiastic were the fans- they sang all the songs along in english, during "iron curtain" times!!! Continent was divided into two parts. It really made me glad to see that rock'n'roll is binding this people together as one. It was a great evening to see that.

After this time you've never played in Poland, and-believe me- you have a lot of fans there. I was wondering, why didn't you come back to Poland? Do you have a plans to change it in the future?

I can't tell you now, as I'm talking about that with Wacken Open Air promotor, as they wanted us to tour with their agency. We got a lot of offers, around 20-30 different festivals so far. So we're still thinking about future months- we need to decide what we can do, and what we can't do. I really can't tell you know what we'll do in the future. Back in the days we've made a tour in Germany and we've tried to do shows in different countries as well. But we really realised, that we started losing our money on shows. We made pyrotechnic, light, sound. We needed to spend our money on it. Someone needed to pay for it, for roadies etc. We stopped that in late 80s and 90s. That's why we didn't play shows outside Germany.

I was always wondering- nowadays a lot of bands love to do "thematical gigs", where they play some album entirely. Next year there will be 30th anniversary of "under Jolly Roger". Do you think that you'll also made a concert, where you'll play this material entirely.

No, because I don't believe in that idea. When I do the show, I want to show what Running Wild is about, which means to me playing songs from all periods. I never would play whole album live or anything like that.

What was the first band, that get Rock'n'Roll into heavy metal music? What was the first concert, that you've seen?

Well, I was born 1961, so I was listening music from 60's, there wasn't metal at the days hahahaha I can't imagine first album, that I own. I loved Black Sabbath, Kiss, AC/DC stuff like that. When "Unleashed In The East" came, I was destroyed. I knew band earlier, albums like "Sin After Sin". They came out with this album and it was start with metal from me. At the same time AC/DC went on tour- "Highway To Hell" tour, where supporting act was Judas Priest. It was 1979 when I saw Judas Priest live for the first time, and they really blew me away. That AC/DC really sucked. It was one of the last shows with Bon Scott and he was totally drunk. Judas Priest was so great- starting point for me! But I was into music since late 60's. I like rock music and stuff like that.

I wanted to ask how is your project Giant-X going. Are you still composing music? Or it was just a way to take rest from Running Wild?

I can't tell you. I don't think in a nearest future, that we'll find any time for it. PJ is busy with his own stuff, he's a producer, he owns a studio. I'm busy with Running Wild. It's a problem, I don't think that anything will come around in the nearest future.

I wanted to ask if you still have contact with ex-Running Wild members? Do you think, that one day we'll see their guest appearance on the stage?

From time to time I have a contact with Thilo Hermann. When I played at Wacken I've met couple of guys. But I don't think that you'll witness old line up.

RUNNING WILD INTERVIEW

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Do you maybe will have some Japanese version or exclusive version of "Rapid Foray" with some bonuses?

No, definitely not. It's just this version. There may be some different editions like metalbox or vinyl release, but there's no other way.

Thanks for the interview, captain! Last word goes to you!

I hope, that Polish fans like album the same way as I do! I hope to see a lot of fans on upcoming shows!

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