

**Imperator, one of the most important bands in Poland's metal history, has returned. Great concerts in December 2018 as part of Merry Christless mini tour, the announcement of a show with equally famous Protector from Germany in October this year – fans' appetites are growing. Bariel, the Founding Father of Imperator, has shed some light on the reasons for the band's reunion and their plans for the future.**



**Hello Bariel! First of all, congratulations on your successful Merry Christless shows. What are your feelings concerning those concerts? Have they fulfilled your vision as for the official reunion of Imperator?**



Hi there! Thanks, yeah, I think those shows have met my expectations. There was a big chance it would all work out as we had worked really hard before the gigs. I myself can't remember how many rehearsals we'd played. It seems that I dedicated the whole 2018 to the band. First there was the line up, we finally ended up with three new members, of whom no one had any idea. I wanted to keep the new line up a secret until mid December. I didn't want people to speculate whether I'd made the right choices. You know, we had a really intense rehearsal schedule. We met three times every weekend – Friday till Sunday – at least me and Richter. Since May each rehearsal was 6-8 hours long, sometimes even more. We met 45 times during the summer holidays. I didn't really know how people would take those shows. 80 per cent of the people I talked to or whose opinions I heard were rather sceptical. They said 'Don't do it Bariel, you're going to kill the legend.' Only one fifth of those interested would say 'Fucking awesome, Bariel, it's the right call. Keep going.' I'm generally satisfied with those gigs. We had put a lot of work in the whole thing. And in December we simply did what we were supposed to. We just played. Now we're focused on the future...

**Since the new line up is no longer a secret, can you tell us a bit about the new members? Krzysztof “Chris” Świątkiewicz seems to have already been involved with the band in the past, but the rest (Tomasz Nowok and Richter) are fresh blood. How did you come to**

### work with them?

I'd had a lot of questions since April 2018 when Nergal from Behemoth spilled the beans about Merry Christless shows including Imperator. People seemed to think that was a joke as the news was published on April's Fool. They went on asking 'So now what, you, Mefisto and Carol?' I would only say 'Wait till December, you'll see for yourselves.' Mefisto played with us for some time, it was no secret. As for Carol – I talked to him in January or February 2018 and told him I was bringing back Imperator, but I had a different idea for the drummer. Mefisto had been playing with us till August, but then it turned out the whole thing didn't really fit in his schedule. I think it had to do with the number of rehearsals I suggested, or rather expected. There didn't seem to be another way than just to play the songs over and over again. And to play them better each time, as you can always get better as a whole band. Always. At some point all those little mistakes are only known to the band, but they're always there. So the strategy was to reduce the amount of those mistakes as much as possible. In the end things went rather smoothly, but probably not perfectly. At some point I was really happy the gigs were coming up because otherwise we would just work ourselves to death, haha. After parting with Mefisto I got in touch with Tomek Nowok. Richter knew him and had his phone number. I'll tell you about the drummer later. Krzysiek Świątkiewicz had already played with Imperator. I mean here the year 1995. Just ask Chris and he'll remember no other episode, haha... So, the choice here seemed rather obvious. He's a great guitar player, he's also crazy about almost the same music I've always listened to, but most importantly, he's an awesome guy. I got in touch with him in

January 2018 and said 'Listen, I'm bringing back Imperator and you're welcome to be a part of it, a really important one.' The same month I had the idea of Richter behind the drums. I'd heard plenty of suggestions of drummers playing for different bands, both from Poland and outside the country. I'd also been told about top Polish, let's say, multi-band drummers, but I said 'Wait a second, I want to check one dude first – I've got a certain feeling about him.' I met Richter in June 2016 at 'The Time Before Time' beer premiere in Warsaw. He came round and asked me to sign his record. He was an IMPA fan and never tried to hide it really. On the day I wouldn't even think of the reunion. After a while he asked me to send him the lyrics for 'Święta Wojna' (Holy War) as he wanted to cover the song with his band, Bestiality. Then, in January, I think, I wrote him 'Hey, would you play a few songs from the album on drums?' He wrote back 'I know this album by heart.' It later turned out not to be entirely true, haha. After a few months he told me 'What was I supposed to tell you then?' So I still don't know whether he knew the album so well or not. I'm not so sure, haha. Anyway, we met. In April we started practicing. I really appreciate the energy he has brought into Imperator. I made a joke once that I had been waiting with bringing the band back to life until Richter was born – he's 23. We hadn't played for 25 years.

And as for Novock – when things with Mefisto started to go south, I knew I had to find someone right away. I told Mef what I was planning. I went to see some gig in Łódź, in a club called Magnetofon. Devilpriest with Tomek was playing there, I came round to him and we talked. On the very next day he was in Warsaw to see how we were doing. You know, he might have been among those 80 per cent of people who didn't really believe this would all work out. He also wanted to talk about a possible schedule in this artistic endeavour. I emailed him the papers (the songs' scores). A week later he came back with three, almost perfectly learnt songs. It was a nice surprise to us. It was fully professional. He's also brought great energy to the band. I'm really satisfied with this line up. ..

**Why didn't you want to take things up with Carol?**

Well, recently I tried again to remember why in late 1993, when things with Imperator started to get really serious, I decided to put a halt to the band. There were a few reasons. The guys might remember it differently, but the songs we were making back then – the ones that have never seen the light of day, only being recorded sometime at Labelin Studio – those songs had no tempo. They weren't fast. Fuck, what a nightmare. Back in late '80s nobody knew the term 'blast', we ourselves didn't use it in Impa. But who cares. I had always wanted to play as fast as possible, with fucking brutality. And Carol's drumming didn't have that. There wasn't really anyone to step in his shoes either back then – Docent (from Vader) had his hands full – and that was actually it. But to be fair – we made huge progress with Carol in those days, our playing improved much. We started playing slower than when Moloch was in the band, but definitely more accurately. And since the 'Dracula' recordings and theatre performances we played together for a few years. But even now, when working again on the bonus songs from the CD version – 'Love Is the Law' or 'The Rest Is Silence' I find the drums arrangements a bit weird. We're not going to change anything but now I finally realise I simply

didn't want to play that way. Well, those songs are quite OK though. Now, for the first time, at least in a long time, I can bring up the song titles, like 'Elder Gods' or 'Your Accursedness'. I don't know if I'll ever go back to them. Without the tempo? I don't want to play without speed, it must have got on my nerves even more back then...

## IMPERATOR

Wpisany przez Oldchool Metal Maniac

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