

**Hello Mark, same possibility to perform this interview with you it's a great honor, probably you don't even realize how much does it mean to me! For me, Manilla is one of the greatest and cult bands ever. How are you?**

Shark: I am very well thank you. I appreciate your kind words about Manilla Road. It is an honor for me to do this interview with you.

**I've read that the name of your band comes from a name of one of the roads in Colorado. Does this road still exist? Does it still means something to you?**

Shark: Actually that road is in Kansas off of the interstate highway that leads to Colorado. We came up with the name of the band before we found out about the road having that name. The name Manilla Road was thought up while watching Monty Python on a little TV in my drummers kitchen while drinking beer. We do still stop and take photos of the highway sign every time we pass it on tour ha ha.

**Could you tell something about a evolution of Manilla Road over time? What circumstances have affected it mostly?**

Shark: We started out more of a heavy space rock band. Over the first couple of albums we eventually found more of our direction wanting to be heavier and more progressive. We have experimented with almost all styles of heavy metal music and have never just remained in one direction. The one thing that seems to remain constant is the epic nature of the music and lyric content. There have been many band member changes over the last 39 years which has contributed to the sound of the band evolving a little as well. I try to let nature take its own course when it comes to where the music is going. What I mean to say is that I like to let it flow and not to over think the creative process too much. So I suppose that the evolution of the band has been sort of a natural event.

**I worship Manilla Road from the very begining, since you've created your own epic style. So let me ask about a distant past - what were your dreams back then? Did your dreams come true?**

Shark: My dreams were to become a renowned musician and writer and for the most part yes, those dreams have come true. I sort of wanted to get rich also and that part seems to have eluded my career so far ha ha.

**Over all of the years of your existence you've been working very hard. Manilla gave a birth to lots of albums. Are you planning to keep up that pace? Are you going to record a new album?**

Shark: Yes I plan to continue to release as much material as I can that is quality music. We are recording the next Manilla Road album right now and I just finished the new Hellwell record which should be coming out this year. And Hellwell has a new drummer that should be of interest to every Manilla Road fan. That drummer is Randy Thrasher Foxe. I just finished mixing the project, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hellwell album and I am totally pumped about how good this album has turned out. I am also working on another project that will most likely see the light of day eventually. So I still have plenty of material and releases that I am working on that will be released in the near future.

**In what atmosphere do you plan to keep the new album? Do you have any ideas about the entirety, album cover?**

Shark: Yes all of that is planned out but I am not ready to give out the title or the concept of the songs or cover art yet. We are still finishing the last touches on the recordings and still have to mix and master the project so there is still a bit of time before I want to expose all the goodies about the album. I can tell you that it is a little heavier than The Blessed Curse was and there is not near as much acoustic instrumentation on it.

**What plans do you have for now, besides the tour dates you've already announced of course?**

Shark: For the moment I am working in my studio until we go out on tour in Europe this year. Then I plan to play my ass off all over Europe spreading the epic metal word to the world. I am actually already starting to think about music ideas and concepts for the Manilla Road album after the one we are recording right now. Basically I plan to just keep writing, recording and performing metal until it is physically impossible for me to do it anymore.

**In one of the interviews for one of the Polish Heavy Metal Pages you said, that you really need to play in Poland one day. How is the progress with that plan? Has anybody made a contact with you in that case yet?**

Shark: I think our management is trying to work out a show in Poland for this year in 2016. I know that we will play anywhere there is interest and financial capability of getting us there.

**They say, that Manilla Road fans are amongst the most loyal ones. Is it still true, after what you can see on your gigs nowadays?**

Shark: Oh yes it is very true. I have been so impressed with how loyal our fan base is. If not for them and their earnest support we could not still be doing this. They have shown their support all over the world and it means everything to us and is what really keeps us going on and wanting to continue the quest of epic metal.

**In retrospect, which Manilla Road album is your favorite?**

Shark: I have several of course but out of the albums released so far I would have to say The Blessed Curse. The Deluge would most likely be next and then Gates of Fire.

**Could you tell me more about your partnership with Jowita Kamińska, the author of your album cover "Gates of Fire"?**

Shark: We run into each other all over the metal world it seems ha ha. We have met up at several festivals and still have a great relationship. I plan to use her art talents again in the future. She is one really great artist and she has good taste in metal music also.

**What was your reaction, when "The Circus Maximus" was released as Manilla Road's record, unbeknownst to you?**

Shark: I was not happy about it at the time and still think of it as Circus Maximus and not Manilla Road. But what is done is done and that is so long ago that I have moved on and don't really ponder on it that much anymore. I do think it is one of the best guitar performances that I ever did on an album. That project and those musicians really tested my skill as a guitarist.

**In your lyrics I can see that you were inspired (among others) by H. P. Lovecraft or Edgar Allan Poe. I'm sure that you have plenty more of your favourite authors. Could you recommend some of your beloved novels to our readers?**

Shark: Anything by Robert E. Howard is totally top notch stuff. Especially his Conan and Solomon Kane stories. I am a big fan of the old literary giants as well like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Jules Verne. For good horror stories I like Clive Barker also.

**I've read in one of interviews with you, that you've worked with Richard Cathy on a book based on a story from "Voyager". What has finally happened to that novel? Did you manage to finish it?**

Shark: We have finished the outline for the story but I have just found no time to work on it lately. Manilla Road and the music always comes first with me and so as long as there is something to be accomplished in music I will be working on that foremost.

**What do you think, why initially (in the '80s) Manilla Road was treated by fans better in Europe than in your country?**

Shark: I think that the majority of the European fans were much more open minded to experimental metal music back then. And our music revolves around history, myth and legends and most of what we write about is based on the old world and not the new. There just is not as long a history line with the Americas as there is with the European continent.

**Thank you so much for this conversation. I already know that this interview will be one of the most significant in my life.**

Shark: I thank you as well and have enjoyed every minute. I especially wish to thank you and all of our fans for their undying support of Manilla Road and epic metal music in general. Up The Hammers & Down The Nails.