

Interview with Cold Cell

Author: **Piotr Czwarkiel (www.kvlt.pl)**

Questions answered by **aW** (drums)

1. Hello there! What is with all that hiding of your identity?

aW: Cheerioh! Well, that is very simple: The focus should be on the music itself respectively on the whole piece of art (including designs, stage props, artworks, photos and stuff), not on the individuals within the band. I know it's not super-innovative, but it is a good way to form a faceless collective, a grey eminence and to give the music as much space as possible.

2. What do your abbreviations mean? Is this some element of building the atmosphere around the band or maybe you work as CEO's of some Swiss banks? (laugh)

aW: Yes, THAT'S it! That would be nice tough. No seriously, it's also part of the piece of art I mentioned before. ColdCell is a reflection of who and what we are, on an authorial meta-level. So our civil names don't matter, it's just not important. And it also would look somehow stupid, if we tried to create a holistic concept but kept on writing down or normal names. It's all for the sake of art.

3. Your guitarist called W4 is the only one from outside your country. Is this not an obstacle when polishing your material or rehearsing before a live show?

aW: W4 used to live in Switzerland nearby us, so it was never a problem to rehearse regularly. Or almost never, hehe. Unfortunately, he emigrated to the eastern part of Germany, which is a damn shame. Not is he only a great open-hearted and open-minded character and a good, intelligent freaky friend, he also has a quite different musical background and brought in some very cool new crazy ideas and influences. Because he's from Iceland, he's also not that narrow-minded like we Swiss people are. He's not out of the band, but also no more in – he remains a silent member, the spirit of ColdCell. Hopefully he can join us for some special opportunities in 2018. But the show goes on – we already have new young blood in the band, which opens again quite promising perspectives.

4. The new album, *Those*, was released by your national label Czar of Crickets. Is this a matter of a satisfying deal or did you want to strengthen your position and recognition on the Swiss music scene?

aW: Both. Since we never had any contracts with our former labels, we always had the possibility to move on and create new synergies. The guys from Czar of Crickets are old good friends of us, they have an amazing roster of bands across all musical genres – and they really appreciate what we are doing with ColdCell. So it was foreseen that we had to cooperate. And so far, we are very happy with that decision. The press' feedback is tremendous, great reviews and lots of interviews. For example, we never had an interview with a Polish Magazine, so there you go.

5. When talking about you music scene, from what I recall, the most recognizable brands are Samael and Triptykon. What other bands except for yourselves (laugh) and Schammasch are worth attention?

aW: None, of course. No I'm only joking. There are quite a lot of great and inspired extreme bands, crossing borders and creating something outstanding and individual. Of course you know Bölzer, and I'd also name Darkspace (Ambient Black), Zatokrev (Extreme Sludge Doom Post Hardcore), Sum of R (Post or whatever Rock/ Metal), Blutmond (Urban Bohemian Madness), Excruciation (Doom), and I'm sure I forgot a lot to mention. There are also plenty of inspired artists from other genres, but I guess that would go beyond the scope of this interview.

6. Switzerland is a beautiful country. Does living there affect your work and what additional emotional charge does it carry?

aW: I think Swiss people's mentality and behavior and how our society works and is strictly organized has the biggest impact on at least our conceptual approach. We are one the world's richest country, we have a democracy, and basically we have the possibilities to achieve almost everything. But still, there is a lot of small-mindedness, unbelievable bureaucracy, shallowness and blindness on various levels – personally, spiritually, politically. I could talk about that for ages. But if I take a look at the problems lots of European countries have at the very moment, we still seem to live in paradise. Seem. But that is not a Swiss problem, that's a sickness affecting all western, globalized and – generally speaking – occidental countries. And additionally, borders are just a human construction. I'm not unhappy to live in Switzerland, but I don't give a horseshit on national pride or national identity. I'm only half-blooded anyway, haha. And yes, Switzerland has beautiful cities and parts, also when we are talking about nature, but also some dirty shitholes. Like all countries have.

7. Your music is outstandingly atmospheric, full of ambience and depression. Do you achieve all of it at the end stage in the recording studio or do you have your vision at pre-production phase?

aW: Normally, all songs are completely finished when it comes to entering the studio. This time, there was some hectic and flurry, because not all of the stuff was ready in time, due to a more experimental and open-minded approach including elements we never had on a ColdCell-album so far, such as those ambient parts and the bigger focus on psychedelic, psychotic styles and even some noisy, trippy FXs. I heard the final version of "Heritage" the first time at the studio, when I was supposed to record the song... So, to come back to your question, the particular ColdCell-atmosphere and all feelings are already given birth at pre-production phase; they "only" need to be recorded and finalized then.

8. Does this charge of sadness and anger, which can be heard in your music, is something you like to cleanse yourself of? Some sort of a catharsis?

aW: Yes and no. Our music is the conversion of our very inner emotions, of our mental beings and of everything that surrounds us and has a negative impact on what and who we are. ColdCell is therapy, catharsis and (un-)controlled outburst of those feelings. But that sadness, anger and sometimes pure disgust are also driving forces, sources of inspiration and creativity. So there is this positive aspect in all negativity, and we use that fact to emerge and be aware of ourselves.

9. In my latest review, I wrote, „you can imagine that S (the Vocalist) is not singing about anything pleasant“. Thus, by the way please tell me what your lyrics are about because the booklet is not a typical one, and we will not find any lyrics there.

aW: Actually, there are some excerpts of each song's lyrics in the booklet, to give you a brief lead what each song is all about. But there's also a general concept for ColdCell which has a wide range and which can be fleshed out in many ways. Our lyrics deal with ourselves, our world (microcosm and macrocosm), our society, the degenerated human species and the fucked up and retarded times we're living in. So we have a very down-to-earth approach, because our lyrics are directly connected to what is called our reality. The topics are endless. Loss of spirituality, digital illusion and isolation, the power of mammon, fake images, redundancy of profoundness, celebration of shallowness, abuse in various ways... "Those" metaphorically reflects on different negative human aspects, for example our great will to never learn and to always fail, to always recreate the same faults, the same misbehaviour and the same disgusting stupidity. One thing is very important: We point fingers on "those", but at the same time, we know that we are part of them, there is no escape from that fact. But we KNOW that we are fucked up, we KNOW that our globalized, digital, super-shallow system is going to fail, we KNOW that we didn't learn anything from our history. This knowledge is the main difference between us and "them".

10. I would also like to ask about the graphic layout. Was it your own idea with those inserts and the cutout window? Alternatively, maybe you gave freedom to your graphic designer and when you saw the effect, you approved it without consideration?

aW: To cut out a window in the front cover and to create different insert cards was the idea of Antigraphic, who was responsible for the layout and who luckily understood our intention and our vision. Never the less it was financially total lunacy (the production of the digipak was much more expensive than a regular one), the result looks very decent. Classy, but still dirty and rough.

11. Those characters we can see in the inserts, are these real life people, or were they created by Maxime Taccaardi?

aW: Those "persons" or characters are based on the main topic of each song, they are a symbol of the song's content. We just took a look at Maxime's roster and took the pictures which fitted best for each song; half of the pictures already existed, half were created exclusively for our artwork. We had some rough discussions as you can imagine, because Maxime has a lot of great, dark and eerie material, and five band members means you have five different opinions, but in the end, we finally found a consensus. And I think the artwork looks fantastic and emphasizes perfectly what *Those* stands for.

12. Last summer I saw a charming live performance of Schammasch during Summer Dying Loud in Aleksandrow Lodzki. I am obligated to ask if you are planning on coming to Poland for a concert, or maybe you are only beginning to sort these things out and do not have any precise plans in that matter?

aW: To be honest, there are no such plans at the moment, but we'd gladly like to play in Poland. Since we don't have any booking agency, it is very difficult for us to organize and pay such trips. Besides that, two of us are active in Schammasch which are constantly on the road, and some of us have also family and kids. You see, it's not the easiest thing to find a free time gap. But anyhow, if there would be a cool possibility for us to play in Poland, we would do it for sure since we all know there's a great amount of people who are deeply into extreme Metal in Poland.

13. It is November already and soon everybody will create his or her end-of-the-year summarizations. Could you please share what in your opinion should not be missed from 2017?

aW: It should not be missed that 2017 was the year of the demagogues, of political insanity, of terror reaching our homes, of regress on so many levels I could actually puke, of revisionism and of proof that some parts of us, of our society, don't want to and never will learn from history. So far, so bad. At least we're not running out of inspiration for ColdCell under these circumstances. On the other hand, for a very personal reason, 2017 was the best year in my entire life. And also musically, it was an excellent year: Comebacks of Arkhon Infaustus, Disbelief and Marilyn Manson, awesome releases by Gold, Dool, Anathema, Samael, The Ruins of Beverast, Grave Pleasures, Fides Inversa, Farsot, Septicflesh, Leprous, Wolves In The Throne Room, a great debut of NeoNoire... not too bad in the end.

Cold Cell in the Internet:

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