

Interview with **Przemyslaw „Quazarre” Olbryt** - leader, guitarist and vocalist of polish black/death band **Devilish Impressions**.

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**You are not a newcomer, one could say that you are an old hand. First it was Asgaard, then Devilish Impressions... Have you not had enough after so many years of playing? Do you not feel burnt out? Or maybe you know some patent for artistic longevity?**

I do not... As long as there is something burning inside of me, then I will create, under one name of another.

**Do you find yourself as a fulfilled artist? I am asking because I think there is something holding Devilish Impressions back and does not let it be in the same row with the most well-known Polish bands from extreme metal stage.**

Feeling fulfilled would mean an end to any further searches. However I still feel there is a lot for me to say. I still want to create, write, use my work to play with topics I have not yet touched. At the same time it is not my ambition to stand up and fight with others. Music is not a sport, it is not a competition, where you can be better or worse than the others... Creating a world thanks to some or other lyrics and sounds I fulfill my own needs first. Of course it is supportive to be aware that involuntarily we find a specific target group for which this world becomes close, nevertheless we cannot influence the numbers in that group, whether it will be hundreds, thousands, or millions of people.

**I am wondering, and perhaps some of our Readers are too, is that not problematic the band that Icanraz lives in Bialystok, BP in Finland, and you yourself in Opole? How do you even cope with that? Is this why we can see you on stage so rarely?**

Since the very beginning we have been functioning in this kind of disentanglement and somehow it had and still has an impact on our stage activity. No doubt it is easier to play a local gig just assembling together the company which lives close to each other. In our case we are talking about longer or just more affordable trips.

**Let us focus on the matter of BP (Ben Pakarinen, the guitarist and vocalist of Coprolith). What was the reason he was brought into DI?**

We met Ben during the „Adventvs Tour 2014”, when Coprolith opened for Devilish Impressions during the concerts. At some point of our work the cooperation initiative, which by the way was put forth by the guy himself, sounded more than interesting. How it soon turned out, we managed to play only one tour together. Yeah, we never officially admitted it anywhere, but BP is no longer a Devilish Impressions member for more than a year.

**Then who would in this case become the second guitar player and the bassist in case of live shows?**

Fortunately everytime we are facing the necessity of changes within the band, we find new musicians who are willing to take the responsibilities pretty fast. The official line-up of Devilish Impressions will be declassified soon.

**Would it not be easier and better for the band to find people to play from places closer to Opole? For example somebody from the Wroclaw scene?**

From the Wroclaw scene you say? Once we had Domin from Lost Soul who lives in Wroclaw among us. He is an outstandingly talented guitar player, who in a longer perspective could have brought a lot good into the band. He played on a big tour with us in the Baltic States, Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as on a few festivals. For some reasons however we did not seal our collaboration. He kills it in Hate right now and... we wish him for the best, and by the way we would get a beer or two with great pleasure, hehehe.

**And what about Vraath if I may ask? Is there a chance for his return? I must say, he fit the band perfectly and his vocal cooperation with you worked out flawlessly.**

I think so too. The conglomerate of personalities that made DI together with Vraath among us was in my opinion one of the greatest things that happened to this band.

**I am going to ask again. Is there any chance that Vraath will be back in the band? Is there anybody else who has a closed gateway back or have the departures from the band been always held in a friendly atmosphere?**

I would like to believe that most of the musicians who passed through Devilish Impressions think about the past with kind heart: all the trips, rehearsals, studio visits, concerts, moments of the highest excitement and moments when you thought it could not be any worse, joint parties, totally crazy activities, sometimes plain stupid, completely dangerous, meeting people, uncountable discussions until the very morning about more or less important topics, killing hangovers, the feeling of a common mission, brotherly unity, etc... Unfortunately I sometimes hear that someone, however proper our relationship was, is doing some bad PR around behind our backs. Well, that is life... Those, who would have an open road know about it, as well as all the rest who we would never ever, for fuck's sake, want to see in the band again.

**I remember your concert in Bielsko-Biala during the tour promoting „Adventvs” EP and its weak attendance. When entering the scene and seeing only a small bunch of fans are you irritated or do you not give a fuck and do your job – give a show the same way as you would if you had 100-200 people at the concert?**

You know what? At different points of our career and the band's popularity we happened to play both for 50 and for 500 people, sometimes even more. And I am not talking about fests but about concerts with DI as the headliner. Our motto has always been and will be to play as if it was a concert for 50 thousand. Raising the fucking roof! Maybe we are naive but we believe that sometimes among the small group of people there will be even one person who after seeing our show will stay with us forever.

**It may be frustrating but maybe you know why it is like that? Why are there so few people attending concerts nowadays?**

I do not know, few? It all depends on the band's popularity. Behemoth or Mgła fill the clubs up to the roof. I assume that if you went for a concert of some disco polo or hip hop name you do not know, the club would also be packed. The thing is with concerts of less known metal bands, that nowadays here and in most Western European countries such parties happen cyclically and, may I put it this way, everybody has seen everything. Typical for nowadays Poland are the „weekend plays”. From the perspective of bands, promoters and club owners it is more affordable. Why? Because during the week everybody is fucked with work and everyday's life that they treat the matter with less care. Add the economic factor to that, people's wealth, who, when facing additional expenses, have some difficulty to go to a concert. We cannot afford, like our neighbours from across the Oder River, to get a crowd to a

concert and buy t-shirts and CDs during it, drink a few beers by the bar and on the next day go to work with smiles on our faces and pretend it is okay. Let us face it, there are fewer metalheads right now than there used to be a dozen years back.

**The emotions around Dark Fest have settled a while ago, although your name was popping here and there, and not in a positive way. Would you like to comment on it somehow? Was it really about the corpse paint?**

Do you not think that the public's reaction to our show and the will to carry on is the best answer to all that mess? I am not talking about these who made their mind about us based on some thoughts of people who are negative towards us. Just to make things clear – when we were entering the stage, the organizers already had a 3-hour delay. We had a contracted time when it comes to soundcheck and the concert itself, and we fit ourselves in this time, which was so unprofessionally cut for us. When we were there preparing for the art, along comes some dude who said that the band is taking too long to prepare for the concert and therefore – apparently on behalf of the organizer – he decided to shorten our time to only one song. If anybody has any claims to us, I will say it again, it was not us who was drunk, we did not – as some thought – acted like some celebs, it was not our fault that such delays happened, it is not us who should be thrown shit at, just because somebody decided to judge us for no reason. That is the end of it!

**Let us get back to „Adventvs” for a while. The material was released in a lovely digipack (self-released) and on a vinyl thanks to well-known in Europe Hammerheart Records. Why the „international” version has only two songs on it? Was it your decision?**

This was all Hammerheart's decision, we did not discuss that, because we deeply cared about releasing these specific songs. The never-before-released demo „Eritis sicut Deus” is like an addition to the version released on CD.

**In May 2015 you announced that you were starting to record the material for the fourth DI album. Some time has flown by from the moment of that declaration, as far as I know the session was postponed, can you tell me why? Were you really working so intensively on the new album or was it all just to heat up the atmosphere before the release?**

We do not have a fanbase as wide as royalty such as Machine Head, Kreator or Sepultura has, so there is no way we could talk about heating the atmosphere before the release of a new album in the way you are suggesting. The fact that the recording took place in a few places was determining the necessity to fit to the schedule of people responsible for different stages of the session. We worked very long for the final sound because, for example, when we have already found a fucking awesome drum sound, it turned out that it does not really work well after the configuration with the guitars sounds. We had to wangle it again. We lost a lot of time on the mixes, then the works on the album's layout design, etc. All in all we put more time in it than it was foreseen at the beginning, however we had no deadline thrown at us from the label, and we did not really want to speed things up. We really cared about polishing „The I” from all sides, to make it an album which, when being discovered, would give people as much emotion and as much satisfaction as it did to its makers.

**Let us talk about the new album at last. The drums for the new one were recorded at Dobra 12 Studio, and the rest, along with the production, at Impressive-Art Studio with Przemyslaw Nowak. What was the argument for choosing this studio and this producer? Did someone recommend Przemek to you or maybe you were bewitched by the sound he made on Outre's debut?**

You know what, I do not even remember how I came across Impressive Art, was it thanks to some info in some magazine, or a post that was shown to me somewhere? I just cannot recall, no matter what. We wanted so badly for „The I” to sound differently than anything else, that is why we decided practically without thinking about it. Outre and their – by the way genius – album „Ghost Chants” I came across only thanks to Przemek, the owner of the studio. And since we are here, I want to recommend Impressive Art to all other bands.

**As far as the lyrics on „The I” are concerned, you put some fragments from Polish authors. Where did you come up with such a diversity? By the way it worked out wonderfully!**

Already with the „Adventvs” EP from 2014 with the new songs mentioned before we could here fragments from „Satan's Children” by Stanislaw Przybyszewski. With „The I” I decided to give myself out more to the world created by chosen authors who were representing the so called Young Poland Meteora. A few yaers back I would never think that I will even sing anything in my mother tongue in Devilish Impressions. I feared it would not be as resonant and polite as for example English, or Latin, which we used too. That is what makes me even more happy that this procedure was so well done.

**„Adventvs” has set the bar high for Devilish Impressions. Do you consider the new material as a continuation of the EP? Personally I think there is a lot of common features.**

Totally! It was on „Adventvs” where we used 7-string guitars for the first time, why we sounded a lot heavier. It was on „Adventvs” where we resigned not only from orchestrations but also from keyboards. „The I” is a logic continuation of the road which started with „Adventvs Regis and „Meteoron”. It is darker, heavier, and in a common context more unpredictable.

**From the beginning of the band's history you are the *spiritus movens*. Have you never though about giving something more to say or even to play to the others as an experiment?**

It is not that no one besides me has anything to say in the band. The drum arrangements on „The I” is for example a 100% Icanraz's work. The music itself is of my doing for years because I have a clear vision about how it should sound as a whole. However if anybody would give me a riff interesting enough and fitting the concept arranged before then... why not? Of course based on the „work experience” and band functions I would still have the decisive call about the final shape of each number. Fortunately I have a lot of unmade ideas so I am not going to play too much democracy regarding the compositions in Devilish Impressions.

**There were special guests on the new album: Mike Wead, Ronny Hovland, and Bon, a project from Opole. Where did you get the idea for the particular guests on the album? Can you talk some more about how it all came into happening?**

I will start with the Opole project Bon. As you know, on „Adventvs” you can gear some exoctic sounds of instruments, as well as overtone singing, which Contemplatron was responsible for. When I talked to him about revisiting our cooperation for the new album, it turned out that he is also the member of Bon. One word to another, we figured out that we would receive a few recordings from their different rituals and receive „green light” about the way some particular

fragments of those recordings would be used. In the end we have chosen the fragments which we found the most fitting and using them we have decided to begin and end the album. Ronny Hovland, known widely as Ares, the vocalist and guitarist of Aeternus, a band which we played our very first concerts as Devilish Impressions. It was a phenomenal tour, where we really started to get along well, and the friendships made then last until today. We decided that it would be difficult to find a better way to seal our friendship, than to invite Ronny to be a guest on our new album. I wrote to him, he was very enthusiastic about the case and... that is that! After some time he sent me the recorded pieces which can be found in „Ipse philosophvs, daemon, Deus et omnia”. The idea of playing a solo by Mike Wead was put forth by Icanraz, who met him during one tour when he was working on drum tech. The same as with Ares, Mike also was eager to cooperate, and the effect of it is the great solo part in the beginning part of the same song, „Ipse...”. In the past we have already had guests at our recordings, on „Diabolicanos” we have Cezar from Christ Agony and late Szymon Czech from Antigama and Byia. On „Simulacra” there is Orion from Vesania and Behemoth, Jacek Grecki from Lost Soul, Wojtek Kostrzewa from Asgaard, Romek Bereznicki from Lecter and Lestath with METrasmissionAL. Thanks to „The I” we have such artist like Ares from Aeternus, Mike Wead from Mercyfule Fate and King Diamond (also Candlemass and Edge of Sanity), and there is Bon. We are damn proud that all these great musicians have decided to leave something behind on albums with Devilish Impressions sounds.

**Surely some of our Readers would like to know how the vocals recording process looks like. Are you using any „upgraders” or is it 100% your own sound when recording your voice?**

If you are asking about effect, then the answer is no. This is, or should I say these are, because the same thing concerns Vraath's vocals, hundred percent our own, unmodified in any artificial ways voices.

**You are Kamecki's endorser. How does his guitar really work in Devilish Impressions? It looks great but are you fully happy with the way it sounds?**

Of course I am happy! Pawel is an extremely talented guitar maker and a real magician when it comes to string instruments. The guitar which he prepared for me works out perfectly both on the stage and in the studio. And yes, all the guitars you can hear on „Adventvs” or on „The I” have been recorded using this particular piece.

**„The I” is the first DI's LP to be recorded on a seven-string guitar. Does this mean that you have not stopped your progressive searches and we will be able to hear some of that music on the new album?**

Let me put it this way – I am not going to take on the eight-string yet. About my progressive searches, their presence on Devilish Impressions albums can be explained by the fact that I really like different genres, that is why surely not necessarily intentionally I incorporate this or that tricks to our work. Will they be on the next album? This is still a mystery for the Devil himself, hehehe.

**How about the issue with playing concerts and big tours in our country and abroad? You have the new material and surely it would be great to play it well on European scenes. You worked with The Flaming Arts but it did not really give you high concert activity. Are you planning your concerts and festivals to promote your new album?**

Plans are plans, and the reality is another thing. Literally right now we should have been on tour with Onslaught. Unfortunately, their guitarist's sickness made them to cancel the tour, at the same time the agency responsible for booking the tour did not have enough time to change the headliner. As an outcome we are at home. Of course we are looking for alternatives what to do in order to go with our record here and there, but only time will tell if it is possible.

**Apart from the few concerts planned for March do you have something else for us? I mean European festivals, which there is quite enough, according to [Concerts-Metal.com](http://Concerts-Metal.com).**

As I said before, together with EMG we are checking some possibilities. On the other hand, we do not want to force anything, there are some cases that, however hard we would want and with our readiness, we just cannot overcome. We always inform about all our confirmed concerts on our website.

**A year ago you went on a tour with Taiwan and China on the way. Tell me, how was it? Does the public there differ from the local one? Or maybe all this extreme metal is like some „exclusive good” to them?**

You cannot judge a book by its cover, there are many bands playing there, however it is a bit funny, that the „awesomeness” of different bands as we know them in Europe or in the USA does not apply to concert attendance in Asia. For example, at our first gig in Shanghai we had around 500 people. After we finished the Chinese leg of the tour we had a few days off before departing for Taiwan, so we looked around the city a bit, and the day before our flight we went for Amorphis gig. The same venue, three weeks later, and... fewer people than at our show. Likewise in Taiwan, where in Taipei we had more fans than Nightwish, who over here a definitely an arena band! Therefore it is a market you cannot foresee with reality which is completely different from what we know in Europe. How was it? For me it was fantastic. I hope that in time we will get a new invitation there, and since the country is fucking huge, we got places to play, hehehe.

**Does such an experienced musician have any „musical dreams”? For example who would you like to share the stage with, or record an album?**

Let us not exaggerate, there is a whole bunch of musicians, even if you take our own scene into consideration, to whom I have no comparison based on my experience. I have a lot of musical dreams, just like there is a lot of artists I would like to share the stage with. I could go on forever. I am really sorry that I will never be able to play with Lemmy, Shuldiner, Quorthon, Nodtveidt, or Dane, who has passed away not long ago...

**I am also interested in how things are going in Asgaard. I am asking because three years ago there was some talk about the potential successor to „Stairs to Nowhere”. Could you share some details? Are the guys actually recording some new music?**

That is correct, the recordings are taking place. We have already done the drums and the guitar parts, we should move on with the bass in a couple of days. We have most of the keyboards ready as well. Of course there is still a lot to do, like work on the lyrics, then also the mix, master, etc. Right now I can give say I am 100% sure this album will be different from the rest. The character of the new songs has dictated the way we used the keyboards, which is quite surprising, even for Asgaard. The whole thing has more of a rock feeling, than metal,

maybe because of the more classic, catchy song structures. I hope that something really interesting will be the outcome of it all.

**You have been working on the Polish music market for over 17 years. How do you see the changes that have happened through all these years? Do you also complain on the Internet and how it changed the line of business?**

If I would count the time when we started this metal in our houses, garages or a local community center, I would go back further to some 1993-1994. Basically everything has changed. The way the metal sub-culture is seen by the rest of the community has changed, there has been a great change of values, meanings... As with many of my peers – not to mention people older than me – I was a witness of the change of popularity within different subgenres, trends coming and going, smaller or bigger „wars” within the scene. I witnessed the coming of the digital era, the weakening of physical records sales... Do I complain on the Internet? Well, my problem in general is that I do not follow all the tech news, I get scared at times, everything speeds up so fucking quick, people lost this real contact for some virtual „friendships” weaving somewhere in social media... And it took me long time to understand the fact that we cannot win with all of it, especially is such giants like Tool, defending themselves from selling their stuff via Spotify or some other Deezer, after all even they lost in this battle. That is why we, who are working in the underground cannot fight those windmills just for the sake of the fight. Younger than me know better how to use this potential which is the Internet, with tools thanks to which we can reach even the farthest point on the map, and I guess in this context, the stepping in of the Internet into the music industry opens some doors which were not only closed before us but we did not even know they existed.

**In this context, where do you see Devilish Impressions in a few years? Do your thoughts go into the future, do you have any plans? Or maybe you just want to let things happen their own way?**

For some time I choose the second option. Of course, there are some issues that require help, that is why it is better to plan them from the beginning. I do not focus on cases that are potentially placed in time too far from now.

**Did you ever think about starting a whole new music project? Maybe in some other climate, say... heavy metal or technical death metal?**

Neither this nor that, hehehe. However I enjoy heavy metal, I do not really like tech death. There are lots of ideas for new music, but surely they do not fit with the genres mentioned.

**Country/rock like King Dude or maybe something more black metal? Are those ideas only in your mind, or do you actually compose and record some music in your free time?**

Free time is a difficult thing for me lately, however it does not mean that there are no things in the happening, and a lot of others is waiting to be released out. I love black metal and maybe some elements of this genre would be the main theme of my next project. If you mean country, then I would say the more „dark” version of it, however it is not my cup of tea. And do not forget that right now we are promoting „The I”, and some time from now I will have to focus more on the new Asgaard album. Right now these are my priorities. But who knows, maybe soon enough something brand new will be born?

**Putting music aside, I wanted to ask if you even get your mind wrapped around our down-to-earth reality, politics, or maybe it is simply indifferent for you?**

Of course I think about such things but I would not like to discuss them here. I think that it would be a lot better down here on Earth if people connected to „art“ would not get dirty in all that shit. There are enough of those who seem to be happy when they can put the stick inside the anthill and by the way stir up the animosities building up inside us. One thing I will never cut myself away from is that I am totally for the absolute freedom of speech and religion. And lately, here in our catholic land, it seems to be hard to receive those values, which are guaranteed by the constitution.

**One question for the end. Will the new Devilish Impressions album be out sooner than the once we have now? You kept us waiting for five long years.**

Well, we were planning the new album for the following year but... maybe it will out 10 yrs later? Who knows? ;)

**What should we wish you for the New Year?**

What you mean? Health, neverending artistic inspiration and seven digits on my bank account. Everything else will sort itself out somehow, hahaha.

**Thank you for the talk.**

No, thank you. Let me say „hi“ to all the Readers out there and I advise you to check out „The I“.

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The logo for 'Devilish Impressions' is rendered in a highly decorative, black gothic script. The letters are thick and feature intricate, swirling flourishes and sharp points. The word 'Devilish' is written in a larger, more ornate font, while 'impressions' is in a slightly smaller, simpler gothic font. The entire text is set against a white background and is framed by a decorative, vine-like border that flows under and around the letters.