

Nearly thirty years in the metal scene, more than ten studio albums released and well-earned title of the pioneers of Hellenic black metal: one can certainly write a lot about **Rotting Christ**.

Before their concert in Berlin Weronika and I interviewed the frontman **Sakis Tolis** about the band's biography, upcoming album and the artist's attitude towards playing live. Intense and tiring European tour wasn't much of a problem and on a grey afternoon in Berlin the vocalist found time for an interview with KVLТ Magazine.

We'll start from basics. How has the tour been going so far?

We are near the end of the tour and it's been one of the most hellish tours we ever had as a band. It's quite a strong package, very good response very night, great attitude from all the bands, I think it's a very good tour and we are very proud that we are a part of this.

Was there any show on tour you were looking forward to in particular?

No, I wouldn't say that. Everywhere we play, we give one hundred percent of ourselves. If sometimes we play in a place which has a special place in my heart, like in Poland, it always feels like playing home, but I have to give one hundred percent at all the shows.

You're soon releasing a new album, "The Heretics". What was the best part of the recording process?

Recording an album is quite a stressful procedure. I'm doing most of the stuff by myself, it's not that easy. The best thing is when the album is finally ready. This is the best part, we feel great when we come up with an album. So the best part is when the album is finished!

So do you prefer playing live or recording new material?

Both... actually, no, I prefer playing live. Because this is when I have the opportunity to meet people. I'm quite an oldschool guy, I prefer to speak with someone instead of just being at home and recording albums. I want to meet people, speak with them after the show, this is very important to me.

It's very important to us as well. It's visible how Rotting Christ give one hundred percent at the shows.

When the audience is happy I'm even happier. Some people out there think touring is about partying, but it doesn't look like that. We are traveling, we travelled for eleven hours today, we are very busy and tired, but as long as the shows are doing well, we fell really happy.

It actually made me think of keeping the spirit alive. Would you say it was one of the most important aspects of Rotting Christ's music?

Yes, it's very important! It's very important to be yourself. Sometimes you lose it and you must fight for this.

It's been 25 years since the release of Thy Mighty Contract. Did anything change for Rotting Christ throughout all these years?

The attitude or "Non Serviam" motto didn't change. But music-wise some things are different now, which is normal, because we are a band that has been releasing albums for almost thirty years so if we were to release albums which sound exactly the same every two years, I think nobody would care. Personally, I would like to see new horizons in my life, explore something new. I'm doing the same with the band.

When it comes to the upcoming album, was there any particular reason behind choosing “Fire God and Fear” as the song you play live on Trident’s Curse tour?

I had to choose one song. I don’t know, really... it was a big problem for me to choose one song ‘cause I write all the songs, they feel almost like a part of my family. So when I have to choose one, it’s basically the biggest nightmare I can have! I just choose one song that sounds the most like **Rotting Christ** material. But there are definitely different songs on the album.

We are looking forward to this album.

Yes... but that stresses me out, believe me or not! I have this insecure feeling of every artist before releasing new album.

Was it always like that, from the very beginning of Rotting Christ’s career?

Yes, with each of the fourteen albums.

Maybe it was less stressful to work on the book (Rotting Christ’s biography “Non Serviam”), then?

It was the most stressful year of my life! Thirtieth anniversary of the band, a lot of re-releases, I was working both on the book and on the new album...

No time to rest at all.

Yes, it’s not fun anymore! You can be busy but this was more than that, I lost my friends, I didn’t like this. Even though I had the opportunity to speak to interesting people when working on the book, it’s still been very stressful. Today I started working in the morning, no time to see the city, just lots of deadlines.

Exactly: tour, interviews, deadlines, lots of work.

Yes. It’s not that hard if you wake up and put a tight schedule in your life. Still, you can lose yourself in that.

Will we learn something new from the “Non Serviam” book? Some curiosities about the band?

Some curiosities, yes... but not that many, maybe there would be more curiosities in a book about all my experiences. I’m on the road for thirty years, I want to believe I have a lot of things to write down, especially from the non-digital era, from the analogue era when we didn’t have any mobile phones, computers and stuff like that. It’s like a legend. I’m pretty curious about how the book turns out eventually, I’m curious about the final result.

We are looking forward to seeing the final result as well!

The book is a new medium I am working with, I don’t know how people will react and so on. It’s a book, after all.

It’s also more interesting thanks to the fact that not so many bands do it.

I wouldn’t do that either. But **Cult Never Dies** and **Dayal Patterson** who writes such books pointed out that I have a thirty years long history. I agreed but I don’t like to write about myself, I’m not that kind of person.

Exactly, you’ve done many interviews with him but only one of them is a part of Black Metal: Revolution of the Cult.

Yes, that's right.

You expressed yourself not just through a book, but through a comic book as well. How did you react to Rotting Christ comic book made by the fans? What was your reaction when you found out about this?

It was okay... weird, but okay. I just let things go and let them happen.

It was fun to read, actually.

Yes, it was fun, exactly! Weird, but in a good way, let's say that.

What about cooperation with Dark Crops ("Non Serviam" beer from the Greek brewery Dark Crops)?

Dark Crops belongs to a friend of mine, his brewery is excellent. He had an idea for a strong, special beer for the band.

Special beer for a special band. Thank you for the interview, we managed to talk on so many different topics that I think we're good for now.

Thank you too, I'll gladly talk to KVLТ again after the album is released.