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QUO VADIS

Studio Report!

By David Perri

Two cats are out of the bag in the Quo Vadis camp: first, the band's new record is shaping up to be a classic, and second is the fact that the bass player on said forthcoming effort is none other than four-string guru Steve DiGiorgio. The DiGiorgio news has been an especially harrowing task to keep secret until now, BW&BK being exclusively informed of this bit of metal weeks before it was announced to the public but sworn to absolute secrecy. Even so, catching up with both Quo Vadis mainman/guitar player Bart Frydrychowicz and DiGiorgio in a Montreal suburb was a pleasant task, the two musicians chatting about their latest creation and also offering the opportunity to hear rough, half-finished bits of the upcoming album.

The first question of the evening revolved around DiGiorgio's involvement with Quo Vadis. How, exactly, did the man who has performed with Death, Sadus, Iced Earth, Dragonlord and Testament come to join the Canadian band's ranks as a session player?

"We've always looked for ways to make this record better," begins Frydrychowicz. "We knew Remy (Beauchamp) wouldn't be involved with the recording, so I started thinking about who could play bass on the album. I thought of Steve, but realized it was a long shot. I called Stephane (Mellul, Brave Concerts International) who helps us out and pitched the idea to him. He laughed and said it was the dumbest thing he had ever heard (laughs). Still, making great music is my goal, so I figured why not contact Steve just to see? I emailed him a cryptic message that simply read: 'Would you be interested in doing session work in Canada?' I didn't write anything else, I didn't discuss Quo Vadis or anything."

DiGiorgio continues the story, laughing in delight as he cries out, "I was blackmailed! I asked them for more information about the band, and Bart sent me their bio. I heard some of the new material as well as some of the old stuff, and then decided to work on this project on my way back from Testament's tour that we just finished. It was a total blind date, we had never met before Bart picked me up at the airport."

With that cross-border tale of communication out of the way, DiGiorgio and Frydrychowicz attempted to explain the soaring, technical Quo Vadis feast currently consuming their lives. "This album is going to be fucked," exclaims the bassman. "It's like a knot. From far away it doesn't seem like much, but there are so many intricacies with so much stuff going on. You've gotta let it grow to appreciate it because it's multi-layered."

Frydrychowicz, who's responsible for most of the writing on album, continues. "There will be eight songs on the album, possibly nine. The last song will be instrumental, just four minutes of solos. We've also got a progressive song. It's the most progressive song Quo Vadis has ever done. I tried not to listen to metal while writing the album, because I didn't want it to sound like any scene. This material is counter-current, I think. There's also a song called 'Death', which is my tribute to the band and Chuck. It sounds like Death around Symbolic and Individual Thought Patterns, in terms of the playing and direction. We didn't want to do a cover, so we decided to have a Death-like vibe." And the guitar player is right. The track, from what's currently written and recorded, is a super-fast, complex scorcher with soloing and melody abound.

The mini-listening session leads to the next, seemingly obvious question. With material this strong, what are the current goals for Quo Vadis? "We'd like to take it as far as we can," Frydrychowicz responds. "We'd like to play the US and Europe, and we'd love to know what people think of our new material. I love hearing the reaction. We've taken some time with this album, but we figured why rush? Let's go the extra mile to make it as good as possible."

DiGiorgio, though not a touring member, is equally enthused. "It would be cool for these guys to reach the next level, and to get the word out there. There have been some delays with the recording of the album, but like a fine wine it takes time. The CD will speak for itself."

This still-untitled new record is being recorded at Wild Studios in St-Zenon, Quebec. Given that Cryptopsy, Kataklysm, Misery Index, Anonymus and others have graced its premises over the last year, it seems that the studio is fast on track to becoming Canada's answer to Abyss. "There's a definite vibe when you get there," explains Frydrychowicz. "Its location is partially inaccessible because it's in the forest, and you're surrounded by bears and deer. It's a big chalet, so you're not cramped. It's conducive to being creative. The console room has a view of the lake, and it's unbelievable. You just always want to go back."

Keep an eye out from Quo Vadis' new album sometimes in 2004. ☺

