



Interview with Bart.

Hey guys! First let me tell you that your newest release worth the waiting and that I totally agree with the review that my partner Patrick wrote about it and the mark of 90% he gave you.

Now let's begin this interview...

1- I had the chance to see you live at the Trois-Rivières Metalfest at the beginning of November, the second show of a four gigs series. Your performance was totally awesome! It was the first places where your newest release, *Defiant Imagination*, was available. Could you talk about the production of this album?

Thanks for the kind words; I'm happy to hear you enjoyed the record and the show. Trois Rivières was a great fest, I know someone in the crowd broke their leg after Ian Campbell started the "Wall of Death" during *Legions of the Betrayed*... It was a pretty crazy show. Half of the band was sick that night, Steph was losing his voice... but everyone tried their best and we had a blast. The following night in Hamilton we played a perfect set - go figure. As for the new record, it was a long and windy road to the finish, but was it ever worth it in the end. This time around the recording and creative environment was so much different in comparison with the previous albums. We had to deal with external issues that one usually does not plan for an album recording... All the events had an influence on the way this record progressed, beginning with the line-up changes, to the studio approach, to choice of musicians. Basically, we said, this will be a no-compromise record; we will work on it until we feel it's done and release it when we're ready. And so we did. No compromises.



2- *Defiant Imagination* is your third album. Recorded by Pierre Rémillard (Oblivion, Cryptopsy, Krisiun), mixed by Jim Morris (Ozzy Osbourne, Iced Earth, Sepultura) and mastered by Bernard Belley (Kataklysm, Misery Index, Malevolent Creation), the album's got an amazing sound. Would you like to talk about your experience in studio for the recording of this album?

Well yes, the drums were recorded at Pierre's in 2002 then some guitars and bass in 2003. The rest of guitars, solos, all vocals and choirs were done at my home studio with the help of Yannick St-Amant. It was a very interesting experience - Yannick helped us build a vocal booth and he worked with Steph on the vocals for about a week or two... He also helped us with the solo and guitar sound for the rest of the recording. The choirs were done over a weekend with about 12 people taking turns singing and me behind the controls. I remember thinking; man everyone is sounding better and better - as I took a swing between every take - HAHA! (I wonder why...) A couple dozen beers later everything and everyone was finished HA! I can't wait to do it again. In regards to the mix, Pierre did a rough mix, then we did a mix at Audiohammer with Jason Suecof. By the way Jason is the mastermind behind Crotch Duster and Capharnaum and he's must be one of the craziest and funny people I've ever had a chance to work with. We've never laughed so much in our lives - maybe we should post some of the excerpts from the Florida mixes on our site... Jason was really involved with trying to get this record to sound its best and on his suggestion of we finally went to Morrisound to mix with the master himself. Jim Morris finished the mix in two and half days. I can tell you that going to Morrisound was one of the most important decisions we made. With mastering we took the same approach as with the mix - work it till it's done. We had one mastering done at Morrisound and about seven at Bernard's! All the work paid off and we have the first album in the history of Quo Vadis where you hear everything that was recorded! To sum it up, we've learned a great deal about the industry and people in general. I can't wait to start recording the next album - we already have a bunch of riffs ready and they sound killer!

3- As I mentioned before, *The Darkest Hours* really loved the album. But we are surely not the only to do so! Brilliant comments are coming from everywhere and medias are agreeing to say that it is your best album to date. Were you anticipating that kind of reaction? How does it feel to be recognized this way?

To be honest I thought everyone already forgot about us before the album came out. I never want to take anyone and anything for granted, especially the fans, so we went out on the road playing shows covering over 10000 km before the album release. We always believed in the music because this is what has permeated our lives for past two years but we did not make any assumptions about how this album was going to be received. We simply focused on the music and ignored almost everything and everyone for two years.... I'm happy and grateful the record is being received so well, it makes me want to work twice as hard for the next album.

4- Can you talk about the whole concept behind *Defiant Imagination*?

This has occurred to me only a few months after the decision to call the album Defiant Imagination but I think from the perspective of time it seems the most important thing about this album was of fitting everything to the drums that were already recorded. This is one constraint that I think colours this album's sound so much, like I already mentioned the drum tracks and the main song structures were done in 2002. Following the September sessions I went back to work out the harmonies and write a whole new set of guitars trying to see them from a different point of view. The main challenge was to always stay within the parameters of the drums - either that or we would have to re-record them again. So I had to be very creative to make the songs interesting without introducing new sections or tempo changes. This is why there are so many harmonies and counter melodies. It was challenging - often I would just jam to the recorded tracks for a long time trying to find a different vibe then that already recorded... this is best apparent on To The Bitter End or Tunnel effect. If you listen to both guitars, they're doing widely different things yet compliment each other very well. I could go on but I don't want to bore your readers HAHA. Maybe I should put all these comments in the tab book that should be out in a few months.

5- The artwork of the album is really nice. I know that you were supposed to have a different title for this album and that you changed it for Defiant Imagination because of this artwork. Can you talk a little bit about it and explain why you changed your mind?

The original title of for the record was "To The Bitter End" and it was our first choice simply because the premise of this album was that we were going to record, or mix, or master until we're 100% happy and NOT settle for compromises. And if you think about it with 4 mixes, 8 versions of mastering, the title was fitting. But the artwork we were getting did not really speak to us, so going with our philosophy we looked until we found. The original title for the artwork was "Seeking Light" and it fit perfectly with Defiant Imagination which was a much more constructive title then "To the Bitter End". So we contacted the artist, worked out the details and swapped the tiles.

6- Do you have a constant between every albums or a leitmotiv element that will always be present on all your productions?

I hope that when people think of Quo Vadis the name will be synonymous with aggression, creativity and good musicianship.

7- Now that the album is finished, what's next for Quo Vadis. What can we expect from you?

Another killer album in 2006 or early 2007. I already started writing riffs for the next record and they're coming along very well... Like we say before each new album, do not expect Defiant Imagination II, but something different, something interesting and always true to what made us play music in the first place. Yanic is preparing some surprises on his side as well.

8- O.K. For those who still don't know Quo Vadis, would you like to describe your music and talk about the evolution you pass trough since your debut album.

Aggressive, harmonically intense and above all skull crushing. We hit like a ton of bricks.

9- So for the past years, Quo Vadis line up was quite unstable. Your biggest loss was your vocalist/guitarist/violinist Arie Itman. But now you seem to have found the rare pearl with Stéphane Paré on vocals! Can you talk about his insertion into the band? How did you find him?

The lineup has been very stable actually - we've been playing live with the same musicians since 2003. Alex Auburn filled in for us for about a year until we found a permanent guitar player (Will Seghers). Cryptopsy would begin to require much more time from Alex around now so everything fell into place as it should. We are very grateful to Alex for all his help and time, but we're happy that Quo Vadis is not a distraction to him following John Levasseur's departure from the band. I do not foresee any line-up changes for Quo Vadis in the near future. As for Steph, I had wanted to bring someone into the band for vocals all the way back in 2001, this was not possible at the time as some ex-members of the band felt it would diminish their importance or felt threatened... in any case, it was clear to me at shows that the dual vocalist/guitarist thing did not work simply because all the soundmen always complained the vocals were not loud enough. I guess with all the microphones on stage a lot of junk would seep into the mics and pollute the mix. In addition when you play guitar and sing, you will never sing as loud as a person who can use his whole body to give the death metal vocals the extra push required. A vocalist also has much more control over the microphone when it's in their hands as opposed to being stuck on a mic stand. I guess what made the decision obvious for us, was that before Stephane, we had NEVER performed a show where ALL the vocals that were on the CD were also sung live. There were always bits and pieces left out of some songs. There was also the fact that you need to divide your attention between the mic and your instrument so it was less fun on stage... This was still OK for the old material - the new songs on the other hand are a bit more complex so it would just take the fun out of the shows. In any case, the most important issue was to fix the weak delivery of vocals live. And that has been addressed when Stephane came in.

10- But even if you found Stéphane Paré, you still have lost a guitar, a bass and a violin. Dominique Lapointe (Atheretic, Augury), assigned to the bass, is playing live with you for at least a year and a half now. You also have William Seghers on lead guitar and Roxanne Constantin (ex-Rostrum) on keyboards, playing on the album and live with you. Can you explain why these members aren't considered as being part of the band?

We haven't lost anything. We gained stability, direction, and a sense of maturity. The line-up as it is today features for the first time all accomplished and experienced musicians and this gives the band focus. It is also very refreshing to work with reliable people - you see, back in 2002, we weren't expecting all this to happen a month before recording - and to have to write the other half of the album in 4 weeks... If there had been no changes at all, we would have had to deal with similar issues anyway. That's because, little did we know at the time, the other guitarist had only one song ready a month before studio (despite telling us he had material for four songs) so either way we would have had four weeks to write the rest of the album. Maybe he chose to deal with it by leaving the band, I don't know and I don't really care. In the end it wasn't really such a big deal because the people who actually made QV work never left and Defiant Imagination is the result.

Since the changes, we have had the opportunity to work with some great musicians. We are proud to play the new songs live - what else can we ask for? We can now finally tour and everyone involved has the same priorities.

For the rest of your question, lets start with Will. He saw us live at Metropolis the first show we did after the line-up changes. I guess he liked what he saw and got in touch with us... Once the song-writing portion of the album was complete I wanted to bring another point of view for the solos and had asked Will if he would be interested. We shared the same ideas on music and same point of view on how to make a band successful. For the recording Will ended up playing 6 solos on the album. He's a very talented guitar player and I think he did a great job. As for Forest, he has no problem playing Di Giorgios bass lines and we've had a great time on stage whenever we played so this was almost an automatic decision to continue working with him. I hope both Will and Forrest find playing with Quo Vadis a positive experience. Forrest is an obvious choice for his skill and his easygoing attitude, same for Roxanne.

Why are they not band members yet? It only seems rational to take our time. It takes time to get to know people and there is no room in QV for primadonnas, posers, wannabees or losers. The only way to find out if you can trust someone is by taking your time to see if people actually do what they say they would do, only time shows whether they will follow through. Way too many people out there often make grandiose announcements and in reality their words are just a façade with nothing to back them up.

11- And as Dominique Lapointe is doing all the live shows with you, why isn't he playing on Defiant Imagination? And how come you're ending with Steve DiGiorgio (Testament, ex-Death) playing bass on your album?

Steve was contacted around the time Remy left the band. We were not sure if Dominic would have been interested at the time since he already plays in several bands and we did not want to make any assumptions. Later we approached Dominic to play a few live gigs and it went from there.

12- Yanic Bercier is living and working into the USA and the rest of the band is living in Montreal. How do you proceed for shows? And can you explain how is the writing process into Quo Vadis?

Yanic is one of the most solid and reliable people I've have ever known. True he does not live in Montreal anymore, but he is present in the everyday running of the band as if he were here. We are in touch multiple times per day and he participates in the band's decision making. This is really a remarkable situation; and I still am amazed sometimes at how smoothly everything works now given the distances involved. But like I said before, if you're serious, you can make things happen and face the challenges head on. Yanic is the best example. You won't believe this, but we NEVER rehearse with him. We haven't had a practice with Yanic since August 2002... Our rehearsals are the live shows that we play, yet when we play live the band is tight and solid. Yanic makes great efforts to stay in touch, practice, to fly in for all the shows, mixing, mastering etc. I cannot think of any other band in our situation but it works for us.

13- You have distribution agreements all around the world, but after three excellent albums, you still doesn't have a record deal. Why is it so? Is it a choice?

There is a simple answer to this. Yes. We know how the industry works and there is no need for being "signed" - if a band has the organizational skills, the insight and the discipline to plan ahead - there is no reason why they could not be successful. It's never black and white and there are inherent advantages as well as dangers to working with labels versus running your own label. You need to have a vision and think long term - I am convinced we have what it takes to take care of our selves for now.

14- However, you are producing quality products and are investing a lot of money into it. How does it work for you?

We always put the music first. Second, will take our time until we have the resources and all the elements to take the next step and never do anything half way or unprepared. The payback for all this effort is the opportunity to work with the best people in the scene and around the world while you play the music you love. I couldn't ask for more.

15- I saw that you were preparing a video for the song "In Contempt". Can you elaborate about that?

We have all the footage done; we now need to take the time to cut it properly. It will be released when completed.

16- What is your dream show. Is there a band you would particularly like to tour with? And why?

Here's a weird line-up for you: Joe Satriani, Slayer and Hypocrisy. Hypocrisy for their unique ability to create an atmosphere and Slayer because they've been an influence since the beginning, I think South of Heaven is one of the best albums of all time. And finally, if it weren't for a particular Joe Satriani show back in 1989, I wouldn't be playing guitar today.

17- What is the more important thing in life for you?

The answer to this question depends on the context. Do you mean in regards to the band? Personal Goals? The answers to all of these can change with time as well so... to answer in the most general sense, I would have to say, to never loose the ability to learn and be creative - and this applies equally to music and life in general.

18- Where do you see Quo Vadis in 5years? In 10 years?

I would like to have the band firmly established in Europe and North America permitting us to tour and, in turn, bring our music to the widest audience possible. It would also be great to have enough time to focus on writing new material without the distractions of everyday life, whenever inspiration strikes.

19-This is the time to plug your stuff! (website, special news, etc.)

March 7th Defiant Imagination will now be distributed in France via Underclass Music (www.underclass-music.com). We hope to make it to France at the end of the year to play live as we're doing in March of this year in Germany. For info, tabs, mp3s etc, visit www.quovadis.qc.ca.

Well guys, that's all! Thank you for answering The Darkest Hours questions. I wish you good luck into all of your projects and a long life to the band!

Thanks for having us and I hope we'll talk again soon. All the best!

Darkest greetings,
Isabelle Gauthier

Check out the review of their new album in the review section on the website!

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