

## ATROCITY

MARCH 2008

ALL WERK AND  
NO PLAY . . .

Alex Krull and Liv Kristine, frontpersons respectively of Atrocity and Leaves' Eyes, talk about new albums, Dita Von Teese and what exactly you do with a large replica Viking longship...

Although on the surface, 2007 looked like a quiet year for German wrecking crew Atrocity, nothing could be further from the truth. "We have been very busy all the time!" laughs Alex. "We toured a lot around the globe with our two bands Atrocity and Leaves' Eyes - we played in around forty

countries. And don't forget the massive production we did with a symphony orchestra and choir for the new album - this took some time, too. Many of the pop songs from the Eighties suffered from the typical synth sound of the day, which sounded modern back then but nowadays is badly dated; replacing it with the classical stuff in combination with the guitars works really well."

The principal reason for our chat is Atrocity's latest album 'Werk 80 II', a selection of Eighties pop

songs given a Twenty-First Century metal-edged twist. But you can't talk about Atrocity without mentioning Leaves' Eyes, the conjoined twins that no medical procedure can separate, and Leaves' Eyes - the version of the band fronted

As Liv mentioned, both drummer Moritz Neuner and bassist Chris Lukhaup are no longer part of the Atrocity/Leaves' Eyes camp. "Our new drummer is Nick Barker," confirms Alex, "the former member of Cradle of Filth, Dimmu Borgir and Testament. He was our number one choice and we are happy that he has become a member of the Atrocity/Leaves' Eyes family. Moritz didn't really work out any musical ideas and was more into booking the bands than drumming - that was very good for our tour schedule, but not for any input as a drummer. And Chris, he is an old



by Alex's wife Liv Kristine - had their busiest year ever in 2007. "That's true; it was our busiest year so far," confirms Liv. "We never did so much touring in a year before. Moreover, we have to run Mastersound Studio, write new music and deal with promotion at the same time. And since it was clear that two members would be leaving the band, there's even more work for the rest of us. However, I'm very lucky; my job is my hobby, and I've seen a number of interesting places and met a lot of wonderful people all over the world."

friend but to work with him in the bands was, for several reasons, just not possible anymore. But we do wish Chris and Moritz all the best for the future."

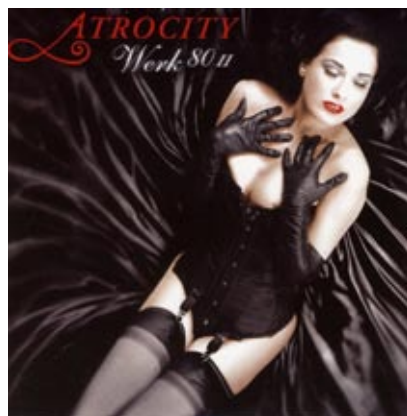
The immediate future for Atrocity is the new album 'Werk 80 II'. Perhaps unsurprisingly - the clue's in the title, after all - 'Werk 80 II' follows in the footsteps of 1997's 'Werk 80' in that it is a second volume of Eighties dancefloor smasheroos (as they used to say) given the Atrocity spin, this time with the Eighties' synthesizers replaced by orchestral and cho- **1**

Alex, "it was just a crazy idea, but it turned into a real challenge. The whole thing actually started out of a mad idea of how those songs would sound like if Atrocity were to play them. There was never any ulterior - commercial - motive or suchlike to do it. We'd already done a metal cover version of a demo by Death called 'Arch Angel' on the 'Todessehnsucht' album, and another step was the acoustic ethno-metal album 'Calling The Rain' with my sister Yasmin which was really something extraordinary for a death metal band.

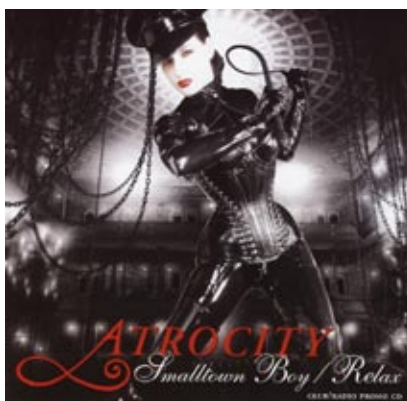
"But with 'Werk 80', something else which appealed to us was setting completely different songs to our style. One metal band covering another metal band is actually nothing special anymore, but from a musical point of view it is a much greater challenge to get something new from a song which is stylistically very different to what you normally do. In 1995, we recorded covers and new versions of our songs on 'Die Liebe' together with the band Das Ich which not only showed how the metal and gothic scenes were growing together, but also proved to us that as musicians we could do something like this. So the idea to do 'Werk 80' was in our heads much earlier than this but we didn't feel that time was right to do it. When we entered the studio after the 'Willenskraft' album - which contains some real heavy songs like 'Scorching Breath' and 'Bloodstained Prophecy' - a lot of people were wondering what would come next. And when it came out that we were going to record 'Werk 80', a complete album with hits from the Eighties, most people said we were absolutely crazy - without even hearing a single note from the album, mind you! A lot of people didn't get it. It was NOT the case that we wanted to become a pop band and dissociate ourselves from metal music; this is complete nonsense and we actually do the exact opposite - what we do is take pop songs and transform them into metal songs! And besides, we are not a band that wants to record the same thing over and over again."

I wondered whose idea the sequel

was. "Nobody special," Alex replies, before laughing and continuing, "OK, maybe I was pushing it a little bit because so many people asked me about a second part. But



then we thought it was a good idea after ten years to record another album like this. After the success of 'Werk 80' a lot of people were asking us for a follow-up to this uncommon - unique?" he pauses - "project, even coming up with wish lists for songs. But we didn't want to do it back then; it was clear to us that if we wanted to do something like that again, we needed to have a break in between and also we wanted some new and fresh musical ideas. One such idea was to boost the classical parts and replace the electronic elements with them: this was a lot of hard work but well worth it, and



as a result 'Werk 80 II' is dynamic, exciting and rocks like hell!

"We actually chose the songs very quickly. For example, we didn't have a song from Depeche Mode on the first album because we only wanted to include songs from bands that no longer existed. This time around that wasn't an issue, and one of the most successful bands in my opinion is Depeche Mode, and 'People Are People' is

one of their best songs. Another great track is 'Relax'; I really liked the song, the provocative lyrics and the scandalous video that Frankie Goes To Hollywood did, even though at that time I was a 100% metal head and normally only listened to hard music. I mean, it's a cult song of the Eighties - we just had to do it!"

Putting together the new album wasn't just a matter of booking some studio time and rattling off a dozen songs though. "As I mentioned before, working with so many people on this project was quite a lot of work. To co-ordinate the whole recording with orchestra and choir takes a lot of time, hard work and organisation. And we had to make out of twelve different bands and twelve different songs one cohesive album. Not an easy task, especially for a singer - there are some great singers on the originals, no question about that, but the songs were written specifically for their voices. So I didn't try to imitate the voices of the original singers, but simply worked with the variety of my voice, be it hard or clean vocals. [The variety of vocal styles shows just how versatile a singer Alex actually is.] After all, at the end of the day it's Atrocity playing the songs, and either you like our versions or you don't! And it would be interesting to know how those bands would play our songs; how would they sing one of our extreme death metal songs, I wonder."

The album is available in a number of different formats ("besides the regular jewel case edition there will be a digipak version with a bonus track and a special deluxe edition with both 'Werk 80' albums packaged together" confirms Alex) and features an eye-catching cover shot of Dita von Teese. "Actually I had a very clear picture in mind of what the artwork should look like. The first album cover was white and shiny and in contrast you had the latex girl sitting there with the cello. It was very catchy artwork and a lot of people tried to copy it afterwards - as they did with the way we played the Eighties classics! Anyway, this time I wanted to have something **2**



dark and mystical, and who better to introduce us to the listeners than Dita von Teese. She has style, she is classic, and she's goddamn erotic, too - perfect to transport our dark vision of the Eighties classics we play this time in a much more symphonic way."

Before wrapping things up, I took the opportunity to ask Liv how things were going with the Leaves' Eyes side of things, starting with the DVD shot at the Metal Female Voices Festival in October 2007. "Well, there is still a lot of work to do. We have collected so much film material from the recent years, it's very hard to choose what to include and what to leave out."

At the same time - these guys are never content just to have one thing on the boil at any given time - there's the small matter of the follow-up to the legendary 'Vinland Saga', Leaves' Eyes' breakthrough second album. "We have recorded about ten to twelve tracks already, and I've started to write lyrics and compose my melodies. At the

moment though we are moving out of our old studio, and building a brand new one where we live to avoid the long drives every day. I'm really looking forward to having it completed. In the long run we will save a lot of time, but obviously it's slowing things down at the moment. So yes, first of all, we have to get our new studio ready, then we will continue the recordings of our next album. We've also got offers for an American tour, some shows in China and a number of single shows in Europe during the summer as well. This year will be just as busy as the last one, it seems."

We move back to the new album, and I ask if there will be a theme or concept running through it; and whether it will feature the sea, one of Liv's favourite topics and reminders of home. "All right," she laughs. "I will unveil a few secrets. Yes, it is a conceptual album, it will deal with a historical theme and the sea is one of the settings in the story."

I wondered if this meant the band could use the huge Viking longship which formed the backdrop to the Leaves' Eyes DVD shoot again; it's not, after all, something you can just stick under the bed! Liv laughs again. "True! The ship is situated, fully built, in an industrial building not far away from here. We hope that there are promoters out there who are able to spend a little more money on a bigger Leaves' Eyes production so that we can use it again. We really hope to have it back on stage again soon. The ship shows part of the true image and concept of Leaves' Eyes. It's an amazing construction."

And since the interview was undertaken it appears that the longship will follow Motörhead's bomber and Saxon's eagle and come out for retirement for the band's show at Wacken this year. Longship goes boom, as Krokus might have once said...