

## DIGNITY

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# “DESTINY! DESTINY! NO ESCAPING FATE FOR ME!”

Dignity's keyboard player Frank Pitters talks to John Tucker about the band's date with destiny.

One of the latest additions to Napalm Records' ever-broadening roster, Dignity are a new band, formed in the autumn of

material perfectly.

The catalyst for Dignity was Roland's ever-deepening frustration over his role in Edenbridge. "To be honest, Dignity was formed in 2006 before Roland actually left Edenbridge," says Frank. "The relationship between Edenbridge and Roland was comparable to a marriage where

first tour in 2000. The first time we both played together in one band though was 2004, when we joined the band Free2Fly in Vienna, he as a drummer and I as a guitar player. But after recording a single and one demo we both left and at that time the idea of forming a new band together was firmed up. So we decided to work on some songs that I had already written and also compose some new material. After that, we started to search for the right members to complete the band and we found Martin and John very quickly."

According to the band's biogra-



2006 by drummer Roland Navratil and keyboard player Frank Pitters. Their debut 'Project Destiny' is a great example of Eighties' melodic hard rock (think Brother Firetribe or Cloudscape), a clutch of classy songs featuring superb instrumentation and strong, catchy choruses. They also have a secret weapon up front in the shape of singer Jake E whose soaring voice fits the

the gap between them just got wider and wider, ending in a logical divorce. He was 'just their drummer', while Roland wanted more influence and responsibility. That's why he wanted to concentrate more on Dignity.

I've known Roland for several years now, since I was the backliner for Edenbridge on their

phy, guitarist Martin Mayr and bassist John Boy Bastard had known each other for some time, but before I can frame a question Frank shakes his head. "This information is not true, I'm sorry to say! Martin and I have known each other for many years, because we went to the same school. It was there that we formed our first

metal band Invictus and we recorded a demo in 1999. Martin then went on to a special music university after school where he improved his guitar technique immeasurably. Meanwhile, it was Roland who brought John to the band. They knew each other from the civilian service. I don't know if you know this, but in Austria you can choose between

for the right singer. In Austria it proved impossible to find the frontman that we had in mind; you know, someone with a powerful voice, great ideas for lyrics and melody lines and who also looked like a frontman. So we checked a lot of bands that we liked and Jake's work with his band Dreamland impressed us a lot. So it was obvious to get

After finishing with the songwriting I recorded the songs in my little home studio as a demo and then Roland and I worked on the arrangements. So, in that way, the songs were almost finished when we got to the studio. But we keep space for some improvisation in the studio; some riffs or the bass lines and the guitar solos were not worked out, so



the army or the civilian service. Anyway, John originally comes from the punk scene [no kidding – the name's a bit of a give-away!] and he played in a number of bands before he joined Dignity. But his extreme drive on the bass really pushed the songs forward so he was perfect for the band."

Although the nucleus of Dignity was in place and demos were being worked on by the final months of 2006, the vacancy behind the mikestand was the stumbling block and took quite some time to fill. "Yes, you are completely right about that!" laughs Frank. "First we wrote all the music and also did the pre-recordings. Then we searched

in contact with him. We were really, really lucky because he liked the music and had fantastic ideas for vocal lines; after a short visit to Vienna (where we recorded some demo vocals and also demolished a fair amount of beer!) he was in the band. He had prepared all the vocals in Sweden so that when he came to Vienna he did all the songs in less than a week! It was a great time: a lot of hard work but also a lot of fun as well!

"Overall," he continues, "the album came together really easily, because I already had most of the songs composed. Five of the nine songs I wrote alone, two with Roland, one with Martin and the other one is a cover version.

as to make things in the studio more, uh, interesting," he laughs. "So we really just had to fine-tune the arrangements and then make a plan for recording the stuff – it was impossible to all be in the studio at the same time because we all have different jobs. And we didn't want to do the recordings at home. It's fortunate for us that I work as an audio engineer in a music studio, so we could record there. First we recorded the drums with Roland; then we had to wait until John Boy had some holiday to do his parts, and after we'd recorded the bass we did all the guitars. In between times I did the keyboard parts and we searched for the ideal singer. But in the end ev-

everything turned out really cool!"

Production duties were jointly undertaken by Frank and Roland, with the final mix being handled by Scar Symmetry's Jonas Kjellgren; perhaps an odd choice, given that Scar Symmetry and Dignity fall at quite opposite ends of the metal spectrum! "During the recordings we spent a lot of time thinking about who could mix the album. We didn't want someone who is famous for mixing the sort of melodic metal or hard rock stuff that we play. We wanted someone from a different background and Jonas was perfect for this job. He comes from the death metal and thrash metal scene and impressed us a lot with his work with Scar Symmetry. After meeting with him we knew we had made the right decision. Jonas is a really funny guy with an absolute intuition for music. Without him the mix would not sound like it is now!" Rather pointlessly, I ask if the band are happy with the way the album turned out: the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

As mentioned above, the album rounds off with a cover, 'Don't Pay The Ferryman', from Chris De Burgh's 1982 album 'The Getaway'. An odd choice, perhaps, although it doesn't sound out of place on the album. "We've had some very different reactions to that song: some like it a lot, others think it's rubbish," says Frank honestly. "It was Roland who came up with the idea to play this song, just for fun. At first, it wasn't even planned to be on the album. But when we recorded it and heard Jake's vocals, we thought it was too good to leave it off. Really, it's just a nice tune to wrap up 'Project Destiny'."

With so many albums being released these days, an eye-catching cover image might make the difference between a CD being picked up or being left on the racks, and there's something about 'Project Destiny's' cover that keeps pulling me back. "That's great! The whole

artwork for the CD was done by Felipe Machado Franco. He's also worked for Axel Rudi Pell, Iced Earth and Ayreon, amongst others. You know, the CD title is 'Project Destiny' and when you stand in front of the stairs you can only see the light that comes out of the door. So you don't know what to expect. If you go through that door it will change your life. It is your destiny! It's what Jake E is singing about in the song. Is your destiny pre-determined or can you decide it yourself? We came up with the original idea from a picture of a stairway that we found on the internet, and then Felipe created this amazing cover which we are very pleased with."

I asked Frank what, he felt, when writing and recording an album – particularly a debut album – was the most important thing; the one thing that any band must get right. "Good songs," he replies; "the most important thing is writing good songs. That's more important than having a special image or a superb production. Another thing that's very important is the quality of the singer: I mean, a good singer can lift good songs to a very high limit, while a bad singer can ruin everything. Of course the production is important too, because as a newcomer you don't have any chance for a record deal without a really good sound. So there are a lot of things that you must do right when you record an album, and all these things are so much more important when you are a newcomer because you have to make a statement with your album – if you don't, no-one will take you seriously."

And the band's strengths? The question throws the keyboard player for a moment or two. "Hmm, that's hard to answer. I mean we all can play our instruments very well, we can write songs and we stick together like a really good team. I think the task sharing in our band is our biggest strength, because we all have different abilities and everyone knows what to do

to push the band forward. The band is more important for all than the ego!"

As for ambitions, the guys in Dignity have no desire to let the grass grow under their feet. "Of course we hope that we can go on tour with this album, because we are not a studio project. We want to get out on the streets and play! At the same time though, we have also started with the songwriting with the next album, 'cause we want it to be released around the same time next year!"

For more information, go to [www.dignityband.com](http://www.dignityband.com)



