

SISTER SIN

AUGUST 2008

SIN OUT, SISTER

Drummer Dave from Sweden's Sister Sin tells John Tucker about Switchblade Serenades, the band's love of the Eighties, and Blackie Lawless's half-chewed meat...

Mid-way through our interview,

his response, he replies, "OK, our singer Liv: vegetarian and forever panicking; bassist Chris: ever optimistic about time and always late; Jimmy our guitarist is not as good at videogames as he claims to be..."

And the drummer? Dave laughs. "Superior, of course!"

metal was fun, exciting, glamorous, sleazy, audacious and lived to the full, the irony being that the best days of metal were long gone by the time the four members of the band had become musically aware – or possibly even started walking! But they've got the vibe nailed bang-on ("there's an honesty in our music and image and a mutual goal between us to raise some hell!" laughs the drummer), and in doing so have recorded one of the biggest surprises 2008 has offered up so far.

The band came about almost by accident, as Dave recalls. "Me



in a break in the proceedings, I ask Dave how, in a few words, he would describe the four members of Sister Sin. After a moment or two to consider

Gothenburg's street-wise Sister Sin have just released an aural sledgehammer of a record. 'Switchblade Serenades' is a glorious nod to the Eighties, when

and Chris met when I auditioned for another band he was playing with at the time. But instead of joining that band, the two of us ended up starting our **1**

own band instead. This was back in 2002, I believe. We found Liv through an ad, and Jimmy is an old friend of mine who joined when we fired our original guitarist in 2004. Our early days were a constant struggle because at the time everybody listened to rap-metal like Limp Bizkit and that kind of shit and people couldn't care less about music that remotely resembled Mötley Crüe," he laughs. "But we had a lot of fun, and still do!"

With a name half-inched from Sweden's Machine Gun Kelly ("they had a song on their first – and only – album called 'Sister Sin'. The title stuck with me and came to mind when me and Chris were discussing possible band names," the drummer recalls), the first incarnation of the band was ready to roll, and just a year after getting together kicked things off with an album entitled 'Dance Of The Wicked'. Dave grimaces.

"'Dance of the Wicked' was a demo – the result of the first songs we wrote as a band and the first time we ever recorded together," he says. "We sent the demo out to indie labels and SleazyRider Records in Greece ended up releasing it the same year (2003). It was about a year later, when Jimmy joined, that we finally found our niche and we weren't at all happy that our debut demo tape was being sold as a record everywhere. We ain't exactly proud of that album," he adds, "but what can you do..."

"We followed it up with a single 'Minor You' which we recorded in 2005 for a new Swedish label. They had big plans but went out of business right before the release which led to a good year of legal to-ing and fro-ing before we could get the band out of the contract. Happy times!"

But it was a case of third time lucky, as a five-track EP 'Smash The Silence' in 2007 started making waves, and, following on from that, the band's first real full album 'Switchblade Serenades' could be the release that

not so much opens a few doors as kicks them down. It's rough 'n' ready and all the better for it: over-produced is not a term you'll find in the band's dictionary. "We actually recorded five of the songs earlier and sent them out to fish for a new contract. When we signed with Metal Heaven and Victory Records in the States we went back to the studio and did the remaining six songs. As the album consists of demos and songs we've been playing since 2006 it all came together pretty easily.

The recording was done super-fast: the bass and drums took just two days in total, the same with the guitar. We didn't want to polish it too much and spend weeks and weeks mixing; we strived for a live, rough sound. And in general I'm very happy with it, especially considering the short amount of time we spent on it. The bottom line is that I know the songs are good – and that's what counts in the end. And," he continues, "at the end of the day the most important thing is to make an impression – whether it's good or bad! – and be somehow different to the thousands of bands who've released their album on the same day as us."

Production duties were handled by Tobias Lindell at Bohus Sound Studios. "When we met him he had just produced an album with Swedish band Mustasch that sounded bad-ass," is the reason Dave gives for Lindell getting the nod, "plus he had really a cool studio! Of course, Mustasch spent six times more money than we did on their album, but we really liked the guy and we were on the same page as to how our music should sound." The key to Sister Sin is their unashamed liking of the good old days of the Eighties, and both their sound and their attitude recreates the era which produced some of the greatest metal music ever recorded. Even the album's title is reminiscent of Spread Eagle's MTV hit 'Switchblade Serenade'...

"That's because everything good comes from the Eighties!" Dave breaks in. "Music, movies, you name it. We all listen to Eighties' bands like Mötley Crüe, WASP, Accept, etc etc. To me, these bands were in their prime back then and as a band we're trying to pick up where many of them lost the plot in the late Eighties or early Nineties. That said, a journalist from 'Sweden Rock' magazine mentioned the Spread Eagle song a few weeks back, and I must admit that none of us had ever heard of it." Well, I would offer to sing it to you, but you still wouldn't recognise it! Given Liv's rough cut(t)vocals and the heads-down gutter approach to the band's material, Sister Sin's point of reference for the Eighties (and for new recruits to the ranks of Sin) should be the likes of Hellion, Black Lace, and perhaps in particular Smashed Gladys – all hard rockin', female fronted Eighties metal acts who probably had their heyday before the Swedish quartet were out of nappies. I throw the names at Dave but there's no flicker of recognition. "No, I can honestly say I've never heard any of those bands," he says, "even if many people have compared us to them. I should probably take a listen then."

Chris, the bassist, is the catalyst for the band's material. "It's Chris who writes all the lyrics and comes up with the basic riff. After that we all rehearse together and arrange the thing until it ends up a finished song." This is the same Chris who ensured his flightcase was a little too secure... "That's right," laughs Dave. "He bought a big lock for his bass case before we flew to the Czech Republic to do the Masters of Rock Festival. Five minutes before we were supposed to hit stage he noticed that he'd forgotten the key to the lock; he'd left it at home! The damn thing was unbreakable so he stumbled off – drunk of course – and ended up in Cradle of Filth's dressing room. Suddenly he re-appeared swinging a huge medieval sword and split the lock into

pieces. Problem solved!"

Of course, even if the big time is looming, there are certain things that are guaranteed to keep the band's eight feet on the ground. "When we did the UK tour with W.A.S.P. the conditions were so poor for us that our manager had to collect leftover McDonalds from Blackie and the band so that we could at least get something in our bellies. Not many people can say they've feasted on Blackie Lawless's half-eaten Big Mac!" Nor in my opinion would they want to! In the meantime, as Dave puts it, "Check out our shit, stay tuned to www.sistersin.com and bang the head that doesn't bang!"