

Attached you find the original interview before the translation from English to German between Markus for soundmagnet.eu and Darren Brookes from Benediction.

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- ✓ **Markus (Soundmagnet): Since your last album "Killing Music" 12 years have passed. Why did it take so long until the current album "Scriptures"?**

**Darren:** Many reasons Markus. After we did Killing Music we toured extensively in promotion of that record initially. We then found ourselves being asked to do 'old school' sets by a number of promoters for a number of years so the desire or need to go back into writing was dampened slightly. We also struggled to replace Neil Hutton on the drum stool. He was such a solid drummer. There is also the fact that Rewy (Peter Rew) moved away from Birmingham. Myself and Rewy are and always have been the writers of all of our music so that became a little difficult. But I think the biggest thorn was our regular jobs.

I would love to do Benediction full time but the truth is it doesn't pay the bills. We have all grown up now, we have families, houses, children and that is a huge expense and also requires you to be home more often. Myself and Rewy have progressed really well in our jobs and it became difficult to balance that, family life and the constant touring we did and to then find the time and the energy to write for a new record.

- ✓ **Your label promotes the new album as "an album from scratch, where everything is at it should be". Well, how should it be and what can we understand by this statement?**

I guess it means its a true, honest, old school Benediction album. No outside influences, no gimmicks, no bullshit. We ain't trying to re invent the wheel here, we ain't trying to be something we're not, we just wanted a classic album that people would instantly recognise as Benediction. A modern old school death metal album. I think we need it to be honest. I think the death metal scene is too focused on speed and technical ability and we've lost the groove, the feeling, the power. We intend to bring old school back to the people!

- ✓ **After approx. 30 years in the business, Death Metal fans know your sound. Nevertheless, can we expect some surprises or experiments on "Scriptures"?**

No. Why? There are so many bands that lose their way, their identity by trying to do something else. Benediction is Benediction and we like that. A lot of death metal bands sound alike and we like the fact that we sound like Benediction. We did our experimenting in the 80's when this scene kicked off. We found our sound, our style. We liked it and still do.

- ✓ **You parted ways with singer Dave Hunt in 2019 and brought his predecessor Dave Ingram back into the band. How was it for you to work on new material with Dave Ingram again?**

I'd firstly like to thank Dave Hunt for an amazing job over the last 21 years. It was truly a pleasure to work with the guy but yeah, working with Dave Ingram again is cool. He knows how we sound, how we write, how we are, so it was an easy fit. Benediction have been a touring band for more than thirty years now, we didn't quit when the scene dipped, we stayed and yet this feels like a comeback. Very strange.

- ✓ **Benediction had a lot of line-up changes in general, only you and Rewy have been there from the beginning. How do you manage to stay true to your sound despite the changes? How does the writing of your songs work?**

Quite simply it's because as I said earlier, myself and Rewy are the heart and soul of this band and always have been. We have similar styles, influences and tastes. The writing process changed over the years. We used to write all of our music at rehearsal. We were younger then, no real responsibilities. We quit our jobs and would be in the lock up most days. Nowadays it's more writing at home, sometimes alone, sometimes together. But the feeling is much the same.

- ✓ **At the beginning of 2020 you had to cancel your South America tour because Dave Ingram had health problems. How is he doing now? I hope that he has recovered again.**

Yes that was a real downer for us, we love to tour South America, but obviously the health and well being of one of our brothers is vitally important. After we did the Italian gigs around Christmas it seems Dave's problems with his hips became a real problem. He got an infection and was told in no uncertain term that he risked losing the use of his leg if he didn't get an operation immediately and unfortunately that meant letting a lot of our fans down for which we are devastated. Dave had the operation and will this week have the second hip fixed (*Remark: Status 28.09.2020*). So hopefully we will have him hopping around like a kangaroo before long. I hope so for his sake to be fair, he has been in pain for quite some time. Hopefully a thing of the past soon.

- ✓ **What are your plans for the near future right now? There is not much planning security at the moment for artists, unfortunately. However, I believe that fans in the German-speaking countries would love to see you again soon.**

Oh my god we are desperate to go out and play live. Benediction is truly a live band, that's where we are most comfortable and happy. I wanna interact with the fans again. We are trying to organise some 'socially distant friendly' shows but it's tough. The costs are ridiculous and it's difficult to fund it because the audience numbers are so restricted. But we are desperately trying. All of this years gigs have been copied and pasted so as long as this Covid bitch allows us, we will be gigging as soon as is possible.

- ✓ **I remember seeing you live on the “No Reunion Required”-Tour 2008. There you said: You don't want to play games with the audience, like leaving the stage and returning after some applause or other theatrical bullshit. What distinguishes your shows from others, what makes them special in your opinion? There must be something, otherwise I could hardly remember a club show of yours 12 years later.**

I think the biggest difference is that the show is not just for the fans. It's for us too. We don't, as I said earlier, do this because it's a job, we do it because we love it and because we believe in it. We make a connection with the audience, whether that being on stage or at the bar afterwards. The show is important to us. To some bands it becomes a job. They become more interested in how many people there are, how many t-shirts sold, and less about the real reason we should be doing this. We are proud of Benediction and we are proud of our loyal fan base. They have stuck with us through the years. And hopefully they will pass this on to the next generation and we can keep this scene going. It ain't an out the money, the fame, the 'ooh everyone look at me', it's about the music, the feeling, the friendship, the belonging. This is why I despise 'rock stars' or people who think they are above you because they are in a band. Fuck those guys. If it wasn't for those people 'below' them that support them by coming to shows and buying their music they would be nobodies. In most cases they are nobodies, they are just fortunate and should realise that. Excellent! Rant over! That felt good!

- ✓ **Hard and quite repetitive question, as I assume, but still: If you had to pick one song each from the new album and from your entire career, what songs would they be?**

That is surely an impossible question to answer. As I said earlier Benediction never really strayed too far from what we are and because of that most of our material has stood the test of time. This new record kind of encapsulates our musical career in as much as on one given day my favourite track off the album will be for instance 'Embrace the kill'. The next day it may be 'Progenitors' and the next day 'Stormcrow'. Similarly one day I will favour 'Grind Bastard' and the next 'The grand Leveller', and the next 'Transcend'.

Each album, each song means something to me, a reminder of how fortunate I've been to tour the world and play to some amazing people in some equally amazing places. My favourites change regularly. I'd rather put that question to others.

- ✓ **We are always looking for new music from all over the world. Which bands from your home country can you recommend that we should definitely listen to, besides the obvious ones like Black Sabbath, Judas Priest and so on?**

Hey I listen to all sorts of music, not just metal. My passion is classic heavy metal from the 80's, but I also love to listen to Pink Floyd. I'm a huge fan of the Cardiacs. The band I'm listening to just now is a band called Redline. A classic sounding heavy metal band. Check em out man.

- ✓ **Thank you for your answers The last words are yours, is there anything you want to say to your fans and our readers?**

Thank you my friend, good luck and I hope we can meet for a beer soon.

I would simply like to thank all of you readers for reading this, I hope it was entertaining. If you already a Benediction fan can I please say thank you for your loyal support over the years. It is greatly appreciated and to anyone just discovering Benediction, or death metal in general I'd like to say welcome aboard, it's good to see ya!

I hope you like Scriptures. We are very proud of it.