

Attached you can find the interview between our editor Sascha for Soundmagnet.eu and Pedro for Moonspell before translation.

Thank you very much for taking some time to answer a few questions for our magazine. First of all I want to congratulate for a really fantastic and varied new album, I really enjoy listening to this record!

How long did it take you from songwriting to final record in these pandemic times? Which difficulties did you face due to the corona situation?

I think we started the first music ideas that ended up as songs on Hermitage in early 2018 or late 2017, but I'm not to sure, it could be earlier. There were two stages before all songwriting was done , the first when we did about 7 songs until September of 2019. By the end of that year we were quite sure we weren't happy with the way these songs were, even if they were finished. The second stage starts in 2020 when we did 3 more songs and when we redone all the other 7 songs. Some of them are barely recognizable!

The Pandemic and in particular the first locked down in Portugal, by March 2020 forced us to be at home and that made me focus a lot on redoing the songs. Start them from the beginning and , if needed , create new parts. When we were allowed to get back together, we finished the songs and brought Hugo, the new drummer, into the songs.

The Hermitage title and album theme is, though, way older. I'm sure we had title and lyrics for this album , already back in 2017.

SO, in what the album songwriting and arrangements may concern, the Pandemic did have an influence but it didn't create too many difficulties to the process.

To record was a bit harder, it seemed, but after we got informed, it turned out to be smooth and quite pleasant. I don't feel we were limited at any end of the recordings by the Pandemic. We were either lucky or clever ... of a bit of both, so everything was quite smooth to handle.

But I'm just speaking about this Record, because the life, as a band, changed dramatically, of course!

The production and sound of the album is top notch, it's so transparent, clear yet powerful and heavy too.

How was it to work with Jaime Gomes Arellano in Orgone Studios in the UK?

When we meet , we clicked immediately. We have a lot in common , culturally, musically, personally. The social part was super good. We all had a blast. There was fun, there was work, there was sharing, talking, commitment and there were beautiful surroundings. We truly felt like hermits, because Gomez studio is literally in the middle of nowhere. But its beautiful and inspiring !

Then there's the producer side and not only he changed a lot of the textures we had before we went to studio and, more importantly, got rid of what was too much. In Moonspell we layer up too much, I admit!

As far as recordings go, Gomez is working a lot on the sound capture - choose meticulously the mics, its positions, the amps, the instruments in a way that they sound naturally good, instead of processing and tweaking the knobs. He wants the pure fountain to sound real and good enough already. That's awesome !

Hermitage is your 13th studio album, and what I like so much about it is that you do not sound like an "old" band that has run out of ideas and only copies itself with every record. You still sound fresh and relevant.

How do you keep your creativity on such a high level and always reinvent the band Moonspell?

I think Fernando and me are looking forward persons. We carry, obviously, our past proudly, but we concern a lot more about the future. And of course, the whole band always got this spirit. We keep paying attention to new bands, new music, new art. And we , Moonspell, always react to our own music and albums.

Our path isn't straight. It was never to be, we aren't so! Our path is curvy, with ups and downs , full of surprises . I think we are getting more and more in control of our track and even though we can't design the road, we are trying to make it easier, to make it more pleasant.

If you know well Moonspell, you'll see that this was a band that dared a lot it's musical boundaries since the beginning . Just think about the sequence Under the Moonspell, Wolfheart and irreligious. Try Sin/Pecado right after! It's a bit foolish, but it's honest art.

In your promo information for the record you say that Hermitage means turning your backs to the conventions of modernity and the idea of humanity being the center of the world. Could you please elaborate on that and tell us, what Hermitage means for you and what aspects of modernity and modern life you dislike and would love to change?

Hermitage means , to me, to leave and to seek. To question thoughtless actions we all do every day and seek new answers. To think by yourself over humanity. Most people are forced to think a certain way, and they think mainly about just themselves. Hermitage is a place of freedom. You're on your own thinking about everyone!

Regarding how do I feel about modernity, I like tolerance, I like technology, I love not having wars, there's many things Wonderful about modern times. But I hate alienation, individualism, first world problems and social network relations (besides work) which are turning out to be way more negative then , as one would expect, positive.

The lyrics are so contemplative, the music varies between melancholy, ponderousness, sadness and anger.

Is this a very personal album? Which feelings did flow into the songs?

All albums are personal, some more than others, yet they're all personal. But I think I know what you mean, perhaps personal as it feels it's close to you, the message is clearer and it speaks about many things a lot of us feel.

We were all feeling the need to be away. Away from our personal life, away from our profession and sometimes away from each others. The speed, the pressure, the information, the variety of matters that shouldn't even matter, ending in some alienation of humanity is tremendous. This are frequent feelings that flow into the songs, perhaps.

But you know... our art is music and that's our message. I can't really tell what went through my mind when I wrote something. There's usually some motivation for writing, sometimes you're aware of it but many times is spontaneous. And many times it's reactions to a song or album we just heard.

To conclude I would say that our feelings are the ones you feel in this album. It's as close as it gets! If I was a writer maybe I could write the feelings that flow into the songs.

I especially liked that you consider the album to be an invitation to the listener: an invitation to simplicity, where only the music matters, like a gathering of friends enjoying the tunes, providing comfort, entertainment and solace.

I must admit the album really hits me on this deeper level, especially in these times of lockdown and social distancing, it's a wonderful way to escape into melody and music and drift away from reality and the "new normal".

My question now would be: how much of the coronavirus crisis has flown into the lyrics and thoughts on this album?

Not much, to be honest. The concept and ideas, in terms of lyrics, came up in an early stage of composition. Our lockdown has started earlier than the pandemic. This album, in my opinion, expresses utterly the paradox between the society developing isolation and claiming freedom. There wasn't any need for the pandemic to see how individualist overtaking civilisation. We don't want to be alone but we certainly are doing a lot be !

How do you keep up as musicians both mentally and financially in these times, without playing live, without festivals, without being able to present your music, sell your merch, meet your fans, meet fellow musicians and other people?

And how is the situation in Portugal at the moment? I hope you're all healthy!

We are all healthy, no reasons to worry besides the fact that we eat more and move less...

As I said earlier, the pandemic "helped" us to focus on the album. And 2020 was , what we call, an album year and fortunately can still make some money out of an album production. We also , as authors get some, authorship money, to add to Merch that fans generously bought and keep buying.

In Moonspell, we are always trying to adapt to new realities and this time we invested a lot of effort on creating and developing our fan club on Patreon, named Wolfpack, that fans can subscribe and where we deliver a lot of content, like rehearsals, concerts (we are able now to record them professionally), podcasts, videos, Matt and greets, Merch, I mean a catalogue of benefits according to your subscription level (it starts at 3€ and it goes up to 50€ per month) .

Soon we are releasing exclusive in Wolfpack the last show we played with audience on last 17 December 2020. It's a great production! We also gave the subscribers the chance to hear the album first then anyone else as well as the videoclips.

Of course nothing can compensate us from not being able to play live to an audience. We were lucky to play 5 shows in PT last year, but our mind set , our genetics, need more of those! It's not just a question of money, in our case it was only an emotional

frustration. But you know what? There are bigger issues to be solved right now. Our turn to complain will have to wait.

Back to the new album:

It was released in many different formats, a deluxe collector's box with bonus 7" vinyl, different vinyl and CD editions, digital download and even on cassette.

Do you have a preferred format? What do you think about the renewed growth of vinyl and even the comeback of the cassette tape?

I love vinyl. I love it's lay out, it's size, it's mechanic, but mostly it's sound quality. After studio, there's no sound like a good vinyl! Specially the ones from the vinyl era or the new remastered ones ! I'm a buyer, I'm a fan. Believe me, the sound is way better. You can feel the music as if it's right there. Also, every record is like an art piece you own. It's very rewarding to me, to have music in this format.

Cassette is a different story, I can understand it's charm, but it's not better in any sense. It's a cheaper way of listening to music, still more romantic then Spotify or Apple Music! In my case I actually still use cassette as the car I got since an year now, has only cassette... in this case I love to have cassettes !

What are your thoughts on playing streaming gigs or special formats on social media, is that something you'd consider too, or do you prefer to wait until normal concerts are possible again and you can enter the real stage in front of a crowd of people again?

One thing is to prefer something , another is to do something you actually enjoy. I prefer to play for a real audience, by far. But to stream isn't that bad.

We did stream a concert in Portugal and there was a reduced live audience too (still an audience!) . I believe we are going to stream more and more accordingly to the needs! We need to show our music, specially with a new album! It's a question of survival!

Last but not least, being a metalhead now for nearly 30 years, I always like to know what other metalheads' favorite albums are. So could you please name me your favorite three albums of all time, or which bands had a big influence on you as musicians or music fans?

If you expect metal, or a specific genre of any kind, on my choices, you going to be disappointed... I listen music for music, for what and how it makes me feel. So I'll try to be honest and accurate, although is always hard to name only three records out of the 300 I love.

The main one is the Cure's "desintegration" . I'm a big fan of the Cure, And I could mention the head on the door or 17 seconds as most listened albums from them, but disintegration is the album for me!

TypeOnegative bloody kisses (for the change it caused to my way of listening music) or October rust (for the depth of it) or even... TypeOnegative's career is outstanding.

Fields of the nephilim... and maybe I choose a live album "earth inferno" as the whole atmosphere is very suitable with my needs.