

Attached you can find the interview between Markus for Soundmagnet.eu and Alex Rüdinger for Whitechapel in English.

Hello and thank you for the interview. Whitechapel's latest album is called Kin and it is, like its predecessor, a very narrative album. Can you tell us more about the creation process and the stories as well as concepts that make up the album for you?

Lyricaly, 'KIN' is definitely a continuation of 'The Valley' – the two share a lot of the same themes & concepts. Truthfully, I can't give *too* much insight here – that's more Phil's domain, & it's very personal for him. But conceptually, it's definitely about Phil's life experiences – growing up without his parents, & the mental places it's taken him over time. Although I'm with the band now, I was a fan prior, & I can honestly say that Phil's one of the only vocalists in Metal who's lyrics & execution can literally give me chills. It's a testament to just how personal 'The Valley' & 'KIN' are for him – you don't get that kind of emotion unless that's the case. I'm sure a more specific answer would've been more desirable here, but I really think Phil's the only person capable of speaking on the narrative / concepts in depth – it's just that personal for him.

The album combines aggressiveness, melancholy and thoughtfulness to a great whole, quiet and heavy passages and songs constantly alternate. Conscious approach or simply subconscious further development of your sound?

A little bit of both, I think. In general everyone's super into experimenting / expanding the band's sound (while still retaining the roots). But being that everyone's sort of on the same wavelength there, I think it kind of comes naturally. We've also all loved Phil's continued exploration of his clean voice; Personally, I think he has phenomenal cleans, & as such am all for him using them more & more. Since everyone knows that kind of sound is a possibility within the band now, the guys have subconsciously started writing with that in mind a bit. So I guess to answer a bit more directly: We're all very aware of the changes, but it's more of a natural / subconscious development.

Deathcore, Metalcore, Modern Death Metal and so on – there are such a lot of tags out there. I have the feeling that you continue to not care at all about such attributions. Nevertheless, how would you describe the sound of Whitechapel in 2021 yourself?

Haha, yes – there's no shortage of sub-genre labels in the world of Metal. Even though I'm the newest member, I can say for sure that none of us care much about labels. I know the band's roots originated in what people call Deathcore, but even when I listened to them as a fan back then, I never really thought much about that. To me, they were just a badass Metal band (Haha). These days, especially with the progression of the band's sound, I'd just classify it as something a bit more general... like 'Progressive Metal', or something like that.

Your singer Phil Bozeman now uses calmer and clearer tones more often, which also applies to the entire band. After all, innovations automatically bring niggers, Internet trolls and maybe also disappointed fans of older albums on to the scene. Is there anything you would like to say to these people?

Not particularly. I guess I sort of understand both sides – people get attached to a band because of one thing, so if the band suddenly changes something people don't like it. But I guess I would just urge people to remember that this is art, & art is always evolving & changing. Not to mention – if you love the more brutal Deathcore stuff only, there's no shortage of material like that in this band's catalogue. So listen to it, & enjoy it (genuinely!). It's a bit of a catch-22, though – if the band did continuously release "the same" album every few years (meaning identical, stylistically / genre-wise), there'd likely be people complaining about that too, & how it's just rehashing old material & ideas. So I guess you can't please everyone. But I also must say to any trolls: Sure, there's been an evolution in the sound (especially vocally), but I also don't think the sound has changed so much that it's unrecognizable to what the band used to be. There's still plenty of heaviness & brutal stuff, too!

Since 2019, you've been supporting Whitechapel at live shows on drums. Kin is the first studio album on which you can be heard. How was it for you to record an album with the other guys for the first time as a band member?

It was great! At this point I know everyone super well, so nothing about it was stressful or awkward for me. It also helped that we worked with Mark Lewis – Whitechapel's worked with Mark on multiple previous albums, so they all had a strong personal relationship with him. Similarly / sort of by coincidence, I've worked with Mark before too; I tracked drums with him for the Self-Titled Conquering Dystopia album in the early 2010's. We quickly became good friends, & I've stayed in touch with him quite regularly since. So even working with the producer / engineer (Mark) was super comfortable & natural for me, just like it was for everyone else. So overall, the recording process felt very second nature, & was quite low-stress / enjoyable!

I'm assuming Covid-19 also made a decent mess of your tour plans. Nevertheless, can your European fans hope for some live gigs in 2022 – as far as one can even predict in the current situation?

Haha, yes – the Pandemic certainly complicated things for us (& all touring / performing artists). Unfortunately, I really can't say right now exactly when we'll be back to Europe. International Travel in this current climate is still very uncertain at the moment. What I can say is that: As soon as it's possible for us to get back over there, we will! Hopefully that'll be possible in 2022 (fingers crossed!!!) – I can't wait to get back to Europe. I love it over there.

Your home state of Tennessee is best known in Central Europe for its whiskey, but less so for its music. Can you tell us some bands from there that we should listen to?

Well actually, although Whitechapel is from Tennessee, I'm the one member that's not. I'm originally from (& reside in) the state of Maryland – about an 8-Hour car ride North of Knoxville, Tennessee. I've never actually lived in Tennessee, so I can't really speak much on bands from the greater-Knoxville area because I really don't know. That said, Tennessee is home to one of the greatest music cities in the United States – Nashville. So there's no shortage of phenomenal talent & performers!

Thank you for the interview. The last words in this interview are yours.

Thank you as well! It's been a pleasure. I hope everyone reading this will check out 'KIN' upon its release, & I hope to see you on the road soon!

Additional questions (personal): I read that it all began with Slipknot for you and that Joey Jordisons drumming influenced you a lot. How did he influence you concrete?

Absolutely – Joey & Slipknot were hugely influential for me. It's safe to say that I wouldn't be doing any of this stuff without them. Specifically, Joey's style was just unlike anything I'd ever heard at the time (& it certainly still holds up today – it rules!). It also blew my mind back then that someone could play stuff that was that technical on drums, but still find mainstream success. His work is very tasteful & all around pushed me to improve my craft time & again.

When he died earlier this year, did this affect you personal?

I didn't know him personally, so it wasn't "personal" in that sense. But it certainly did affect me, yes. It's always shocking when someone you really look up to (at any point in life) passes away. Especially when they're as young as he was (44, I believe). It was truly a devastating loss, for both the drum-world & the Metal / Music world(s) alike. He may be gone, but he will certainly not be forgotten. Rest In Peace, Joey! <3

Whoever watched a playthrough video of a drummer knows how physically demanding it is to be a drummer. How do you keep in shape?

The best way to keep in shape for drums is simply to play drums regularly. Super regularly. You have to keep yourself conditioned for it – especially in this genre of music. It's not the kind of thing you can just take a long break from & come back to without some work, ya know? Additionally, I try to stay in relatively decent shape – working out & lifting weights, & getting plenty of cardio. All of that stuff helps to some extent. I've never been TOO hardcore about lifting – I'm not trying to become a bodybuilder or anything like that (Haha). But I do enjoy it, & it certainly helps. Makes sense, too – drums are such a physical instrument. If your body is in a healthy condition overall, it's only going to help!