

Attached you can find the interview between *Ingo* for Soundmagnet.eu and *Step*, *Satyra* *Tranovich* for Electromancy in the original version.

Congratulations for the completion of Technopagan! I really like this album a lot! So straight into it: Has the effort and work you put in particularly difficult?

Haha I mean, am I just able to answer yes?? For those reading who aren't familiar with the project, Electromancy was born when I became chronically ill & disabled from Lyme disease, causing me to build physical robots to play music for me since I can't play any more with my nerve damage. These robots play all the music you hear on Technopagan. Building the robots was a long and physically painful process absolutely, as was composing, recording, pretty much everything took a while and hurt. Not infrequently I would have to take weeks or even months off because my body couldn't handle it. But was it worth it? Absolutely. Building the robots, writing and playing my music on my own terms provided so much drive and needed catharsis. Technopagan isn't just an album about me coping with illness, this IS my coping. One of several therapies and emotional health outlets that helped me get through this period with emotional resilience.

May you tell us about the story and history of Electromancy?

At the tail end of 2018 I started losing feeling in my fingers, and it spread to my feet and pain spread through the nerves of my body. I couldn't physically play any instruments for more than a minute without excruciating pain. That terrified me, the thought of a future never being able to make music again. Within the first month of my disability I had already begun designs for robots that would play instruments for me. I put copper tape on the floor and connected to a micro controller so I could compose music with my feet. I had friends sit on a computer and click the buttons I asked them to to design circuit boards, and slowly soldered those circuit boards together a few pieces at a time before having to take a break and come back the next day. Slowly some guitars came together, and then some drums, and even some hacked up manikin bandmates. Building these robots did not only allow me to play music, it really unlocked a lot of creative potential I had inside and Music flowed out of me like never before. For that I am actually really so grateful. The result of all this craziness is Electromancy, the robot metal band.

I love the artwork and how it shows a physically broken personality, how the empty head reflects the psychic problems coming with this. Who did this artwork, was it your idea and has the artist any personal connection to you?

I am so so happy with how the album art came out. Yes, I made the art myself as well! It's a picture of one of my "bandmates", the hacked up mannikins I have on stage with me that light up according to the compositions.

These mannikins embody so many concepts I play with in my music & band, there duality between organic and inorganic, and the paradox of being broken yet filled with life and presence.

From very early on I had this vision for the album cover. A portrait. Of a shattered body. Somewhere between human and inhuman. But the emotional tone is not one of defeat. The figure in the portrait does not look destitute, it stares back, alive and fierce. I am broken. And I am more powerful than ever.

I almost want to call it a self portrait of my emotional state at the time, but obviously it's not of my physical self. I guess in lots of ways that's just sort of what art is, isn't it?

You told us that you battle with some health issues. In which way was your work as a musician still restricted by that?

So many ways, so many ways where to start.

I have a lot of difficulty with my hands. And hands are very useful things! But I found ways around this. I composed more than half of this album with my feet, using the copper tape and microcontroller contraption I described earlier. Literally stepping on the floor to compose music, and using a mouse very slowly and arduously with my foot to make edits.

Another difficult one is taurine. Along with the hand issues, my body and energy levels are just generally a wreck, some weeks feeling decently good just limited hand use, and other weeks in so much pain and exhaustion I cannot even work, let alone travel and tour. And that can just randomly flip at times.

I played some live shows in San Francisco and those have been awesome!! But the thought of touring terrifies me, knowing that my body just can't handle what most people can, and the touring is tough on even the healthiest person. But I am working on my house, I'm taking the next few months off to really try to fix myself, with the goal of getting healthy enough to tour.

I'd say to this day one of the things that calls me back a lot that continues to surprise me, is how angry some people get at me for doing this. Some people write-off the project, calling it a gimmick and saying robots can't make music.

You'd be surprised how many labels said they like the music but didn't want to sign a robot band. But really that's ableist as fuck and makes me so angry, people saying that if you don't have a fully functioning body you can't make "real" music. These robots are assistive technology, sure they are cool, they are gonna let me to make music while disabled, they are an extension of myself like a prosthetic. Plus isn't robots making metal like the most metal thing ever? I just don't get it.

I think your struggle between your illness and your will of doing constructive work is well reflected in the lyrics of Technopagan, in the aggression of the music. Did this transported aggression help to deal with the limitations you had / have?

Absolutely. Going through such intense and uncertain health issues, especially in the beginning having zero idea what was going on and now only having a slightly clearer picture, it's a traumatic experience. As I stayed in some of the lyrics, disability asks for a repeated grieving of oneself, Who we were before and what our bodies can physically do. This project helped me express that grief and return to states of peace, over and over again. It also reminded me through proof that my life and dreams weren't over, that my process may be slower and a little crazier now, but my life is still full and many of my dreams are still in reach. The release of this album was a big dream of mine.

Unfortunately here in Europe we didn't have the possibility yet to see you and your Robot band live. Do you think this will change in the future? Let me correct: When will this be changed?

Good correction, because it will happen one day! I would love to tour Europe. As I mentioned, I've done live shows but haven't toured yet because of the strain on my body. But I'm working on my health at home babe I can get things together enough to go on tour. It may have to be the slowest tour you've ever seen, playing a show every week or so, but luckily my work is geographically flexible so maybe I can make that happen. If I can get my health together I would love to do a European tour as early as within the next few years. I'm crossing my fingers.

As *Technopagan* reflects a progress, a transition: Do you have any concept for your next album? Will it be different and present a different point of standing?

Believe it or not, despite the clear thematic arc of *Technopagan* I actually approach my music with the musical compositions first and let the themes come out of that. It's easier for me to think with music, and then look back at the music I made and realize what it was all about and put the lyrics to it after.

So with that in mind, I've begun working on some compositions. I want to further explore some of the technologic, rhythmic, and melodic capabilities of the instrumentation. *Glasshole* was the last song I composed for *Technopagan*, and for me it was an experiment in phasing; the song is entirely composed of 6 notes and 4 rhythms those notes could be play, and combining those simple puzzle pieces indifferent ways throughout the song made a complex and fulfilling piece. I would love to further explore this concept and other similar ones with they guitar, possibly multiple guitars, the drums, and more. I'd like to do this while also throwing out some more genre blending, including throwing in some more doom elements.

That might sound a little sterile to hear it described that way, but *Technopagan* began with very similar abstract ideas and the result was no less emotionally dense for it. I think it's just sort of how I process, setting the musical canvas so to speak first and then when all is right, seeing what pours out. I'm as curious as you are to see what feelings & themes emerge as the music takes further shape.

What about working together with other musicians? Are there any plans and do you have a favourite musician you'd like to work with?

Great question, this is also something I would love to explore further in the next and/or future albums. I was lucky enough to work with two other musicians, both vocalists, on this album and I love the unique sounds they brought to the table. Working with other musicians is such a joy.

I would love to work with more vocalists, because honestly Vocals just Lawren but I'm interested in doing myself, but I would also love to explore other instrumentation and musical styles. In particular I think it would be interesting to work with some brass instrumentalists, I'm drawing inspiration from Ihsahn's album *After here*, because I love the sound of brass. I'd also be very curious to work with a Trap artists and just totally make something like no one's ever heard before. Ha ha definitely experimental stuff.

Obviously my process is a little unique, what with the robots and everything, so the musicians need to be down to explore something different. But it's sharing that exploration process that is the most fun to me.

Which bands and musicians influence you most, if there is any influence from outside?

I would count my biggest musical influences as Portal and Liturgy on the metal side. I love their rawness & willingness to experiment, and in particular love Liturgy's ability to do that from a deeply emotional place. On the conversational side my biggest influence is probably Dan Deacon. I just love the way he takes some of the compositional minimalism foundations of Philip Glass and really explores them in a maximal sensory stimulating way. Brilliant. Moritz Simon Geist was also a big influence on the robotics side of things as well. Dude it's just a robotics wizard.

The last words in this interview are yours. Any advice for our German speaking readers?

Thank you so much to everyone for being interested in my band and music. It feels surreal every day to have actually managed to bring this crazy project to life. I'll be really proud of the music I'm making. This is just the beginning, and I'm so grateful for everyone of you who follows along on the adventure. And as far as advice, there's always going to be someone who thinks what you're doing is stupid or the music you are making is shit, even if what you were doing is as cool as making heavy-metal robots.

Don't listen to them. Follow your heart, be patient, and love yourself. If you're loving what you're doing, then what you are doing is fucking awesome.

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