

The power to keep playing Death Metal comes exclusively from our life and our feeling, hate is our real fuel.



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Hard work should pay off and indeed, in case of Italy's sonic blitz Hour of Penance it seems to be happening. With 3rd album, which's title *The Vile Conception* sort of paraphrases the dogma of *immaculate conception* raised by church, the band delivers extreme Death Metal art in such an ardent form, that there's no way to avoid its sound waves vastly bombing listeners' senses causing torrents of adrenaline blasts to come making blood boil. The violent breed of brutality, intensity & extreme skills flows on the album supremely. Ain't it exactly why we all are into the Metal of Death? Enjoy the chat, buy their album, support real creative talent in art!

– Giulio (guitar) was the one to answer, many thanks!



Giulio, it was just a really tiny bit that divided already awesome *Pageantry for Martyrs* album from the ultimate precision achieved on *The Vile Conception* album, wasn't it? How do you think you have continued your way to perfection with the new release? It can be 'smelled' there has been conjured something bigger than ever in your existence. How much involvement, progression & sweet as well as your creative fulfilment lies behind *The Vile Conception*?

Well, lot of things have improved since *Pageantry for Martyrs* both songwriting-wise and musicianship-wise. We achieved lots of experience thanks to the opportunities we had in the last two years, as the tour with Krisiun, we grew up as a band in a more professional way, becoming more *mature* I would say. That's what basically lays behind *The Vile Conception*. Moreover, we had an important change of line up, Enrico founder and main composer of the band left Hour of Penance in 2005, so everything you can hear on the new album has been written mostly by me with the help of my band mates. So *The Vile Conception* can be considered the chapter of a renewed band by most of these aspects.

When we returned from the tour with Krisiun, we decided that a lot of things had to be changed in the band, starting from our style. What you can hear in *The Vile Conception* is definitely the result of a lot of work to let the new album sound perfect almost under every aspects.

Your songwriting has become top-notch over the years and you've become utmost effective in this area. What mistakes have you learned to avoid during the years and which things you keep constantly evolving? How do you envision the songs structures so that you make everything comes and fits into right place whilst still being that effective in retaining musical extremity at the highest level yet memorable without inevitable dull repetition, which I suppose is something you truly deprecate!?

Yeah you're right my friend, the new formula we adopted for the new songs is trying to make good technical and memorable songs. We tried to avoid lots of clichés during the songwriting session, trying also to discover and use some different elements we did not use in the past and to break some boundaries. Obviously we didn't sit at the table and said: *The new songs must sounds like this or that*, the new songs slowly showed up in a total spontaneous way.

Just for example, track four of the album *Drowned in the Abyss of Ignorance* was entirely written in almost 2 or 3 hours, and it's one of the tracks that people prefer most on the album, and that's definitely satisfying because it means that our new style is winner.

One thing I kept in mind while I wrote the songs was that I was writing Death Metal songs, and to be properly called Death Metal they should have some requirements, as to be violent and *in your face*. I love the kind of Death Metal that hurts you like a bomb-storming.

Man, I totally indulge in voice patterns on the new album. It's not only about pitch range versatility but the overall tight phrasing is jaw dropping, not mentioning the inhumanly rampageous machinegun like cadency in places. Could you clarify a little bit how the vocals were treat by the band respectively by Francesco for this release and

what doors closed you were able to open and literally enhance HoP style with having such a *Death metal Pavarotti* in the band?

Ahaah, *Death metal Pavarotti*... Francesco will be happy reading that! Well, we parted ways with our ex vocalist Alex basically because when we were practicing on the new songs we noticed that his voice was not proper for the new stuff we were writing. We were lucky to find Francesco in a short time, almost one month before we entered the studios to record the 3 track promo CD (which included the songs *Misconception*, *Slavery in a Deaf Decay*, *Hierarchy of the Fools*), at that time I wrote down most of the vocal lines for the songs, which now you can hear also in *The Vile Conception*, and Francesco was the only one able to sing in that way. From then, Francesco started taking care of the vocal lines of the new songs, obviously with a little help of mine, because since I'm the only composer in the band I had a perfect vision of how the songs should sound. Francesco is without any doubt the best singer we've ever had, he has a unique style and his approach on the new songs is one of the main features of our new album. I must say also that nowadays it's not easy to find such a dedicated person to the music.

When it comes to recording. How have you evolved the band's vision regarding the sound outcome over the years?

We always took the direction towards a *professional* sound, that lets the songs sound brutal but at the same time clean in order to let the listener *catch* every aspects of our music. I think that this helps also the album stand out from the overwhelming sea of releases... Most of the listeners want to hear what you're playing, and moreover our style definitely needs that kind of production. Being a friend of Stefano and working with him at his studios, the 16th cellar, is also another aspect we can't forget; it was like recording at *home*.

How did the recording as such worked out in studio this time – finding out the right sound for everything and stuff? How much time did you spend on tracking each instrument including vocals? What would you consider most difficult and smooth moments in the studio? Did you feel any pressure due to deadlines or studio budget, limited time respectively?

Recording *Promo 2007* before helped us a lot in finding the correct way to record the new album after, gave us a complete vision of how the songs will have sounded on the album. The recording sessions took almost a month, we had some delays here and there caused by some computer problems and some routines problems but everything went smoothly. I think that the most two important moments in the studio are the choice of the right starting sound and the mixing session, in both you can fail. We did not have any kind of pressure during the recordings, and since this was the fourth time we entered 16th Cellar Studio with our friend Stefano at the mixing desk everything was really cool. We're looking forward to enter the studios again soon!

In the end, you had prepared more songs than the actual 10 that were nailed onto the album, did those songs made it to the recording stage or did you drop them out

before? Which song on the album did take most effort to be completed and which one was composed surprisingly fast for you?

Yeah we had a total of 14 songs ready before entering the studio, so we had the possibility to choose the best ones in order to let the album sound like a perfect thing. I did not have problems in writing the songs... The songwriting of *The Vile Conception* took almost a year, and everything went smooth and as I told you before in a spontaneous way.

Some songs as *Drowned in the Abyss of Ignorance* took some hours to be completed and I didn't change anything on it before entering the studio, while I spent more time on *Hideously Conceived* or *Misconception*.

Could you pick up your most favorite song on the album and talk about it since the very inception and progression onto its final shape? What concrete things do you love it for etc.?

Well it's hard to pick a favorite, but as far as I can tell you the song I had more fun to write was *Slavery in a Deaf Decay* because it was the first real new Hour of Penance songs since *Pageantry For Martyrs*. When I started back in writing the new stuff I did a couple of songs to let the other guys hear how the new songs and our new style could be. One of them was *Slavery in a Deaf Decay*.

I started with few ideas, and then the songs spawned after 1 or 2 hours in its entirety. What I love when you are in the songwriting mood is the flowing of the ideas, you start with a simple idea and then after other ideas comes and you have the full song ready to be recorded.

You have incorporated such a speaker blowing and eardrum shattering sound almost bordering on a detonation effect sort of. This is a pretty distinct part of some songs like *Misconception*, *Liturgy of Deceivers* it sounds like if a bass/tom are hit at once in a way, yet I doubt, the tom plays the part here, it seems to be bass only, do you know what I mean?

Eheh, it's just a bass pad, it's a common sound used in the studios to boost the bass in certain part of the songs. Most of the bands nowadays use that kind of sound if you pay attention, I would say it's just a production-trick, eheh.

*The Vile Conception* has been sub-labeled as a *Death metal manifesto against those who rule the earth through the power of lies and lead humanity to an inevitable end*. As far as I know, besides music you have left nothing to any random brainwaves and there is a firm concept behind everything concerning the album, which includes the name of the album, the cover and the lyrics. Could you, please, run into details?

Exactly, there's an overall concept behind the lyrics of *The Vile Conception*. We truly believe that the causes that are leading humanity to an end come from the interaction between politics and religion, their shoulder to shoulder policy of betraying people to achieve economical interests and not only. Just watch the TV, holy wars everywhere around the world...

The major issue is that most of the people nowadays still believe in false gods, in heaven and hell, while we have proven through the sciences that everything has its explanation.

As for the cover artwork of the new album, the awful woman that is raising the dead child to the sky is the personification of the Mother Earth, while the dead newborn represents our current century already doomed to an inevitable end.

Could be something improved when it comes to the fact that instead of focusing and deepening historical failures, mankind would rather took some enlightenment of them in the present day and avoid failures done so many times?

That could be a solution, but we're impotent. We live in a free world where freedom is only a mere condition given by those who have the real and full control of our lives. Living in a sort of mental-cage is not the condition to achieve improvements...

On the topic of immaculate deception, it's absolutely scary that a christian world, we are sadly a part of, is based upon such a primitive lie, pure nonsense, since the beginning. Actually it's so frustrating seeing how easy it is to manipulate people and make individual-less sheep of them and in fact this is just a bottom line of the whole case, isn't it?

Yes, you're right. I would say anyway that in *The Vile Conception* we are not focusing only on christianity but on every religion, with the exception of buddhism. The immaculate lie is only a small chapter of all the lies every religion has...

Could be the world a better place without religion ? I would say definitely YES. Just pay attention to the islamic countries, they're sadly third world countries because of the moral their religion teach. People should open their eyes and realize that we 're not still in the medieval times.

Oh and by the way, you are living in Rome, next to Vatican. How it's like to be so close to the core of real unpure evil of this world? Have you noticed they have done some exorcism symposiums few years ago? It's just incredible in 21st century.

Honestly, I must say that the major fault, that helped the church growing so much and literally making joke of us, comes from their followers. How can you still believe in exorcism in 2008? Obviously the church uses that kind of tricky magic to gain more followers, luckily we're not part of that kind of people. As the bible call them *Sheep*... What more exact term to describe their followers?

Could you make some retrospective look starting in the time when you got into metal of Death and name albums that were crucial for you in terms of breaking & shifting musical extremes and perfection to new levels since that time to the present day?

Well, for the fact that I'm quite young (22 , I'm turning 23 next June) I missed (unfortunately) most of the Death Metal of the 80's and 90's. I've obviously listened and bought most of the releases of that period, but I can't talk about Death Metal as someone who really lived shoulder to shoulder to this kind of music since its inception. But as far as I can tell you there were loads of bands that really changed my life... I'm not that kind of metalhead that has only 4 or 5 favorite bands, each Death Metal band has something interesting for me, and the positive thing is that today I still discover new interesting bands. I started listening to Death Metal when I discovered

Sepultura's *Schizophrenia*, from then I felt in love immediately with Death Metal... I still listen to that album on a regular basis. Talking about my personal influences, I can name a few that really changed my mind and obviously my style of playing Death Metal... Morbid Angel, Hate Eternal, Suffocation, Nile, Angel Corpse and the almighty Cannibal Corpse of course.

Generally speaking, in which aspects could be the perfection and extremity in Death Metal pushed further? Do you still see paths unexplored? And on a theoretical base, do you see any ultimate border for the genre concerning that perfection and extremity?

Talking as musician, I think that Death Metal is one of the few kind of music that doesn't have barriers. Although some Death Metal bands are similar, every year we have new bands that have something new in their style... I remember the first time I came across the first Spawn of Possession CD I was stoked by the *freshness* and originality of their musical purpose.

Honestly I have to say that I prefer mostly those bands that have perseverance in what they are playing... I don't like the wave of newcomers Death Metal bands that embed in their music all that experimental stuff...

You guys in the Czech republic know what I'm saying, eheh. ;)

Where do you see Hour of Penance within the frame work of reaching musical perfection as individuals as well as a band? Do you have an idea which ways & lands of the extreme musical perfection of Death metal are you going to explore in near future?

Well, for me Death Metal is a way to challenge against myself so we will try to push forward and improve more every single aspect of our music. We're totally satisfied with *The Vile Conception*, but I think that we still can do better and better. So that will be our primary aim.

As I told you before, we don't like those bands that introduce *experimental stuff* in their music, we will keep playing this music without any kind of compromise.

How do you manage to be still motivated and inspired as a musician after all those years, you got a regular job I suppose, these daily routines are not really creativity supportive so to say, what is the way of how you literally charge your creative batteries?

Well, the fact that we had and we are having today a good feedback and a solid fan base it's one of our motivation of still playing this kind of music. We don't have a job, we are all students so we still have the time to focus on music. The power to keep playing Death Metal comes exclusively from our life and our feeling, hate is our real fuel.

How's the situation regarding second guitarist in the band coming along? Any permanent member or live addition in sight? How about Francesco handling this duties since he's actually a guitarist however I don't have a clue how good.

Unfortunately we didn't find a good guitar player so far so we're still playing as a quartet since Enrico's departure. Francesco is a good guitar player but it's really hard for him to play and sing along the new songs. Moreover, I like the way Francesco interact with people at our shows, so you will never see him playing the guitar too in HoP.

When it comes to musical education, from my research I know Francesco has got some education backgrounds in music and maybe is still active student, not sure here. Generally, how are things with the musical education among the HoP members? What do you think is good/bad on being musically educated or just a self-taught musician? For how long do you guys play your instruments actually?

With the exception of Francesco, who studied music in the past, we're all self-taught musicians. Being educated is obviously good but being a self taught musician helps you play and write music in a more personal way in my opinion. I've been playing guitar for 7 years, same for Mauro maybe a bit more for Silvano.

Let's talk about some *worthy losses* Death Metal has brought to you. Death Metal has certainly enriched you a in many ways being it either as a musician or just as a personality, but is there something worthy/beautiful you have sacrificed because of Death Metal and you don't regret it at all or do you?

You have always to make compromises to keep playing this kind of music, that's the real counterpart of being a musician and playing in a Death Metal band. Regarding material loss, money is something you have to forget, eheh, and this is something that most of the underground bands could tell you but it's not a big deal because although you're wallet is empty, you're definitely a happy musician (this at least for me). This is one of the worthy sacrifice. Another sacrifice is leaving your girlfriend home while you're on tour... You know, disappearing from home for weeks could cause you some problems, but till today we were lucky with that, also because with the exception of the forthcoming tour with Origin and Impaled next June, we didn't ever left Italy for over 2 weeks, eheh...

That's it, Giulio, wish you real success with the new album, your dedication and hard work over the years should be finally fully rewarded with this one. Keep continuing your way to perfection of the most extreme musical expression ever, Death Metal, hope to see you on the road! Final words are yours.

Thanks a lot Jan for your interview, your support, and your cool words regarding Hour of Penance. Hope your readers will find this interview interesting, eheh, keep up the great work with your webzine!

For those who didn't do it yet, check out our new album *The Vile Conception* out now for Unique Leader rec. and be sure to check out us on tour this early summer with Origin and Impaled too! -Giulio

