

- 1) Out Of This World, your new album, lasts seventy minutes and features fifteen new compositions. The context has however been agitated, between the covid pandemic and your own health concerns. How did you stay the course so brilliantly?

Most of the material was already written before my health issues and the pandemic came, so that wasn't a problem. But it took me about 5 months to really recover from my heart attack, so we did not start working on the album until springtime last year. It was ok to take our time. We spent the rest of the year recording it. We have an eager band with talented musicians that love doing what they do. And I am stil motivated to write new music as good as I can. It was only a question of organizing the recordings within the Covid restrictions, but nowadays the technology allows you to do almost anything at a distance. Only the vocals were done in a normal studio situation, as that requires direct interaction between the singer and the producer. But we are used to working like this for ten years or so. Even twenty years ago I contributed to a Camel album, or Areyon, from my home studio, sending my files by email. So there's nothing new really.

- 2) One of the fifteen new tracks was written with your old new drummer, Hank Eijkenaar. But you remain the almost unique composer of the material. How is this control on your part explained, do you have a hard time letting your comrades compose, or do you find that their attempts at composition are too poor? 🤔

Not at all. The main reason for my being in the band is because I write the music. That's my drive, my motivation. Without that, I don't know if I would still be in a band at all. I'm a writer first, a performer second. And nobody in de band offered or asked if he could write for Kayak. It's possible, sure, there's no law against it. If someone else in the band would offer me a great song, I would certainly consider it. I can understand that they are hesitant, because I've been in this band for decades and it's an uphill battle for them. Luckily outside of Kayak everybody has their own solo work, so they have their musical output as well.

As for Hans Eijkenaar as a cowriter, I used the drum groove that he always plays on soundchecks, as a foundation for the song. I reasoned: without his playing that pattern, there would have been no Traitor's Gate, so he deserves recognition as a co-writer of the music.

3) Out Of This World is a succession of gripping and sometimes brilliant titles, like the superb "Under A Scar". With almost fifty years of active Kayak career, how do you manage to always find inspiration? What are your creation secrets?

I wish I knew, but that's the mystery of creativity. You never know. You're never sure. Every song you start from scratch, and there is no guarantee if it's going to be good. How does it work? Where does it come from? I think once you rationalize it, the magic is gone, and it could become a trick. So I don't think too much. Of course I have developed some technical skills and have experience to recognize a good idea, which helps with the writing. But still it's very much trial and error, and be critical.

Maybe staying creative has something to do with keeping an open mind for the world around you and never be really content with what you did. I have friends my age and they're mainly speaking of the past, that glorious past. It's nice for a while, but for some of them it's all there is. Nostalgia. I cherish the past, but it's still the past and it won't come back. For me, creating something new, interpreting the world and turn it into my own little universe through music and lyrics, is always at the back of my mind. It's one of the reasons I exist at all. But you know, it can change of course. I could imagine that one day I will say: enough is enough, I can't improve myself anymore, I have written what I could and said all I had to say. We'll see. Time will tell.

4) In addition to your investment in Kayak, you now participate in the nebula of Samurai Of Prog: we find you in the cast of the last two albums of the group, and also active on the first opus of The Guildmaster. What attracted you to their approach? How are the collaborations between you going?

Marco and Kimmo asked if I had music available for their projects. Which I did, so we started working together. Again sending files and ideas ack and forth. They liked what I offered them, and it's turned out to be very good. So there's more to be expected in the future.

5) We know that the current context makes it difficult to hold a tour and concerts. Are you planning to organize concerts via the Internet, or are you going to prepare a new studio album sooner than expected?

No internet concerts, for now. Personally I don't like performing to cameras, even if you know there's an audience somewhere at the other end. It will never have the same vibe or energy as the 'real' thing, so you might as well or even better listen to the albums that we spent a year making. Unless there's a big show attached, with lots of visuals, I can't see the advantage. Also for playing live, a band needs to warm up and play a couple of shows before it feels right. That's not going to happen in the current situation, yet. We'll just have to wait till this is all over, so we are aiming at early 2022 now for a tour. And it's really too soon to think about a new album, this one is still warm....

6) In recent musical releases, have you spotted any promising records, artists who seem particularly gifted to you? In your opinion, are there any worthy successors to Kayak, who officiate in the same stylistic niche?

I have to think really hard. I rarely listen to other new bands, I have to admit. But I also find it hard to even listen to my own work. I am always looking for improvement. I mostly listen to classical music nowadays, early stuff from 1500-1750, there's so much wealth in harmony and melody there, that's missing from contemporary music. Production and technical skills nowadays are perfect and impressive. But the question is: does it touch your heart? Because in the end, that's all what matters with music.