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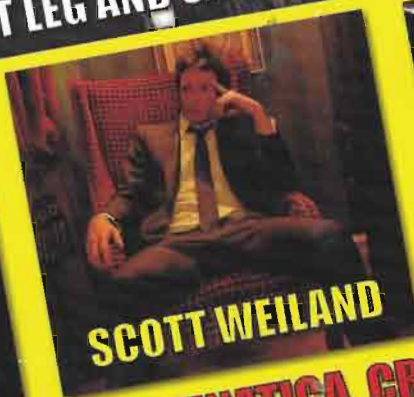
ROCK & METAL MAGAZINE

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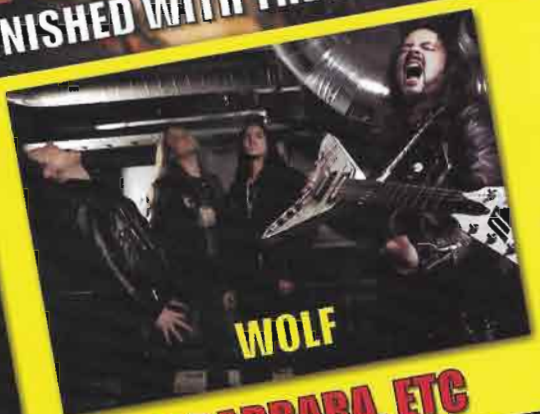
IS BACK WITH NEW BAND HOT LEG AND SAYS HE'S FINISHED WITH THE DARKNESS



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Cornerstone

Interview by Allan Bannerman

Up-and-coming, ambitious and looking forward to the future are just a few things that are the driving force behind Austrian Indie/rock/AOR styled Cornerstone. On the down side, bass player Michael Wachelhofer had to endure numerous wacky emails and an interview with yours truly. A sure fire case of a performer having to suffer for his art. With their new CD "Head Over Heels" not long out, this was my opportunity to find out what makes this band tick today but first I wanted to know where it all started.

"I guess it all started about ten years ago. My brother [Stefan] and I had been playing bass and guitar for a short while and we decided to form a band. We were joined by one of our friends Markus Bouska who played drums and we just started doing covers of songs by The Cure, REM and Soul Asylum. During that time we did start to write and play our own material. I think "Changed" and "I Can't Even Say No" which appear on the new album were written during this time but things never stay the same, line-up wise, in relatively new bands and we went through a few changes between starting out and 2004. I think we actually got to the point where we were going to call it a day but then along came Hannah [Wachter] and Anja [Schirmer] and things just took off. I suppose that's when the actual band Cornerstone came into being. It gave us new life and direction as musicians and most of what you can hear now on the album is the new Cornerstone."

"Our music is a mixture of styles and a lot of this comes from what Stefan and I grew up listening to and also like as individuals. Stefan is more into metal music whereas I'm from the AOR side of the street. I guess it's very difficult not to bring what you like into the music that you write and play yourself and I suppose having this lighter and darker aspects to what we like means that the music that Cornerstone has created is going to be somewhere in the middle. I'd like to think that it's flexible enough to be interesting and hopefully appealing to a wide range of music fans. When it came to doing the recording of this album we did have a good idea of how we wanted it to sound but we are a very democratically based band and ideas and comments about where the sound was going were thoroughly discussed and decisions taken from there."

"I think that a belief in what you're doing musically is also very important. Maybe that wasn't as high on our priority list when we started out but it's certainly jumped to the top since Hannah and Anja joined us." I asked Michael about the live performance and reaction to them that they'd had so far. "Yeah, it's been really good and we've all been surprised at the reaction our live shows have got. We did a fair bit of touring in the latter part of last year mainly in Austria and in England. I think we did seven dates in the UK and after just about every show we'd have people come up to us and say that it was really good. They'd obviously heard the album as it's been out in Europe since the middle of October. They did comment that it was so much more intense and heavy than what we got on to the CD. I'd like to think that this is because we enjoy ourselves when we get to the live dates that we play. As a group, we all think that it's important that we are entertaining when we go on stage to perform. I don't think we'd ever just get up there and go through the motions. That's just not fair on

the fans that have come out to see you play."

Since Michael had mentioned the group aspect of things on a number of occasions I asked him to elaborate on the democratic nature of the decision making that is part of what makes Cornerstone so effective. "I suppose when you're just starting out in a band, or many other things for that matter, there's always some kind of struggle; maybe struggle is too strong a word, but vying for creative control or trying to find a direction that suits and that's probably what happened in the early days. Now we've kinda found our feet as to what sound we want to create and that's down mainly to the personnel within the band now. We talk a lot more about how things should sound. If there's something we don't all agree on then it's doesn't get taken any further than that. When it comes to the bigger or let's say 'managerial or logistical' decisions then the guys are quite happy to let me be the spokesperson for that. Again, there are always discussions about these things but we all realise that it's better to have one voice on these things rather than four. I guess that's why I get to do most of the press interviews with you guys although the others will help if I'm not available for any reason."

Back to the music, was the group happy with the way the album had turned out? "Yeah, I think so. We're all very comfortable with what we did on this album, which is important, but with hindsight there's always going to be a few things that we might have changed but not that many. I think most artists will tell you the same thing but you've got to get to that point where you do draw a line under what you're going to commit to a recording and then just go with it. Otherwise no one would ever get anything out on CD." I asked Michael about new material. "We've got about five or six new songs, or the basis of new songs, which we're working on right now. I think it's always good to be moving the music along as you go, so to speak. Getting any new material to a point where it's ready for recording is always high on our agenda. We'll probably try a few of these songs out live when we get out on tour in the spring just to see if they'll work in a live situation and what the reaction will be to music that no one has really heard yet."

What are the band's plans for 2009? "We've got some tour dates lined up already, mainly in Austria but we've set aside some time for possible dates in the UK during April so if people want to see us live then keep checking the website [www.cornerstone.co.at]. A short set of dates in the States might also be on the cards. We'll just have to wait and see what the spring brings." So there you have it, a new band with great enthusiasm and a cool sound. With article space at a premium, Michael's guilty musical secret will have to remain between he and I.

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