

Sascha Beselt / MANDATORY Interview for Xtrem Music

Cheers, Sascha, and welcome to Xtrem Music! Now that you have released your first full-length (“Adrift Beyond”) through Xtrem Music, we can say, better than ever, that you are in your house, isn’t it? Hahaha! How are you, my friend? Anything new, interesting or worthy of mention in German lands?

SASCHA: Hey bro! Thanks for your support! Heavily appreciated! Everything’s fine over here. Being busy with some new productions in other musical styles. Nothing bad to report at the moment. People keep raving about the album. We will start working on the second one very soon.

Ok, Sascha... We are going to start with the questions. MANDATORY is a band founded in 2001, and this is your discography so far: “Divine Destruction” (Demo 2002), “Beyond The Veil” (what did happen with “Beyond The Veil”, Sascha? I think that it was an attempt of first album, but that, finally, could not be released... Well, only two songs: “Day Of Carnage” and “In Torment”, that appeared in your compilation “Exiled In Pain”. The rest of songs of “Beyond The Veil” already appeared in your Demo “Divine Destruction”, but we could not have heard the “Beyond The Veil” version of these songs. Sascha, can you clarify this matter? What did happen with this work, that was going to be your first album but that, finally, didn’t was released?), “Curse Of The Undead” (MCD 2005), “...Where They Bleed” (MCD 2006), “Altar of The Old Skulls (Split shared with DEATHEVOKATION and KINGDOM and that contained your MCD “Curse Of The Undead”), the Demo compilation “Exiled In Pain” and, finally, your first full-length album: “Adrift Beyond”. Sascha, why have you been late so much time in releasing your first album? It puzzles me to know the composition and releasing process that you have followed... Enough time ago, I read in the 9th issue of the Bleak ‘zine that the first title proposed for the album was “In Torment”, and that this title changed to “Into Eternal Sleep” and that it was goin’ to be released in 2007 (I think). Finally, none of two things, hahaha! The album is titled “Adrift Beyond” and was released in 2010, three years later! Well, Sascha, I think you have a lot to tell and to clarify here, hahaha! Start when you want!

SASCHA: Haha, yes, this can seem a bit confusing, I know. Well, anyway, let me explain: After the recording and release of “Divine Destruction” in 2002 we immediately went into the same studio to record another three songs with exactly the same settings to have a full length. These three songs were mixed exactly like “Divine Destruction”. But we wanted a professional mastering and went to a big studio in our area which fucked up the mastering. It made a “Power Metal”-mastering instead of a Death Metal sound. We sounded like Running Wild and not like let’s say Grave, Dismember and the likes. So we told them to change the mastering. They promised us to do so but never did it. Over a year we had been waiting for their new mastering when I finally decided to let a friend do a new mastering. He did a good job. I have to add: Around this time in 2003 I had no recording studio myself, so we had to focus on other studios. Anyway, so my friend did the new mastering and we released only a few copies of “Beyond The Veil” on CD-R. They were sent out to labels worldwide. Perhaps these few copies pop up on Ebay some day, who knows, haha. This release “Beyond The Veil” featured 9 songs. The six ones from the first MCD plus those other three songs. The album which would later become “Adrift Beyond” was never ever really entitled “In Torment”. Only the old webpage showed this title. But this page was done in 2005 or 2006, so don’t give a fuck for this. The real first title was indeed “Into Eternal Sleep”, a title for a song which actually is on the album and also one of the centerpieces. One of our favourites on “Adrift Beyond”. As for the reason to change the title: There is no reason at all. Just personal preference. So bottom line: “Beyond The Veil” was just a promotional album and the title for the new album was changed only because of a change of taste. Nothing more.

As for the long process of writing and mixing “Adrift Beyond”: We all had to finish our studies first. Plus you have to take into consideration that there are 16 songs on the album. This is a lot! But as a band you usually write more songs than you finally put on an album. So there are even ten other songs which were written for “Adrift Beyond” but did not make it onto the album. So you have around 25 compositions for this album and a mixing engineer who lives far away in Sweden. This all bundled with our studies and jobs makes up for a serious delay. But the second album will be written, mixed and out WAY faster!

Anyway, the most important thing is that your first album, finally titled “Adrift Beyond”, has finally been released through the Spanish label Xtream Music. Sascha, can you tell us how did arise the possibility of signing with Xtream? When you contacted with Dave Rotten for the first time? Did you have offers from other labels? Why did you decant on the offer of Xtream Music? Are you satisfied, so far, with the distribution and promotion work that Dave is doing?

SASCHA: Dave approached us somewhere in 2007 or 2008 for the first time as far as I can remember. But around this time we were signed to Asphyxiate Recordings from Australia. Also a good label! Dave contacted me again in 2009. Since Xtream and especially Repulse Records is and was responsible for some killer outputs I also have in my collection since many, many years (Centinex, Demigod e.g.), it was obvious that Xtream was a great option. Xtream was one of three really good labels that were in contact with us for a possible deal - the other two being Osmose and Relapse. Finally we somehow decided to go with Xtream and they do a great job! So nothing to worry about so far.

As we have just said, “Adrift Beyond” has been released through a Spanish label: Xtream Music. And two questions ago, we have mentioned the Bleak ‘zine, a Spanish ‘zine. Sascha, what do you know about our scene? What bands, labels, ‘zines and webzines do you know? What does look like to you our scene? What’s your opinion about it?

SASCHA: Well, to be honest, I am not that typical underground Death Metal guy who goes to every little concert at the weekends and trades CDs or tapes. MANDATORY is more the kind of band like let’s say Edge Of Sanity. We only care for ourselves. What I can tell you is that we love every fan, label or zine for supporting us! The Bleak Zine is a good underground zine written in Spanish. I cannot understand a word though, haha. But I know that they do their best and so horns up! From Spain I am also familiar with the There Where I Belong-Zine and Carlos who is my mate and good friend (what’s up TURBO-LOVER?!?!) as well as the great band Graveyard which released a cool full length. That’s all. To

be fair: I am also not that much into the German scene. It's just because we are so busy with our own things and lives.

Well, if it seems to you likely, we are going to start talking about what “Adrift Beyond” contains. Let’s start talking about the composition and recording process of the album. As we have already said, your first full-length was announced for 2007. But, finally, it has been released in 2010. When did it begin the composition process of the songs of the album? And, when this one was finished, when did you start recording the songs? What is what it has provoked these three years of delay in the release of your album? Were you very meticulous at the moment of composing and to record the songs and of obtaining a certain sound, or they were other motives those that provoked that this album has been late so much in being released?

SASCHA: Well, if I recall correctly I have already answered most of these questions above. The writing process started out in early 2008. As for the sound, we aimed at a classic Death Metal sound. We hate modern productions, so it needed to be old school and kinda like early 90’s styled.

Man, I love the sound that you have obtained for “Adrift Beyond”: it’s raw, obscure, powerful, totally old school, but also melodic and catchy. The album was recorded and mastered at Show No Mercy Studio, that is your own studio, Sascha, and mixed by a legend as Tomas Skogsberg from Sunlight Studio. Do you think that you have obtained to 100% the kind of sound for that you were looking? Why did you decide on Tomas at the moment of mixing the album? Did you think about other possibilities? Sascha, what are your fave albums from all the times recorded or mixed by Tomas? By the way, tell us about Show No Mercy Studio... What kind of equipment do you have? What equipment did you use to record “Adrift Beyond”? I know that you also record a lot of bands in your own studio, bands with very different music styles (Rock, Blues, Metal, New Age...)... What can you tell us about this facet as music engineer and producer?

SASCHA: Some years ago Stinne, our drummer and vocalist, told me that his dream is a production by Skogsberg. And so was mine. We had been in contact with Dan Swanö before who is a killer nice person and a cool guy who does terrific mixes. So he was option no. 1. But the reason why we went for Tomas was that Dan

mixes so many albums these days whereas Tomas almost quit mixing real Death Metal bands around 10 years ago. Of course he does it from time to time but his mixes are becoming rare. That's a shame since we love his mixes like on Grave's albums, Carnage's "Dark Recollections" and even the more melodic albums like Desultory's "Bitterness" or Cemetary's "Godless Beauty". It was really hard to get in contact with him because he does not have a homepage. I finally managed to get his email address via the guys in Mr. Death (thanks again!). That's how it started. The mix is cool and old school! You're right! We wanted to set this album apart from other new releases both in terms of composition and sound. We would even go with an inferior mix as long as it is different from the mixes of all other bands. It is totally necessary to be different in today's musical scene. That leads me to the questions about my equipment and the studio. For the recording process I even did not use a standard 4 x 12 cab. I used a big tube combo with a 15" speaker! That is way fatter than the standard 12 inches. I think this is the elementary aspect of Adrift's guitar sound. For pedals I used a Boss HM-3. Yes, notice, NOT the HM-2 all others use. Guitar brands used are Ibanez and Yamaha (for acoustics). For synth sounds I used a lot of different stuff from Korg (Trinity series) and Roland (JV 880, JV 1080). In the studio I focus on great outboard preamps and other quality gear. For example I only use Amek/Neve (Purepath-series) as well as Universal Audio preamps (3 x M-610's and LA-610). For mic's Brauner Valvet, Sennheiser (MD 421's), Rode's, SM 57's and a lot of different Octava mic's. Besides there is some cool stuff like old TL Audio EQ's, Focusrite Mixmaster (for analogue mastering!), Lexicon and Alesis reverb processors, Line 6 POD XT Pro, lots of DBX boxes and my beloved Audient Sumo summing amp / compressor. In the digital domain I use the UAD-card for the most part when it comes to mixing. For creativity and songwriting I have lots of cool VST instruments like East/West Symphonic Orchestra, Arturia emulations for e.g. the Minimoog or Melodyne for vocals. The studio is based on Pro Tools. I write and produce music in lots of different styles ranging from Death Metal and instrumental Rock/Fusion over Blues and Jazz to atonal or World Music and Arab Pop. It's better to focus on different projects than to spoil the music of your one and only band only to include your other ideas. For example it makes way more sense to me to do a single world music project than to use tribal drums and Asian or Arabic flute and string sounds on the next MANDATORY-album, doesn't it, haha?! So at the moment I am busy

finishing my solo record (instrumental Fusion/Rock somewhere between Santana and Satriani) and producing new songs in the Arab Pop sector for a new artist.

MANDATORY has always been, since your first Demo, an Old School Death Metal band. But “Adrift Beyond” is the clearest example of that an Old School Death Metal band can evolve a lot throughout the years. I think that the base of “Adrift Beyond” is Swedish, but I also think that, in this Swedish base, you have got the perfect mix between the Stockholm and the Gotheburg sound. To this, it is necessary to add also very manifest influences of bands as ASPHYX, MORGOTH, PESTILENCE, OBITUARY... And a lot of Old School Doom Metal influences in the vein of early PARADISE LOST or AMORPHIS! If you allow it to me, I also would dare to say that there are NWOBHM influences in songs like “Adrift Beyond”, “Torn”, “Silent Dementia” or “Silenced” (especially in some guitar melodies very “à la IRON MAIDEN”, hehehe...). What do you think about all this, Sascha? Which do you think that they have been your main influences at the moment of composing the songs of “Adrift Beyond”? All this heap of influences does that this album is different enough from your previous works. But his great virtue is that, in spite of being different, all your fans will like it. Do you think like me, Sascha?

SASCHA: Thanks a lot for those comparisons, bro! Really appreciated! Well, in fact during the writing process of “Adrift Beyond” we realized that we had focused on “Stockholm”-styled Death Metal for too long. I mean, do not get me wrong: It’s our favourite style in Death Metal! But we knew it was time to let MANDATORY be MANDATORY and not just another band that does good Stockholm Death Metal. So that’s where parts like the above mentioned ones in “Silenced” or “Torn” came in. Also, I guess you discovered the middle part of “Nevermore” where this groovy rhythm sets in. This is not typical Death Metal. But it works great! I also think of let’s say the first part of a song like “Impurity Of Thoughts” or the chorus of “Hallowed Sacrifice”. And take the acoustic interludes “Cursed Astray” and “Passing”. Many interesting ideas, riffs and melodies on this album but still not wimped out. What I also like about the album is the lyrics. There are not only the typical zombie/horror-subjects but also serious thoughts on life and death as well as stuff like in the above mentioned “Hallowed Sacrifice” which deals with christianity but in a positive way. We are christians. No hardliners of course.

But it feels good to have one or two songs dealing with that stuff. All in all I feel about this album as being our “own” album, not the one everybody expected. Most people love it and we keep getting great feedback but I have also spoken to some guys who simply expected “...Where They Bleed” part 2. But it is not.

In this album, you have also included more guitar solos than in your previous works, Sascha. And this solos are more melodic and definite than ever (I was talking in the previous question that I think that you have got the perfect mix between the Stockholm and the Gotheburg sound, and it's also hereby regarding to your guitar solos, I think). The Stinne' vocals and the chorus of the songs are also more definite. All this does that this album is your catchier stuff so far. Stinne (vocals and drums) and you compose all the MANDATORY's music. This more melodic, doomy (other thing that we are talking about in the previous question), definite and catchier style, was it something for that you were looking from the beginning? Can you tell us about the way in that you have faced the guitar work for this album, and about the way in that Stinne and you have worked regarding to the vocal parts? Do you think that the result has been the ideal one?

SASCHA: Well, see, when we start writing we just come up with ideas we have been collecting over months. It is not that we sit down and have some hours of deep discussions about our aims with the next release. We are not Iron Maiden or Metallica who need to debate with their managers and record labels before the new release. We meet and rock out. Of course we write the songs in my studio with me and my guitar sitting in front of my desk and Stinne sitting at the drums. We collect ideas and experiment. Way back in 2002 - as I said before - I had no studio. So we needed to focus on riffs. When you listen to “Divine Destruction” you will realize that this album a total old school album. Only riffs, riffs and riffs. Today with a complete recording studio in our hands we can come up with such cool parts like in “Silent Dementia”, “Torn” or “Hallowed Sacrifice” where you have the rhythm guitars plus a harmony guitar plus a solo on top of them. So everything gets more detailed and more interesting. The difficult part is not to overload everything. As for the solos: Yes, they are way more technical in some places. Some are raw and old school (“Toxic Mutilation” or “Crypta Crawler”), some others are melodic and technical (“Nevermore”, “Silenced” or “Adrift Beyond”). We always

try to vary those elements, so that I can say that this album features old school songs for the old fans AND new territory which can open new doors.

Related with the previous question: how is it the composition process of the songs and the MANDATORY's rehearsals? Does Stinne and you compose in your house and then you take the ideas to the rehearsal room? Or are the songs always composed at the rehearsal room? As I have just said, Stinne and you compose all the music, and also all the lyrics, but I guess that Adrian (bass) and Steffen (rhythm guitar) will also contribute ideas, right?

SASCHA: All music and lyrics are done by Stinne and me. 100%. As I mentioned before we changed the process of writing: Way back in the early 2000's we used to write in the rehearsal room (which is located beneath my studio) and capture all ideas on a simple cassette recorder. Later we would use an AKAI harddisk recorder. But since I installed the studio in 2005 everything is done there. We open a new Pro Tools-session for each new song and start recording ideas. When the song is structured we move over to the next one and so on. After all songs are written we start recording them with one and the same settings.

Another change that this new album presents is that there is a profuse use of keyboards in many songs. This one is another change regarding to your previous works, where you were using the keyboard only in some intro (if I'm not wrong). Sascha, wherefrom there arose the idea of using parts of keyboard in the songs and not only in the intros? What kind of effect did you want to obtain with it? Atmosphere? Ambient? To complement the rest of instruments? I think that you have been the man in charge of recording the keyboards, right? Tell us about this new aspect of the MANDATORY's sound.

SASCHA: Some people already asked me this but all I can say is: There have been keyboards - I prefer the correct term "synthesizers" - since "Curse Of The Undead". In each song on "Curse..." there are synth sounds. And on "...Where They Bleed" there are also lots of them in the title track. On "Adrift Beyond" they are just louder so that you can hear them. The use of synthesizers is a standard for us when it comes to Death Metal. All our favourite records used synths: Tiamat's "Clouds" and "Astral Sleep", first two Hypocrisy albums, even Grave killer "Into

The Grave” had those typical synth vocals on it. The albums we like the most are the ones that feature catchy songwriting and some melodic parts.

“Adrift Beyond” contains sixteen songs (including an intro, an interlude and an outro). Fourteen are totally new, and there are two that already appeared in previous works: “Exelution” from the “Divine Destruction” Demo and “Crypta Crawler” from the “...Where They Bleed” MCD. The truth is that there is more than one change... Which has been the motive of this re-recording? Were not you satisfied by the original versions of these two songs? Or has it been for another kind of motives? In any case, which do you think that they are the most important changes that these two new versions present regarding to the original ones? In what do you think that these two new versions overcome the original ones? There is some another more song that had you liked to re-record or that you have well-considered to re-record in the future?

SASCHA: The only reason to re-record them was to give them a place on the full length because we love those two songs and think that they are MANDATORY-standards. But a full length is always a more popular release than an MCD. So in let’s say ten years we still want people to know those songs. But when all MCD’s are sold out where would you get those songs? So a re-recording for your band classics is a must from time to time. I think each version has its own spirit. We also do our best, so I like them all. For the next album we are gonna re-record which is perhaps our most signature song: “...Where They Bleed”. Another cool one would be “R.I.P. (Rest In Pieces)” but that’s still unclear at this point in time.

Sixteen songs (including, as we have already said, an intro, an interlude and an outro) and almost an hour of Death Metal... Many people might think that you have included some mediocre songs “to fill album”. And it is everything opposite: precisely, I think that one of the strongest points of “Adrift Beyond” is that all the songs are really good. There isn’t mediocre stuff. Every fan will have his favorite songs, but they will not be able to say that in this album there is stuff “to fill”. Do you agree with me, Sascha? Was it a fundamental aim for you that all the songs were songs with quality? Which would be your favorite songs of the album, bro? There is some song that, along the composition process of the album, you rejected for not considering it to be good enough?

SASCHA: As I said before we wrote even more tracks for this album. Those were also really good. So I cannot say that they lacked something. But we needed to concentrate on the best ones. We only release what we think is good enough. So, of course, I totally love all the songs on the album. And as you pointed out each listener will have his own faves. That is the most important part to me. My personal favourites on “Adrift Beyond” are: “Into Eternal Sleep”, “Nevermore”, “Silenced”, “Silent Dementia” and the title track. But I also think that a slow melodic doom songs like “Hallowed Sacrifice” has it’s own dark spirit. And the harmonies in this song are haunting. Ah, really tough question... since I love them all.

The only thing of the album that I don’t like: in the booklet, the lyrics do not appear. Why, Sascha? The truth is that the booklet is a bit austere... Only appear some info, a photo of the band and little more... Why have not you included the lyrics? Personally I am charmed with reading the lyrics of the songs while I listen to the music... You not? Hahaha! Nah, seriously: comment on the motive of not having included the lyrics and if we can get them or read them in some site. About what do the lyrics of the album talk?

SASCHA: The simple reason for not including the lyrics in the booklet is: There are way too many songs on it. Where would you print all those lyrics if you also need to include a bandpic, contact information and all the credits? I mean: The label needs to pay for all this and a 20-page booklet is way too expensive. Perhaps one day we will put the best lyrics on the website. Or perhaps there will be a MANDATORY-boxset some day that will feature all lyrics and vinyls...

The release of “Adrift Beyond” has also come accompanied with something of new merchandising. Xtream Music, apart from releasing the album, has made t-shirts with the cover of the album on the front and with the drawing of the last page of the booklet on the back, with the sentence: “Living in eternal pain, entering the death domain... adrift beyond”. What have you wanted to express with this phrase? Do you think that it is a phrase that summarizes well what contains the album? Apart from these t-shirts that Xtream Music has made, I know that you have more merchandising available... Can you tell to our readers what MANDATORY’s stuff can obtain through you themselves and

the way of obtaining it? Have you thought to make more merchandising to shortly or long-term?

SASCHA: The shirts made by Xtrem are killer. But they are limited. So soon we will produce new shirts of course. For the last four years the “Where They Bleed”-shirt was available but it is sold out now. We plan on releasing a killer “Exiled In Pain”-shirt which most of MANDATORY-die hard-fans already know the motive of (from Facebook and other communities). The phrase you mentioned (Living in eternal pain...) is the chorus of the title track. The first half of this chorus is also spoken by a child at the end of the intro and then Stinne comes in with the second part with the first hit of the title track. We thought this is a cool start for the album.

“Adrift Beyond” was released only some weeks ago. It is still very soon, but, how are the first reactions inside the Underground regarding to the album? Is the the album pleasing the people? Do you think that, with the pass of time, “Adrift Beyond” will become a classic one of the Death Metal history? By the way, Sascha... What are your top-ten regarding to Death Metal albums from all the times (not only the albums recorded or mixed by Tomas Skogsberg... About this question we have already talked at the beginning of the intie, hehehe...)?

SASCHA: Well, most people are totally raving about this album and a lot tell me that it is gonna be a classic one day. I also had to give several interviews in just one or two weeks. But there are also some guys - as I mentioned before - who just expected a second “...Where They Bleed” with only raw Stockholm Death Metal and with only a few synth sounds. Perhaps for those people “Adrift Beyond” is just too progressive. In fact it is not but you cannot please everyone. Yeah, my personal Top 10-Death Metal albums (in no particular order):

Mortification - Mortification (1991)

Grave - Into The Grave (1991)

Tiamat - Clouds (1992)

Hypocrisy - Penetration (1992)

Cancer - To The Gory End (1991)

Unleashed - Shadows In The Deep (1992)

Edge Of Sanity - The Spectral Sorrows (1993)

Loudblast - Sublime Dementia (1993)

Napalm Death - Harmony Corruption (1990)

Benediction - Transcend The Rubicon (1993)

MANDATORY, a band founded in 2001. Release of the first full-length: 2010. A lot of time, don't you think, man? I know that it's still very soon, but, will we have to wait other nine years to enjoy the next MANDATORY's new album? Hahaha! More or less, every how much time would you like, from now, to release a new full-length album? If everything goes well, when do you think that the second full-length of the band should appear?

SASCHA: We want the second album to feature way less songs. We think about a maximum of nine songs (plus an intro perhaps). We will start writing it soon, so that we think about releasing it in early 2011 or summer 2011.

"Adrift Beyond", as we have just said, was released only some weeks ago. Sascha, are you playing live shows to promote this new album? Are you in the habit of playing live habitually? The truth is that in Internet I have found neither photos nor MANDATORY's live stuff... Though probably I have not searched well! What can you tell us about it, Sascha? Have you thought of doing a tour or a series of live shows to promote the release of "Adrift Beyond"? By the way, bro... I have always thought that, for a Death Metal drummer, it has to be really hard to play drums and to sing simultaneously... How does Stinne do it? Which is his secret? Hahaha!

SASCHA: Oh, think about Nocturnus, Exciter and Autopsy - also a singing drummer! We plan on doing live gigs regularly and perhaps even doing a small tour as off end of the year or early 2011. In fact we had been contacted by Gorefest and Interment in 2008 but could not tour with none of them due to our studies. That was really hard for us as you can imagine.

Ok, my friend... With your new album so recently released, what are the immediate plans for MANDATORY? What is the near thing that you are going to do? You are a band fond enough of releasing Demos, MCD's, Splits... There is some stuff of this kind in way? For example, in the issue of the Bleak 'zine that I have mentioned before, you talked about a new collaboration with DEATHEVOKATION (the first one was the "Altar Of The Old Skulls" Split). What can you tell us about it? Are you working in this collaboration, or it is something that you have left? If the thing goes on, can you tell us of what it would consist? A new Split? Well, Sascha, if finally you are going to release this stuff, would be great that you were giving to us all the details that you could, hehehe!

SASCHA: Back when I did the Bleak-interview we had contact with Götz of Deathevokation and thought about doing a "one-night-project" with him. Think about two or three songs of MANDATORY feat. Götz! Killer, isn't it!? We have definitely NOT left this idea but have also not plan when to do it. But this is gonna be a spontaneous thing one day. Perhaps we will write two songs one day and ask Götz to join us on these tracks. Why not?! The problem is that Götz seems hard to contact, haha.

Sascha, I know that you, apart from musician, are musicologist, and that you, apart from Death Metal, play a lot of different styles (Rock, Blues, atonal music, New Age...) in projects like LE DÉSDORDRE FORMIDABLE (atonal music), MERCURIA (New Age), INVICTION (another Death Metal project), and also with a project that has your own name (Sascha Beselt) and with you have recorded a Blues/Rock album: "Busy Strings". Really impressive, Sascha! Can you tell us about all these projects (and about those that I have not mentioned... It is sure that there will be someone!) and about your musicology studies? Now it is the moment of which you make us hallucinated, hahaha! Take advantage of it! And one more question: apart from your bands/projects and your recording studio (Show No Mercy), do you have some more project related with music in general?

SASCHA: Ok here we go... "Le Désordre Formidable" is a work of atonality for orchestral AND synthesized sounds. It is not only about disharmony as I used the methods of twelve-tone-music on this record. And if you are familiar with

Schönberg you know that his idea was NOT to erase harmony from the music but just to emancipate disharmony. Fifty-fifty. This album does exactly this: To put those two elements in one context to the same degree. Of course, this one is not your Sunday morning-record. And it is also no album to listen to while having some drinks with your friends. It is a work for people that want to concentrate on the music and want to explore something different. I do not want to use the term “new” as twelve-tone-music has lately turned about 100 years. But the approach of connecting orchestra and synths is fresh and the dark, morbid atmosphere which rises in some parts is simply interesting. MERCURIA is a world music/New Age-project done completely by myself. It features smooth acoustic guitar playing over relaxing synths and Asian, South American, African and Arabic drum, flute and string sounds. This is the complete opposite of “Le Désordre Formidable”. It is relaxing. “Busy Strings” is my new instrumental solo record which will be out very soon. It features guitar playing somewhere between Fusion, Blues and a little “Shred”. Sounds are a bit retro, too, referring to the late 80s/early 90s. If you like the older albums of guys like Frank Gambale, Joe Satriani, Santana or Greg Howe, this is an album for you. Apart from all these projects I totally concentrate on my work in the field of Pop music now. German “Schlager” music, some Black music and Arab Pop. Nothing which is of any interest for the average MANDATORY-fan of course. Music and lyrics which I write for other artists, so no similarity to my own projects which are written for myself as an artist. INVICTION is my new Death Metal-project. It will be more in the vein of Massacra, Asphyx, Benediction or Cancer than the typical Swedish style; also a lot faster in some places. Ok, you asked me about my studies. What do you want to know? What I specialized in? Of course, as a musicologist you have a wide field to work in. It starts with harmonic theory and counterpoint studies. Then you have your typical classical-oriented courses and also classes for New Music or World Music. Most of the time, however, you have to explore phenomena of music which lead to problems of analysis. Let’s say the big question of improvisation and composition which is one of THE big standard problems in musicology. Where does composition start and where does improvisation end? Just one example. In my examination I finally specialized on New Music and wrote my examination paper about the question of form in Aleatory music.

And what can you tell us regarding to this aspect about your MANDATORY's companions (Stinne, Adrian and Steffen)? Do they play in some another band apart from MANDATORY, or have some project related with music (a label, a 'zine, a webzine, etc.)?

SASCHA: Stinne and Steffen also played in Sex Gepard which is kinda like a Sleaze Rock/Metal band with sex-oriented lyrics. If you like to party out and drink some beer to Fun-Metal than this is your next favourite band. Their first MCD was also recorded and produced at Show No Mercy Studio.

Well Sascha, to finish with the intie, a curious question: do you know all the other bands in the world that are also called MANDATORY? There is a Death/Thrash Metal band in Austria with the same name that is totally active (they released their first full-length the past year, after an EP and a Single), and there are three more bands with the name of MANDATORY (a Finn Melodic Death Metal band, a Greek Thrash Metal/Hardcore band and a Malaysian Death Metal band), but these are splitted-up. The bands that are splitted-up aren't a problem, but, what's your opinion about the Austrian MANDATORY that play Death/Thrash? Mmmm, very near to Germany and also playing Extreme Metal... Did you know that they existed? Their style of Death/Thrash is very different from your style, but...

SASCHA: Well, of course we know the Austrians. I personally cannot understand why they still use the name because these guys started out in 2004 (we started in 2001!) when we already had two releases out and the whole internet showed our reviews and interviews. In fact when I found a band I search the whole net for other bands with the same name. Just type the name on Google and search Metal Archives and MySpace and you know if there are other serious bands with the same name. So they must have found our band and our interviews and reviews. Plus: They also have no serious record deal but still insist on using the name. So I cannot understand those guys. They should change their name. The Malaysian guys are split up since the 90s. At least their only album was released back then. The Finns and Greeks are new to me though. Yeah, it's a shame that they all use this name but I cannot change this. If I had 50.000 EUR too much I would save the name for international use.

Sascha, thanks a lot for this really interesting interview! Good luck with “Adrift Beyond”! I hope that you kick a lot of asses with this new album! Please, add all that you want in these last lines... Death Metal Forever!

SASCHA: Thanks a lot bro! And thank YOU out there for reading so far! Fight for the Metal of death! Thrash on! Buy “Adrift Beyond” and tell your friends!

Sascha & MANDATORY