

## TOUR REPORT

(By Thiago Oliveira and revised by Fabio Carito)

*During the first tour we did in 2014 , " An Evening with Warrel Dane " during rehearsals , our boss was already talking about playing the album "Dead Heart in a Dead World" in its entirety , but with original guitarist Jeff Loomis involved as a guest. After the first shows with this lineup the conversation changed to " Damn, I want to make this album entirely with you guys." I believe that since these early shows there was a great synergy between the five : Warrel , me and Johnny on guitar , Fábio Carito on bass and Marcus Dotta on drums, and at the first rehearsal there was a feeling it would work . I think since then things were just getting better, both personally and on stage. A lot of people after the show speaks this line , which on stage looks like a unit, a battalion .*

*After the announcement of the Brazilian tour playing the Dead Heart in full in the first half of 2015 , there were some proposals from producers outside Brazil, and after some negotiations it all came true with a tour with shows in the region of Greece and the Mediterranean. Unfortunately in this first opportunity , we would do a show in Cyprus and it got cancelled , which is a shame , since we have great references of an extremely savage audience over there.*

With the tour approaching, the biggest challenge was to leave everything organized for both the tour, and the responsibilities that are pending in Brazil. After all, I have guitar students who have classes, bands I produce , bands which I am a member (7th Seal is now writing the new record) , bands that play as a hired musician and obligations , many obligations. And to make matters worse , a few hours before catching the plane it still gave the finishing touches on the soundtrack of the film "I say you goodbye" which I wrote and played all the instruments. Needless to comment on how much it was stressful to deliver everything and get on the plane and that the hours slept were very few .

## **Conexão 1 e 2 – Londres e Thessaloniki**

We knew that the journey would be long , because the logistics pointed to a flight with two scales: London and Athens.

With little time to breathe , we carried our hand luggage and expected the connections .

And finally the tour would begin the next day.

### **Show 1 – Thessaloniki**

Off the plane in Greece there was the an episode of "Dude, Where's My Bag?", Since both my suitcase along with Johnny's (and his pedalboard) disappeared. Without being able to change clothes until the next day (my things were in Athens and Johnny's were in London) we rehearsed, planned the set list, had a few beers and met the beautiful city, rode on pirate ship and a Jamaican bum tried to pass the scam Dotta.

As we entered the 8 Ball, a very traditional club in Thessaloniki, me and Johnny got to watch the opening show of WEB, a black metal band from Greece that is a mixture of industrial gothic sounds with Dimmu Borgir. Their brutal sound is awesome! It's worth to check them out!

When you leave your country to go to another place in the world to play, you never know what to expect, and nothing could prepare us for the insanity that would be the Greek crowds. And when they began the intro and we began with Narcosynthesis it was absurd response. They waved, jumped, started a moshpit, sang. Despite the fatigue and jet leg the show was like a steamroller, and we only believed in people that said the show was special when we saw the videos. At one point of the show, I started to play forever "Forever" before the "Dreaming Neon Black" playfully and Warrel sang the whole thing, and it was including just right there on the setlist! And it was kind of makeshift, and just entering a consensus that if we rehearsed, it would ruin it. And so it was show after show, until the last. After the show we were relieved with the comments coming

from people already watched the Nevermore several times and were happy with our show.

## **Show 2 Sophia – Bulgaria**

In the morning , we got to know the real character Jimmy Immortal , our crazy driver that worked as a merch salesman for Manowar and he was was the " Manowar lifestyle " in person mixed with the bus driver from The Simpsons . After a few hours in the van we reached Sophia , the capital of Bulgaria. A country that despite the natural beauty keeps a somewhat austere vibe. I could see few people on the street, everything very simple . Capitalism has come far, but did not bring the promised prosperity

The venue was a Hard Rock Cafe style place and it was one of the most stylish dressing rooms of the whole tour, the waitress who brought some shots and drank along with the band! Although it is all very simple, the equipment was top and the sound on stage was crystal clear. Killer sound and vibe that made it a great show. This time we have to take my hat off to the guys in Velian, the opening act, super cool guys who helped us buy a power supply, as Fabio had bust his in the previous gig and Marcus needed a replacement sound board. The guys had contacts with the Bulgarian importers and saved our asses. They sought in the next day we were at the hotel at 09:30 am and gave us a ride to solve these issues, always with courtesy and respect. This is a very important lesson to many guys who consider themselves rock stars (these I refuse to consider musicians); you never know when something can go wrong, and a helping hand can be the difference between be all right in a tour like giving it all wrong. Already badly hit me here in BR because of some of these frat boys who play their instruments in Lego style "can pose, but fingers do not move" and if I were a little crazier I would make the list because these deserve.

### **Show 3 Kastoria**

It was a very funny venue, there was no room on stage, and the vibe resembled of a sports bar than of a metal venue. There was a treadmill (off) and all the equipment had to be carried up the stairs (poor Dotta, the unfortunate drummer). Arriving there Sense of fear, a very band, very nice people, was there. They all looked like King Leonidas from the movie 300, with short hair and beard. It seemed that at any moment they would erect a shield wall and start screaming "This is Sparta" or "Tonight we dine in hell." But it was a very nice band of traditional metal that somewhat resembles Iced Eath. Worth checking out.

Despite the weird place nothing and full of tables, crazy Greeks squeezed there in the middle and it all caught fire. At one point Johnny's guitar (always played in volume Spinal Tap) disappeared and I had to go into ninja mode and remember the riffs he played alone and fill the holes right there on the spot. At the end of Born I felt possessed and I decided to do the guitar solo in one of the tables in the middle of the crowd. You can study at Berklee and shit, but I believe that certain things you only learn when you are on stage. Again the respect that people have an artist there is differentiated. In this particular show, there was NOTHING that separated us from the public, and did not need to have. Throughout the show, the guys in the Sense of fear supplied Fabio and Warrel with water and beer, always enjoying the show.

### **SHOW 4 AGRINIO**

It was a small place, a kind of metal association called Metal Union. We were the only thing going on there and one of the few bands that have played there. Once there, surprise! "Dude, Where's My Bag Part 2 Revenge !?" After a few phone calls we found that was in Kastoria and that we could just get back on the road to Athens. In times like these begins the tour folklore and camaraderie becomes legendary: Warrel offered me a VERY ugly underwear he never wore (says he) and despite horrifying was very comfortable.

During the show, the little place has become a pressure cooker, and most of the fans, unlike Brazil were younger. After the carnage, our crazy driver Jimmy stole a bottle of Jagermeister from the bar and began distributing to us in the midst of other crazy Greeks, always talking to that characteristic accent "hey man, are you looking for trouble?" The guy from the bar was pissed, but the party continued until there was nothing left of the bottle, and our sanity. Many of the kindest people we met on tour there. Many bought CDs of our other bands to support. They very receptive and it was there that we were sure that the Greeks are our European brothers, when it comes to warmth and friendliness.

### **Show 5 Lamia**

Before starting the show (with the same clothes from the day before) I was going into the crowd and I heard "falae Mermão" (hey bro) and it was a Greek who started learning Brazilian Portuguese because of Jiu Jitsu, the guy insisted on talking to me in Portuguese and I was again surprised. Over here in Brazil, many people still see the band with suspicion and doubt. At a show in Limeira (BR) there was an arrogant prick who came to us and said that we should not play the song Born because it would be very difficult to us, that among other crap we had to swallow stupid envious cunts. Meanwhile, in Greece we hear that was one of the best line up that Warrel has played, this coming from people who either had a band or who've seen Nevermore live often. Not to mention the opening bands, in Brazil they come just to talk to Warrel and there most befriended us. Outside Brazil and many welcome things here are super respected, and Brazilians still have a lot to learn regarding respect and humility.

Speaking of shows, one of the opening acts, the Karma Violens really left me impressed. It was a modern thrash that much resembled the Shadows Fall. I made sure to wear a shirt of them on show in Athens, which according to the locals was seen as a much appreciated gesture of respect from us towards the Greek scene. And their vocal was a big Sarcophagus fan, besides playing in a side project with vocal Rotting Christ! Who'd wonder!

Again, another insane night and the crazy Greeks shouted everything in full voice and not just the lyrics, guitar solos too! It was really cool to realize how the songs sounded increasingly cohesive every show. Which was good, because the next day it would be one of the most important shows of the tour, where the majority of the Greek trade press would be present along with the Italian Metal Hammer press. So, we either did a good to show or turn we to stone after looking at the Medusa.

## **SHOW 6 Athens**

In Athens I finally managed to change clothes and get rid of the ugliest underwear of the world uncle Warrel gave me. From the roof of the hotel I could see the Acropolis and the next day we were walking there with Jimmy Immortal, eating an animal Kebab and feeling the millennia of culture and wisdom that shaped much of what we hold dear as the basis of our civilization and Western thought.

Again the opening was Karma Violens and Sorrows Path, a band of heavy doom in the style of Candlemass and Solitude Aeturns Aeturns, very cool. Their guitarist Kostas Salomidis besides being a great musician, was really helpful and helped us hell lot before the tour. Another band that is worth knowing.

For all the anxiety about the importance of this show, what happened was brutal, as apothotic juggernaut led by Hades dogs. Pits and more pits of insane Greeks as if enchanted by the trance of God Dionysus sang and moshed as if they defended Thermopylae from the Persian hordes. I could see in the eyes of those people the otherworldly connection that happened on every note, every word, every solo. At the most bizarre and brutal part in the middle of This Godless Endeavour I noticed the stares that fell over the whole band, and I realized that what produced that trance was the music we played and that in the end we were so possessed as they were.

Returning for the encore I just hear a the boss Warrel and our tour manager telling me to do a solo. In another "ninja" moment I did a

very cool jam with the band. I'm not usually a big fan of guitar solos in shows, so much that the last time that something like that happened was at a Seventh Seal concert in 2010, but I think it was short and fun. At the end the boss came and told me that I played very well! Hearing this coming from a guy who has played with people like Jeff Loomis and Chris Brodderick is like sipping the milk of paradise!:D

### **Show 2 e 3 Athens - Acoustic**

These shows were a mix of emotions. We practiced the arrangements at the hotel and some we came up with just before the show! Initially only one acoustic show was scheduled, and as the venue was packed another one was schedule for the next day and I found out about it while I was on stage! At the same time it was something very short notice, and that tests your ability to adapt to a limit situation. The arrangement for Brother I made the day before the show and at the time it had a very special atmosphere. Some songs like When we Pray, Future Tense, the medley of Dead heart with Evolution 169 were very unusual and the cover for Duran Duran's Ordinary World had a special feeling in Warrel's voice. I believe this to be an interesting format to do in the future.

After three days in the capital , we headed to the city of Larissa, where we played in a sports center, the place was famous because of the owner, Alexandros Siderakos , which besides being one of the greatest tennis players in Greece is frontman Dreamrites , a more traditional metal band that also opened the show . It was very cool to watch the opening show and enjoy Alexandros' Bruce Dickinson style vocals.

Again the venue was packed, crazed crowd which consisted of people who had gone to other shows and members of the opening bands were drunk in front of the stage and transformed the peaceful Sports Center, the only place of the tour that was sold supplement instead of whiskey into a branch of hell. Even after we played the set the crowd kept shouting "we want more " and would not go away. We came to think of things like repeating a song , or suddenly do a

kamikaze stunt and play something off the set , but in the end , we ended up on the stage and we had to explain that the show was over. One point that we take into consideration is that in ALL shows, people asked for " Next in line " and that unfortunately this time, was not present in our set .

## **Show 9 Heraklion**

After two flights, a few hours of sleep and the everlasting annoyance in airport security (disassembling a backpack to show the guys that my pedalboard is no bomb is always a drag) we arrived at the destination: the island of Crete , a place I visited when I was fifteen year old, and I returned many years later, a land with many ruins, the legend of the Minotaur, and beautiful landscapes .

We knew that our responsibility was doubled, because in the middle of the year Warrel made a special concert at a festival on the island with a Greek band, and somehow we were "stealing" jobs from locals. Fortunately after a brutal set many people came to congratulate, saying it was the best show of the year, and, to our relief, some of the fans who were in that festival said that with our performance was way more vibrant and lively. Some of the fans came to tell me "damn you played the This Godless Endeavour solo so perfectly that I almost did not believe it." I spoke with Warrel about that comment, and he said "of course". Many times we have difficulty in assimilating people's reactions and what happens around us ourselves. Again fans showed support and bought the merch from our bands, and now they were "fueled on Brazilian heavy metal".

## **Show 10 – ISTAMBUL (Constantinopla)**

With not much time to sleep after the insanity in Crete, we headed to the airport where we would go to Istanbul (or as it was announced at the airport, Constantinople), Turkey, a Muslim country the day after the attacks of Paris. I received messages from concerned family and



friends, but I did not feel fear. Immediately upon arriving I realized that all I had to preconceptions about the country changed radically after my first step on the airport. It was a multi-ethnic melting pot and a beautiful place. Much is said about Islam and its radicals, but I believe that if we stop pointing the finger at others and begin to realize, we also live among Christians radicals, which forbid women to cut their hair and wear trousers, prohibit people watching television, reading "worldly" books and encourage them to be prejudiced and ignorant. I think the only difference is that they have not declared a holy war yet, but that's just my opinion.

Coming to the show house, the famous Garajstambul where Sepultura would play, we soon realized that it was going to be special. A top notch structure, with an excellent equipment in a venue house with a futuristic look meant that it would be a magical night. As soon as we land on stage we understood that the Turks also knew enjoy a show and they sang loud! In the beginning of the set Warrel just stood on Johnny's cables when he decided to sing on some speakers and his guitar was turned off and we'd finished the song with just one guitar until everything was sorted. Again I am moved by the unrestrained admiration of these people I never seen in my life, but displaying huge innocence by sharing everything they felt, and tears were not rare in the audience at various moments.

I believe that I have never been so well treated by a production team and by Warrel fans. In the end I was so comfortable with everyone that I ended up taking a few beers in the dressing room and distributed to them to the fans while we hang out. Unfortunately I had to leave, or else I would have ended up a drunk night right there in the middle of the crowd.

## **11 - Acoustic Show Drama**

Very hours of sleep later, we went to Istanbul airport, and even before entering the place we had to go through a security check and I could already feel the effects of several days of little sleep in my body. After the return to Thessaloniki we ended up in the small town of Drama for another acoustic show. Getting there all I could do was

sleep and after I realized I completely lost track of time. The show itself was a small club and much of the Athens set was repeated, and the audience was very attentive and quiet, and some fans who were in the earlier shows came to this last show. It was something very intimate, with people having coffee served at the same time and with Warrel telling a few jokes between songs.

After fifteen intense days, many new friendships, experiences it is to acknowledge what is perhaps the greatest powers that music, which is to bring together people from far away and very different cultures. Many things are scheduled for 2016, and it is difficult to keep secret. But all I can tell is that after this tour many funny things, oddities, fatigue and many the future holds more good things to come!