

HIM Interview Transcript

Contributed by Kelly Crawford
Thursday, 16 August 2007

August 4, 2007 - Projekt Revolution Tour Recently Euro-Rock Radio (ERR) got to sit down with the guys from HIM to talk about the new album, tour, and more. Though Ville and Mige did most of the talking Burton, Gas and Linde were there as well. ERR: Thanks for taking the time to do this. We really appreciate it. Ville Valo: Thank you. ERR: First off how's the tour going so far?

Mige: So far so good. Ville: It's okay. It's a bit boring. ERR: (laughs) Boring? Ville: Playing in the middle of the day, just 40 minutes, and then we have a lot of days off. So... I myself prefer when we play like hour twenty minutes, hour thirty, each and every night do like five gigs in a row then a day off. Just getting into the mood a bit more. It's like kind of weird. And we're done by like seven o'clock. ERR: So what do you do with yourselves after seven o'clock? Ville: We drive to the next town. ERR: Oh that's fun. Ville: And then we, you know, then we sleep and then we wake up and do the same old - all over again. And there hasn't been a lot of promo so it's just waiting for 40 minutes which is... You know it's great to be part of this festival I think everybody is glad, glad to be here but it's still something we're not used to. ERR: Are you going to be doing a headlining tour once Venus Doom comes out? Ville: Halfway through October. ERR: October. Ville: Yeah. ERR: Good! Ville: They're sorting out the dates so I think it's going to be public in about a few days or more, more or less. Going to be kind of like thirty gigs. ERR: That'll be good. I know there's a lot of people here just to see you and they're shelling out \$70 for 40 minutes... Ville: Yeah that's also one of those things that's not nice and then in the daylight you know - we don't have the opportunity of using - we don't have the sound checks we don't have the opportunity of using the lights so much because you can't see shit because of the bigger light, the sun, you know. ERR: How's the - I know you're playing some of the new songs, how's the crowd response been to the new stuff do you think? Ville: People seem to know Kiss of Dawn pretty well. Um we do Dead Lover's Lane and Passion's Killing Floor as well and, um, well I don't really know - you know it's all depending on the day. And all the venues have been different and so in some places you know the, what do you call it the space between the first seats and the stage is really tiny and like we played Ocean View - not Ocean View that's the name of a band, Mountain View (Mige chimes in with the name too) um, we played there and that was weird because all the like first seats they were reserved for people with a lot of money - so it's weird when like the first 25 rows are empty or they're snoring - you know old timers, like managers of bands and those that have the money, and then all the kids are actually like 150 yards away and so it's kind of weird. So uh it's different every day and we're still getting used to it, it's not quite half way through the tour yet. ERR: How did you decide which songs off the new album to play? There's been a lot of like bits and pieces of them out on the net already. Ville: These are probably really the only ones we can play live. A lot of stuff on the album is really impossible to play live you know - to many backing vocals too many overdubs or whatever so probably on the tour we'll be playing those three and adding another one called Sleepwalking Past Hope that lasts more than 10 minutes so that's like worth three songs. And you've got to play some of the old stuff as well so - um - well we'll see. It all depends also on the reaction you know how people like the album and if there's certain tracks that are good for other people then we'll try to figure out a way of playing them. But um that's what we've got so far. ERR: Some of the pictures that have been taken at the past couple of shows - everybody's noticing that you have a new tattoo and it looks like it says Venus Doom. Ville: Yeah it does ERR: Why - a question that's been going around on the net a lot is why get that tattooed when you don't have like Dark Light or any of the others, why Venus Doom? Ville: Well it's the best name so far. And the album's pretty personal - a lot of shit hitting the fan you know this year and last year and when the album was done and I drew those monogram's down on one of the very last days of working on the cover artwork I drew those down and I thought I wanted some kind of like, some little tiny memory on my skin, after all the pus of making the album and actually getting it done. So that's what it means. ERR: Speaking of the artwork, how did you choose that painting for the cover? Ville: Well I bought it off a gallery. We were playing for the first time, and the only time so far, in New Orleans and we had a day off and I was walking around in search of blessed chicken feet, you know those dried up Voodoo ones. They told me Madam whatever she was called, she's got the best and most authentic ones - unfortunately she had a day off. So the shop was closed and I was walking about and went to the pub for a cold pint of PBR and after that saw a gallery like right across the street and I fell in love with the picture and thought I'd go, go in for the first time in a gallery and ask how much that painting was. And it was like a few thousand dollars, it wasn't to much, so yeah I'm gonna invest in it and hung it up on my living room wall and I ended up writing all the songs in the living room where I live so I was constantly seeing the picture so it felt natural to have that on the cover. It's a pretty picture I like it a lot. ERR: Yeah it's cool. I guess this kind of goes to everybody - what would be your favorite song off the new album? I mean everyone would have different reasons for it I suppose... Ville: I think it's Sleepwalking (Sleepwalking Past Hope) for everyone. (Everyone agreed) ERR: Why that one? Mige: Um, well, it kind of breaks certain rules that are in music now a days. Ville: And rules we've been using Mige: Yeah we've been slaves to those certain rules, mostly subliminally of course, it's somehow - to have something like that on the album is a relief ERR: Did you all - who did most of the writing on the album? Ville: Me ERR: Well I mean, I know lyrics and stuff but all of the instrumental also or... Ville: Well, the basic ideas yeah. Once Linde starts jamming on the riffs they might change a lot. Keyboard things changes - I hum things to Burton and then Burton comes up with something. We arrange the whole thing together but most of the like lead lines and main riffs of songs that's something I wrote back home and then the like initial icing on the cake that's something we do together. ERR: The Kiss of Dawn video - which is of course on iTunes and selling like crazy... Ville: I still haven't seen it ERR: You haven't seen it? Who came up with the concept for it? Was it the director? Ville: It was Meiert

(director). Originally we were thinking of shooting a video for Venus Doom as well. We were thinking of having two videos which would have some sort of like - would work as a mini movie or whatever. Not necessarily with like a huge plot but something that would start off from somewhere - first one would end where the second one would start and stuff like that and then we just decided to do one video and we all crammed up all the ideas. We shot a lot of material of a lady, like a ghastly kind of Edgar Allen Poe, like a ghost type of thing. I think that she was cut out of the video more or less. ERR: She's in there a little bit Ville: A little bit. Tim Palmer was in the video, the original version, the producer, and I think they cut his pieces out so there was a lot of stuff actually we ended up cutting out because it was just a mish mass of too many ideas gone wrong and we wanted it to be a good, pretty simple performance video. ERR: Speaking of videos, what's the next video? Do you guys know yet or... Ville: Hopefully we're not doing one ERR: (laughs) Not doing one?

Ville: Last time around it took 8 months for Rip Out the Wings of a Butterfly to start getting any radio airplay here in the States so it was kind of like worthless to actually spend the money cuz a band pays like half the budget of the video to do a two hundred thousand dollar video for a song that doesn't get played cuz the album is kind of like done already when it comes to TV and then it comes to radio it's old news - so in that sense I don't - you know if people are in need of something different then we'll do something different but now already we have Passion's Killing Floor on the Transformer's soundtrack, we have Venus Doom as a B-side kind of for our Scandinavian release and they get all the Finnish release on the singles, double A side. So we have all our strongest songs for single use we have them in use already so I don't know - Dead Lover's Lane could be one. I don't know you know, we'll see. It would be cool to do Sleepwalking Past Hope just do something really crazy maybe just have an internet only release not edit the song down just have a 10 minute like video opera type thing - maybe. But yeah unfortunately the cost of videos are ridiculous. It's nearly worthless now a days. People are usually watching videos on really low resolution on their PCs or whatever computers they're using so what's the reason to shoot anything on 35 mil which costs ridiculous amount of money or do really expensive amount of CGI which will be shown on TV maybe once or twice or shown on DVD which maybe a thousand people will see or whatever. So it's like there's actually a lot more reasons to not do a video than to do one. ERR: And you are doing a DVD right? There's a DVD coming out next year? Ville: That's what the label wants. ERR: Is that what you want? Ville: No Mige: No, not really. Because we already have a pretty good DVD out. We don't have the material yet to match that so would be kind of stupid to put out the DVD just because you have to, because your label wants you to. Wait until you have decent material for it. Ville: We'll probably shoot a show or two from the headline tour and see how it turns out. If it's going be really good then... Mige: Then of course, yeah Ville: I don't know it depends also if it's going to be released as the DVD, separate DVD or is it going to be a re-release of the album as what Greenday did. Just releasing the album again with the DVD cuz that's one way of pushing the album back up on the charts. That's record company politics. I don't really care. But in that sense then it would be wise to re-release the album so then people - you know you pay 22 bucks, 23 bucks to get the album again you can give it to a friend, whatever, to get the DVD and some special artwork rather than buying a DVD for 25 bucks that's just got a boring gig in it. We'll have to see. ERR: How did Passion's Killing Floor end up on the Transformers soundtrack? And what do you think about that? It's Transformers - it's a good movie... Ville: Nobody's seen the movie yet. ERR: No? Ville: No. I was more into Masters of the Universe (said with the usual smirk so you don't know if he's telling the truth or joking) ERR: They're redoing that you know. Masters of the Universe.. Mige: Oh great! Ville: Love Dolph Lundgren (played He-Man in the live action Masters of the Universe movie in the 80s) Mige: You can't match him really Ville: But um - I think somebody from Warner was working on the um the soundtrack - not the score soundtrack but the one with the bands on it, the heavy rock stuff like you do here in the States. He asked us if we wanted to have a song on there and we said yes cuz it's free publicity for us. Cuz you know Linkin Park fans buy the album or whatever and they hear us by accident so it's a bonus. Even if the movie is a flop, or if it would have been a flop, it doesn't matter we don't lose anything. If it's a big success we have everything to gain nothing to lose. ERR: Everyone that was going to see it was posting on your official forums, asking where in the movie, did you hear it in the movie, where is it. It's like two seconds in one part of the movie and if you didn't know you'd miss it. But there were plenty of people that would yell and scream as soon as it came on. Mige and Ville: Oh nice! Ville: It's like fucking product placement. Especially here in the states with big blockbuster movies like having a bottle of water of some brand on one table and it's the hero's so you know all the heroes drink this kind of water so you need to buy that one so.. Mige and Ville: Everyone wants to be a hero. ERR: What do you think about - there's a lot, I say a lot, several songs off the album that have already leaked out on the internet, are you worried about that at all? Ville: Which ones?

ERR: Venus Doom is on youtube... Ville: Venus Doom, Kiss of Dawn, Passion's Killing Floor... ERR: Dead Lover's Lane Ville: A live version of it.. (there's a bit here where we talk about which songs are out on the net and Ville keeps asking Gas to close the door to the bus because someone has left it open) Ville: It's not a problem. I think the whole album hasn't leaked and it's only a month to go so that's actually pretty good considering now a days and we'd rather be playing the gigs and giving people more. It's all nice on the album, good collection of songs, so hopefully it's, hopefully everything's worth the price whatever it is ERR: So many people now a days are downloading albums instead of buying them, unfortunately Ville: They're downloading songs not albums, as much, you know so the whole format of the song or an album has gone back to the 50s when we didn't have a concept of an album - first one was probably the Beatles. They had the first album with the old songs halfway through the 60s. So the whole concept of the album is pretty new. And then this actually just goes back to when people were buying 7 inches. Or stuff like that. The only challenge it gives to new bands is you have to prove your worth and all the aspects of your artistry in three and a half minutes. Which is challenging. It's a good thing I think. Hopefully it'll take some of the crap song writers out of the business. We'll see. It could be that we're gonna be under the light. Nobody knows. ERR: There were rumors going around last year that you were going to do a solo album Ville: There's been rumors all the time ERR: Well yes. Ville: I've been writing some

stuff, some acoustic stuff, but everything's always ended up on the album. Cyanide Sun was one of them. So's Sleepwalking Past Hope. Usually cuz I write everything on acoustic guitar it all starts with the fact that I'm writing - but no not yet. Not yet. ERR: Are you getting along with all the other bands on tour. Ville: We haven't really spent much time with them Mige: There's not really time. We come here we play... Ville: There's time but we're lazy bastards we just stay on the bus. Mige: And I think people are leaving pretty much after they arrive here they play the leave, I don't see them to much around. Ville: I think it's good starts when it happens naturally. When there's a reason to talk to somebody and go and hang out rather than just shake their hands and tell them how fucking awesome your band is. You know. I don't know shit about these bands so.. ERR: Had somebody that wanted to ask you - they absolutely loved when you did Byronic Man with Cradle of Filth Mige: Great speech. He's really a master of lyrics I must say Ville: He told me that he wants to uh be on the next HIM album Mige: Oh. We'll have to find him a speech Ville: Or a scream Mige: Yeah or a scream. He has a beautiful voice. Talking voice, singing voice, screaming voice. It's hard to find the right spot of him but I'm sure we'll find something. ERR: Another question, it's not really an odd question but - you're a big Elvis fan. Or so we've heard. Some people are wondering if you would ever consider covering an Elvis song. Ville: No. There are some things to holy to touch, you know. He was a great singer. It's like having Gas play Rain in Blood or whatever it's done so well there's not reason to - or Mige playing NIB. We could always play it as a band, an Elvis song or a Slayer song or a Sabbath song as we have try to better something that you can't top would be worthless. At least for me. Mige: And they a different voice. Elvis songs. If we would play them it would be kind of hard to make it really work. Ville: But never say never though Mige: Yeah we haven't tried. Ville: It's the same as trying or thinking about trying to do Johnny Cash songs - you just can't. You gotta be a girl to do it to make it so different from the original that it would be a reason to do it. I think. Like doing Ring of Fire or something like that. It would be like why? Mige: There's a German band that actually did it Ville: Ring of Fire? Mige: Yeah. Who was it for heaven's sake... (they try to think of the name, Gas chimes in as well). Whatever. It was a bad idea. ERR: Well speaking of interesting covers we recently got a hold of a CD called Heartagrass. It's a bluegrass version... Ville: I haven't heard it ERR: You haven't heard it. It's interesting Ville: Well it's - I don't know the fella - but I heard about it when we were on tour but if someone likes the songs so much they want to spend the time rearranging the songs into bluegrass format or the entire album. Burton: I've heard it. It's actually quite good. ERR: It's different Burton: Yeah it's very different ERR: We were in Helsinki at New Years and went to Helldone and someone was saying, I guess it was a Finnish paper reported that you had started a Helldone company or something like that. We were wondering was that true? Did you start a separate company for Helldone? Ville: Yeah because just um - we were selling a bit of Helldone merchandise or whatever but that money doesn't belong to any of the bands or whatever, that's for the next Helldone or saving a bit of money for the next portion to be able to pay the artist who creates those characters and t-shirts and shit like that. So just logical it was good to have separate company than mix it in like that. Also the owner of the club he organizes like um Tuska the Metal festival and Ruisrock the biggest and oldest rock festival in Finland cuz he doesn't have anything to do with HIM it's easier to do one more company to sort out the - cuz we were thinking of expanding it. But probably don't have time this year. We're thinking of making it bigger cuz there's not a lot of festivals during the winter time. Maybe try something - I think cuz most of the festivals happen in the summer time for obvious reasons but I think it would be quite exciting to have people flying all over the world from America to Finland - it's so cold it's dark and it's different and the culture's different make it be more of a ya know last couple of days not just in one club but in several clubs. Mige: Yeah or maybe even out doors. Like a big tent or something. Ville: We've been talking about the possibility - of you know it takes a lot of time of actually setting up a tent getting all the you know paper work and permits and shit you know so we're trying to figure it out bit by bit. And also a lot of bands have that time off. It's really expensive to fly let's say an American band just for a one off gig just in the New Year cuz they're no tours happening that time. Summer's always easier cuz all the bands they always travel. ERR: Yeah \$900 a person to fly over there Ville: Yeah or more than that cuz of the crew and everything it just comes to be super expensive. So we had friends and we had Cathedral last year. Cuz we'd been touring with them on our previous tours in England, you know - we got good rates off of it. Mige: Excellent rates ERR: Well thank you guys that's all I have All the band: Thank you