

RockRevolt Magazine Interview: Crucified Barbara



Lead singer/guitarist of Stockholm-based all-girl rock group Crucified Barbara Mia took the time to introduce this incredible outfit to Revolvers. She talks about how the band has developed from their 2005 debut album and the challenges they faced when putting their latest album 'In the Red' together. She also reveals the things that bring out the best in CB and the things that just drive her up the wall...

Thanks for taking the time to speak to Rock Revolt.

Been a busy summer for the band?

Yes! Between the summer festivals on the weekends, we have worked with the mixing, mastering, album cover design and a lot of interviews and press during the whole summer, and rehearsing for the upcoming tour with the new songs so we have been busy for sure. Even though we're quite exhausted after working constantly with the album for more than a year, it feels great since the response of the new material from fans and media is overwhelming!

Could you introduce yourselves to revolvers who've never heard about you? What is Crucified Barbara about and what impression should they leave with after listening to you?

Crucified Barbara is a 4-piece band from Stockholm, Sweden just about to release our 4th studio album "In the Red" on Despotz Records. We deliver a raw and energetic mix of rock'n'roll and metal since 1998 and we've toured all over the world since our 1st release "In Distortion We Trust" in 2005. European, Australian, South American headliner tours, support for Motörhead, Backyard Babies, In Flames, Sepultura, festivals like Sweden Rock, Download, Hellfest, Masters of Rock, Graspop, SummerBreeze, Sonisphere and many more. After experiencing Crucified Barbara music, I want the listener to feel like dancing on clouds.

Could you give us a fly-on-the-wall perspective of your creative process? How do you come up with song ideas and what are the things that inspire you to reach for your songwriter's pen?

What inspired us to start working on this album was a very strict and short deadline that we gave ourselves this time. It was summer 2013 and our big plans for the future required us to enter the studio at the end of the year so we just booked the studio for January and started writing. The best songs of the previous album were written during the very last 2-3 weeks before the recordings and by all of us together in the rehearsal, writing and arranging. So this time we wanted to work like that all the way through. From August 'till December we met every day in our rehearsal place, except for some tours and weekend gigs, so we've seen a lot of each other last year! It was a really exhausting period without money and a lot of pressure but we worked up a great flow and never allowed us to get stuck somewhere, just kept on writing, working, changing and arranging until we felt totally satisfied with each song. It was all worth it in the end because we love this new album and we could never have reached the same result without all the hard work and endless hours all four of us together put into making the songs.

Speaking of which, who does the songwriting? Does one of you do all the writing or do you all chip in?

We write all together as mentioned above, we're all good at different things and try to bring out that in everyone.

The video for the song 'To Kill a Man' is well-executed, powerful and emotive. How did you come up with the concept for it and was it difficult to shoot given the weight of the subject?

I wrote the script for the video, and it was really important that it didn't end up being a "story" feasting on rape crimes like they do in the movies. We wanted to present facts and real cases that speak for themselves and take it one step bigger, to also include the sexism and misogyny. I recommend anyone who doesn't believe that no problems like this exist and gets upset when it's brought up, to check out the website www.everydaysexism.com for a never-ending amount of eye-opening testimonials from both women and men.

'In the Red' is your fourth studio album. How do you feel your sound has evolved since 2005's 'In Distortion We Trust'?

The first album was our first real big studio experience and we didn't really know anything about making an album. We brought our demo songs on a cassette tape recorded in the rehearsal place so there was just a lot of noise and someone screaming on top of that. So that was the start of it all. From that 'till today has been a great journey sound- and songwriting-wise, we have developed as musicians and songwriters, and we have found the right equipment for everyone and all the touring has made us "grow" into each other as a unit. Even though we write more melodic and basic songs now in my opinion, I also think that the music is getting heavier at the same time. Maybe it's the result of more dynamic songwriting and arranging.

The themes of your songs have changed quite a bit from your debut album. You've said that In the Red tackles injustice and other topics you guys are passionate about. Why did you feel this was the right time to put your stand on these subjects out there?

We've always cared a lot about big and small things but never really found a place for it in the music until now. I guess it's a result of growing up, getting older and aware of the world we live in -and becoming better at putting feelings into words. This album deals with everything from lack of self-confidence, getting lost in dark places, a report from inside a slaughterhouse, old bold men in top positions in the music business who think women aren't good enough to play music, breaking free from a bad relationship... Then we also have some positive themes like "Lunatic #1" about finding that friend or team that makes you invincible, and "In the Red" which is about our band as one great machine. It's not really a new thing for CB, we have written passionate lyrics before but not made a big thing out of it. Some are pretty straightforward forward like "Sex Action", "In Distortion We Trust" and so on, but there are a lot of thoughts behind songs like "My Heart is Black", "Feels Like Death", "Count Me In" just to mention a few from all the 3 last albums. I wrote the lyrics for 10 of 11 songs (Klara wrote "To Kill a Man") and for the first time, I really enjoyed it the whole way through, maybe because I could let out some frustration for each one of them.

You are scheduled for tours all over Europe to promote In The Red, will you be returning to the US? Are there plans to play in other parts of the world?

We will come back to the US as soon as we can. We did a 6 weeks tour last year in the States with a wonderful response so we just can't wait to get back again with the new album! I can't reveal any dates right now but we'll shout it out asap! I hope this album will also bring us back to Australia and South America, and hopefully, we'll get to play Japan, New Zealand, and Iceland would be cool... We'll let you know when we have sorted out the logistics! :-)

You have been praised for your electric live performances. Is there a particular event or venue which you really love playing in, which you know, brings out the best of Crucified Barbara?

The best gigs are definitely the ones where the promoters are passionate about their event and venue, and make everyone feel welcome, both bands and audience. Graspop in Belgium was a great example of being huge but hearty, I'll carry that gig with me forever as a great live memory. Sometimes it just hits you, it could be on a main stage on a rainy morning or in a crowded tent somewhere far out on the Italian country side, when I can really sense the energy and happiness of the audience, and how it starts flowing back and forward between the band and the crowd, it's the passion in the room that brings out the best of us. It doesn't have to be crowded, we have played killer shows for 10 000 and 10 people, it's the vibe in the air that matters.

You guys have played beside such distinguished acts on the metal scene as Motorhead and In Flames, is there any band or bands in particular that you look up to?

I don't have many role models left but Alice in Chains has their own little dressing room in my heart since I was a teenager they've been a big inspiration and I still love the band even though I've cooled down a bit emotionally. But if I meet Jerry Cantrell some happy day I guess I would be too shy to speak at all...

You've probably been asked this a thousand times but as an all-chick band do you feel under pressure to rock twice as hard as the fellas to gain respect in a male-dominated industry?

No we never felt any pressure like that, we're confident in what we're doing and think that we're doing it well. But I get exhausted when loads of bad playing copycat boy bands can play uncommented but as soon as one girl band performs with any kind of insecurity or inexperience shining through, people start to complain that girls shouldn't be on stage. That's something I truly hate about the music scene, that people prefer to talk shit and complain instead of just having a good time all together. Makes your life so much easier if you've got a positive attitude and you will make other people grow as well.

What does the future hold for Crucified Barbara? Which direction do you want to grow in or where do you want to see the band in 5 to 10 years?

I have decided that "In the Red" will become the Album of 2014 (if only for ourselves) so the future looks bright! We have great tours coming up and our fan club the Crucifiers (crucifiers.org) is constantly growing with kick-ass street teams all over the world. Our plans now are to tour as much as possible with the new album and then start to work on the next one. Next year we'll celebrate 10 years anniversary since our first album release so we'd better come up with some special treats for our fans to celebrate! To be continued!

/ Mia